



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer the 10-Year Plan report to the City Manager for feasibility reviews of the recommendations. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

In 2002, President Bush issued a federal initiative to end, not manage, the issue of homelessness through the creation of "10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness." To date, 325 cities and counties across the nation have begun 10-Year planning efforts. New housing models and innovative programs are being used in 10-Year plans nationwide, resulting in visible reductions in street homelessness.

In February 2005, the City Council directed the Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) to undertake a community-wide planning process with the goal of developing a strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in Long Beach. Since 2005, more than 450 community stakeholders from all nine council districts have participated in the Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness (Community Partnership) 10-Year planning process. The Community Partnership consisted of a Steering Committee, a Working Group and nine topic-focused Working Group Subcommittees. In addition, two community focus groups were held in each council district.

The Steering Committee was formed to provide oversight and executive leadership for the 10-Year planning process and consisted of approximately 20-30 community stakeholders from a diverse cross section of the community including large business, homeowner and business associations, service providers and regional partners. The Steering Committee was chaired by Mike Murray, Director of Governmental and External Affairs, Verizon Communications, and Steve Peck, Community Development Director, U.S.VETS. The primary responsibilities of the Steering Committee included: 1) Review Working Group Strategic Goal recommendations; 2) Share information with other key stakeholders, government officials, business groups, community groups and associations; 3) Co-chair subcommittees; and 4) Make key recommendations to the City Council.

The Working Group, consisting of approximately 35 community representatives, provided the Steering Committee with information received from Working Group Subcommittees and Focus Groups. This information was used to identify issues and problems related to homelessness and identify potential solutions to include in the Community Recommendations. In addition to gathering and disseminating community input, the Working Group hosted several topic-focused special panel discussions.

Since September 2005, nine Working Group Subcommittees conducted more than 60 meetings attended by over 150 community members. Each subcommittee completed a topic-focused community recommendations matrix in which they developed goals and action steps pertaining to their assigned topic area. The nine topic-focused subcommittees were: Community Education, Continuum of Care, Data Analysis, Funding, Housing, Outreach, Planning and Building, Prevention and Review of Other Cities Plans.

Between September and November 2005, The Community Partnership and Institute for Urban Research and Development conducted nine public Focus Group meetings, one in each of the City Council Districts, to build an infrastructure of community-wide participation. The purpose of the first round of Focus Group meetings was to convene all interested City of Long Beach residents and business people, to inform them of opportunities to participate on Working Group Subcommittees, and identify issues and problems related to homelessness and potential solutions for preventing and ending homelessness. Focus Group recommendations were subsequently taken to the Working Group and Steering Committee for inclusion in the Community Recommendations.

The second round of public Focus Group Meetings was conducted by the National Coalition for Community and Justice (now California Conference for Equality and Justice). The nine Focus Group meetings were held from November 2005 to January 2006 with one meeting in each of the City Council Districts. The purpose of the second set of meetings was for community members to review, rate, and provide input on the Working Group Subcommittee's Draft Community Recommendations.

Through the 10-Year planning process, the Community Partnership developed and refined the Community Recommendations, which has 400 examples of POTENTIAL action steps and strategies that could be utilized to prevent and end homelessness in Long Beach. The recommendations range from changing zoning regulations to hiring new staff and now must be analyzed taking into consideration feasibility, fiscal impact, and consistency with other adopted policies. With the consent of Council, the City Manager will conduct an analysis and provide Council with an action plan for implementation.

