



City of San Rafael Action Plan Homeless Subcommittee JUNE 2013

Overview of the Issue

Homelessness represents a spectrum of situations including those seen and unseen, individuals and families who have a unique set of challenges to overcome. The federal agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the County of Marin's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness refer to these broad categories of homeless populations:

- Chronically homeless people
- Chronic substance abusers
- Veterans
- Unaccompanied youth
- Survivors of domestic violence

The County of Marin is the local government agency designated with the primary responsibility for providing services to these groups, working in partnerships with cities, and non-profit service providers. The City of San Rafael's approach with these partners is to understand that services, enforcement, and larger system change are appropriate for different people at different times.

This Action Plan focuses on the following sub-groups that relate to the visible Downtown street population:

- People who are creating disturbances that may or may not have housing
- People with mental health challenges
- Young adults "traveling through"
- Formerly employed people who are having difficulty finding work
- People who are not ready or able to access the current services available to help them get back on their feet
- People who are frequently drunk ("serial inebriates") or addicted to drugs
- People who do not fit any of the above categories and have very idiosyncratic reasons for being on the street

This Action Plan is focused specifically on the Downtown area of San Rafael, as it is the heart of our community. The balance in Downtown has shifted with the street population negatively affecting businesses and the experience of both our residents and visitors.

The City's Role

Homelessness is a complex and chronic issue comprising many subgroups from those at risk of losing their housing to those who are chronically homeless. The County of Marin, through the Federal and State government, is responsible for funding health and human services for county residents. The Federal government requires all funding recipients to prepare a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Marin County has published a draft of their plan "Home for All" for the 2013-2023 period. The Plan is based on a large-scale collaborative planning process ("Charrette") that occurred in the summer of 2012. The Ten-Year Homeless Plan addresses the needs of both homeless families and homeless individuals.

As the County seat, San Rafael is home to many social service organizations that are exemplary in their expertise and commitment to various aspects of the issue of homelessness. Staff from Community Development, the Police and Fire Departments and the City Manager's office works in collaboration with these other agencies on a regular basis. From its inception in 1972 to its demise in 2011, the San Rafael Redevelopment Agency provided financial assistance to local non-profit agencies for the creation of new affordable housing units and for the rehabilitation of housing units for low-income individuals.

The purpose of this short-term action plan is to highlight those actions within the City's control to accelerate progress in addressing the impact of the street population in Downtown. This plan does not address homeless families or individuals that are not on our Downtown streets. San Rafael supports the efforts of agencies and groups assisting families through our Housing Element policies.

The City's Values

- Downtown is the heart of our community and we all benefit from a strong, vibrant and economically healthy downtown with a balance of retail, business, civic, cultural and nonprofit uses.
- We celebrate the City's cultural resources and Downtown activities (library, parks, restaurants, retail, baseball and signature events, etc.)
- We are a compassionate community that respects individuals and rejects unhelpful stereotyping.
- We support housing for residents at all economic levels.
- We support individual's efforts to get and remain clean and sober and we encourage programs that reduce access to alcohol and drugs.
- We want welcoming public spaces and are committed to enforcing appropriate public behavior when necessary.

- As underscored in our recently adopted San Rafael Action Plan, the City values its partnerships with other levels of government, nonprofits, the faith community, and other concerned groups and residents because we cannot tackle such complex issues alone and together we do better in developing and implementing solutions.

Recent Actions

The City of San Rafael

In response to community and business concerns, in the spring of 2012 City staff and the City Council Homeless Subcommittee, then composed of Mayor Phillips and Councilmember Levine (the latter now replaced by Councilmember Colin), embarked upon an effort to address this issue, which culminated with a report of planned actions accepted by the full City Council on October 15th, 2012. A table on the status of the October 2012 recommendations is attached to this report (Attachment A). Other City actions to date are shown on Attachment B.

Service Providers and the Broader Community

The City relies heavily on the initiative and progress of its partners. These are just a few highlights of partner activities since last October:

- Community Action Marin instituted a second street outreach mental health team (CARE Team II) for San Rafael to assist people with mental health and substance abuse issues
- Business, service providers and the faith community developed a working group on the homeless issue called Thursday Morning Group
- Community members have participated in the community action planning workgroups for the implementation of Marin's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

Action Plan Recommended for Adoption by City Council

Overall Goal

San Rafael City Council's overall goal is to significantly reduce homelessness in San Rafael.

Objectives

Short-term (to be completed by December 2013):

- Involve all community members, including those who live on the streets, in making our Downtown a better place to visit
- Reduce negative impacts of the "street population" in Downtown
- Create a more welcoming environment in our Downtown, library, local parks/open space and areas adjacent to local schools
- Authorize the hiring of an additional Police Officer for up to three years to support the

Downtown Foot Patrol to work closely with the City's new Mental Health Outreach position

- Provide multiple ways for residents to contribute to creating a more vibrant Downtown
- Increase community understanding of the complex issue of homelessness by declaring September 2013 as Homeless Awareness Month

Long-term:

- Promote the creation of additional affordable housing stock
- Implement permanent policies that maintain a healthy and safe environment
- Support programs that keep people housed
- Facilitate accountability for mental health treatment follow up

Ongoing:

- Continue to collaborate with the county, local jurisdictions and service providers to address this issue at both a policy and action level
- Explore policy and funding options at the state level
- Identify funding sources for program implementation
- Work with community and service providers to implement Marin County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2013-2023)
- Continue consistent monitoring of City's progress of key actions

Strategies

1. Reduce negative impacts of the street population in Downtown:

It is crucial to meet this objective as our residents have requested change, and it will be harder to attract tourists and shoppers if the Downtown is not welcoming.

- Compel serial inebriates to choose between treatment and incarceration through working with the District Attorney, the Courts and the City Attorney. (County is also addressing)
- Meet with San Quentin officials to address the San Rafael drop-off program (County is also addressing)
- Remove encampments by continuing to fund cleanup efforts in parks and open spaces

2. Create a Welcoming Environment Downtown, at the Library, and in the parks/open space:

Some San Rafael residents feel uncomfortable at certain times on Fourth Street, and the atmosphere of the library, the community center and Falkirk are impacted by the homeless.

- Increase vibrancy of Downtown by partnering with the BID to beautify Fourth Street, create events to draw people Downtown and get local businesses involved in local solutions (such as the Downtown Streets Team)
- Retain local businesses and attract new businesses to the Downtown by hiring a business development professional
- Compel dog owners to be responsible owners by using the efforts of Animal Control and licensing
- Institute “Hot Spot” policing efforts and hire an additional Downtown beat officer

3. Provide multiple ways for residents to contribute to creating a more vibrant Downtown

- Partner with the community to create and support community gatherings and events using the Downtown assets including the City Plaza, Art Works Downtown and the Rafael Film Center
- Support the existing public arts program sponsored by Art Works Downtown
- Work with the City’s volunteer coordinator to develop new volunteer activities and support existing volunteer activities in the Downtown including clean up days

4. Increase community understanding of the complex issue of homelessness

The City will collaborate with its partners on a coordinated education program about homelessness. A key focal point will be to declare September 2013 as Homeless Awareness Month to provide a focused time period for individual and group actions to develop and assist in implementing local solutions. Sample activities may include:

- Schedule and promote a community gathering which directly addresses the three objectives outlined above
- Request the County to make this a Countywide initiative
- City staff and City Council members to meet with local groups to present the City’s Action Plan
- Partner with service providers and other to present personal stories of homeless individuals and families to the local media
- Present a film on homelessness at the Rafael Theatre and/or at the City library or community center
- Partner with the San Rafael library to showcase materials of children and adults on the subject of homelessness
- Invite the faith community to consider sermons regarding homelessness and/or congregation awareness events
- Encourage local business and civic groups to invite speakers from the Home for All campaign
- Meet with the faith community to thank them and promote further community outreach

- Involve local businesses with local solutions such as the Downtown Streets Team and the Home for All campaign, a campaign to educate and inspire community action to help prevent and end homelessness in Marin
- Make information about these activities easily accessible from a dedicated section of the City's website

5. Support Community Efforts to reduce homelessness

- Continue to implement the policies in the General Plan Continue to support "housing first" programs that provide stable housing to allow people to rebuild their lives and assist the precariously housed to avoid shelter stays (County also addressing)
- Maximize City strategies through collaborating with the County, working with the Marin Partnership to End Homelessness and continued participation in the County-level Homeless Policy Steering Committee
- Update the inventory of local services in order to help service providers identify gaps in services and/or overlapping services (Also included as a priority recommendation in Marin County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness)
- Continue participation in the County-level Homeless Policy Steering Committee
- Ensure future funding sources by pursuing Federal and State opportunities, working with local businesses and local philanthropies (County also addressing)

6. Ongoing engagement with the community regarding the City's Plan

- Inform the community and provide updates through the City Manager's newsletter, quarterly updates at City Council meetings and on the City website
- Meet with the faith community to thank them and promote further community outreach
- Provide quarterly updates to the Citizens Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Affordable Housing

ATTACHMENT A

Phase One (approved by the City Council on October 15, 2012)

	Action/Strategies	Implementation Date	Next Steps	Funding	Assessment Tool
a)	Hire a mental health outreach professional	Est. June 2013	In progress. Conditional job offer has been made. Background check underway.	City General Fund	Reduced calls for Police and Paramedic services. Reduction in arrests for quality of life violations.
b)	Contract for the Downtown Streets Team	Est. June 2013	Funding has been secured verbally. Written agreements are being finalized for approval by all parties.	County of Marin Marin Community Foundation City of San Rafael Kaiser Marin General	BID survey. Reduced calls for service
c)	Additional funding for fire prevention in parks & open spaces	2013	Complete. Additional funding added to budget.	City of San Rafael	Reduction in the number & size of encampments. Reduction in fires in open space due to campers.
d)	Concentrated police enforcement in specific zones	2013	Ongoing as warranted.	City of San Rafael (staffing)	Reduction in calls for service.
e)	Collaboration with Countywide efforts on 10 year Plan& other initiatives	2013	Ongoing.	City of San Rafael (staffing)	Improved communication between organizations.
f)	Collaboration with Chamber & BID	2013	Ongoing.	City of San Rafael (staffing)	BID survey and reduction in complaints and calls for service.
g)	Staffing to create time for a new "Point Person" on Homelessness	2013	Complete. Additional funding added to budget. New staff hired.	City of San Rafael	Availability of City "point person" for outreach, communication, etc.
h)	Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on Economic Development & Affordable Housing	Summer 2013	Subcommittee Chair met with CAC to discuss their involvement. First outreach meeting to be held in September 2013.	City of San Rafael (staffing)	Number of quarterly outreach meetings held, number of community members involved on this issue.

ATTACHMENT B

Actions Undertaken by City of San Rafael and Community Partners October 2012-to-Date

	Additional Actions taken to date not included in Phase One	Partners
	COMMUNITY OUTREACH	
a)	Convened Stakeholder Community Group and presented report to City Council	
b)	Affordable housing development funding discussions	Marin Community Foundation
c)	Dialogue with Homeward Bound and other organizations regarding transitional housing	Service Providers
d)	Facilitated meeting of providers, the Mayor, representatives from the Police Department and individuals from the street population	SRPD & St. Vincent de Paul
e)	Increased dialogue with business groups on this issue	BID, Chamber & local businesses, "Thursday Morning Group"
f)	Increased dialogue with existing neighborhood groups	Federation & Coalition
g)	Increased coordination with street-based mental health outreach workers	CARE Team & County of Marin HHS
	CITY/COUNTY OUTREACH	
a)	Conducted Best Practices Research in other cities and included these best practices in our action plan.	
b)	Update of the Marin County 10-year plan to end homelessness (2013-2023)	County of Marin HHS
c)	Started working with the US Marshal to return convicts to State of origin	SRPD & US Marshall
	OPEN SPACE& PARKS	
a)	Continue to remove encampments in the City's open space	SRPD, DPW & SRFD
b)	Continue to monitor the open space to avoid establishment of new encampments	SRPD, DPW & SRPD
c)	Continue to work closely with CARE Team, St. Vincent's, Ritter Center and County Mental Health to address the needs of persons living in the open space & bring them into more suitable housing situations. Service providers continue to emphasize that the Countywide lack of affordable housing and low barrier housing to address the needs of this population.	SRPD & service providers

ATTACHMENT B

Actions Undertaken by City of San Rafael and Community Partners October 2012-to-Date

	DOWNTOWN PUBLIC INEBRIATION & PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR	
a)	Developed strategies to reduce public inebriation	SRPD & San Rafael Community Coalition
b)	Participation in the County’s serial inebriates initiative	County of Marin HHS
c)	Implemented new protocol for response to calls for service when person is semi-conscious to assure proper medical response	SRPD & SRFD
d)	Worked with the County and the hospitals to increase capacity at the Helen Vine Detox Center in northern San Rafael	County of Marin HHS
e)	Created better coordination with County HHS and the Vine Detox Center	SRPD & County of Marin HHS
f)	Adopted an ordinance prohibiting open containers of alcoholic beverage to discourage drinking in public and preventing public intoxication on the street	SRPD
g)	Made contact with all liquor store owners in Downtown, which resulted in reduced single serving alcohol sales	San Rafael Community Coalition
h)	Met with City Attorney and Marin County judges to discuss prosecution of “quality of life” infractions, especially public inebriation	City Attorney
i)	Explored ideas of an additional “Community Court” for San Rafael violations	City Attorney
j)	Developed Strategies to discourage belligerent anti-social behavior in our Downtown and provide healthier alternatives	SRPD & St. Vincent de Paul
k)	Instituted a two month-long street “sweeps” aka Quality of Life initiative to address illegal behaviors in the Downtown	SRPD
l)	Worked with social service agencies in the Downtown to improve communication channels and provide training for their security officers	Ritter Center and St. Vincent de Paul

ATTACHMENT C

2013 Homeless Sub Committee Action Plan Table

	Action/Strategies	Implementation Date	Next Steps	Funding	Assessment Tool	Notes
	REDUCE IMPACT OF STREET POPULATION					
a)	Compel Serial inebriates to choose between treatment and incarceration			County	Reduced arrests and transports to medical facilities	County also addressing
b)	Meet with San Quentin officials to address the San Rafael drop-off program	July 2013				County also addressing
c)	Continue to remove encampments and conduct ongoing monitoring to prevent new encampments. Continue to provide cleanup efforts in parks and open spaces.	Ongoing program Main focus in May - Sept 2013		City General Fund- (staffing)		
	CREATE A MORE WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT					
a)	Partner with BID to beautify the Downtown and create events to draw people Downtown	Ongoing 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
b)	Partner with BID to get local businesses involved in local solutions (such as Downtown Streets Team)	Ongoing 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
c)	Retain local businesses and attract new businesses to the downtown by hiring a business development professional	Sept 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
d)	Compel dog owners to be responsible owners by utilizing the efforts of Animal Control and licensing	July 2013		City General Fund (staffing)	Reduction in complaints	
e)	Institute "Hot Spot" policing efforts	May – Dec 2013		City General Fund (staffing)	Reduction in complaints	
f)	Hire additional Downtown beat officer	Aug 2013	CC budget approval	City General Fund		

ATTACHMENT C

2013 Homeless Sub Committee Action Plan Table

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT DOWNTOWN						
	Action/Strategies	Implementation Date	Next Steps	Funding	Assessment Tool	Notes
a)	Partner with the community to create and support community gatherings and events utilizing the Downtown assets including the City Plaza, Art Works Downtown and the Rafael Film Center	Ongoing 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
b)	Support the existing public arts program sponsored by Art Works Downtown	Ongoing 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
c)	Work with the City's volunteer coordinator to develop new volunteer activities and support existing volunteer activities in the Downtown including clean up days	Sept 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		

INCREASE COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING						
a)	Declare September 2013 as "Homeless Awareness Month" focused – a time period for individual & group actions	Sept 2013			Partnership with community	Partner with the community
b)	Schedule & promote a community gathering	Sept 2013			Partnership with community	Partner with the community

SUPPORT COMMUNITY EFFORTS						
		Sept 2013			Partnership with community	Partner with the community
a)	Continue to implement housing policies in the City's General Plan	Ongoing 2013				
b)	Maximize City strategies through collaborating with the County of Marin & Partnership to end homelessness	Ongoing 2013				
c)	Update the inventory of local services to identify gaps	Ongoing 2013		Service providers		County also addressing
d)	Ensure future funding sources by pursuing local, state and federal sources	Ongoing 2013				

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT						
a)	Quarterly updates at City Council meetings and Citizen's Advisory Committee	Sept 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
b)	Meet with Faith Community	Sept 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		
c)	Update City website	Sept 2013		City General Fund (staffing)		

ATTACHMENT C

2013 Homeless Sub Committee Action Plan Table