



Town of Moraga

TOWN MANAGER

August 23, 2017

Jim Mellander, Foreperson
Contra Costa County Grand Jury
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

RE: Town of Moraga response to Grand Jury Report No. 1707, "Homelessness in the Cities"

Dear Mr. Mellander:

The Town of Moraga provides this response to the Grand Jury Report No. 1707, "Homelessness in the Cities," pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05.

The Town of Moraga commends the Grand Jury's efforts in researching and documenting methods to find and provide stable housing and services for the homeless within Contra Costa County. Through the Town of Moraga's Housing Element and Moraga Center Specific Plan, the Town has provided several ways to address homelessness within the Town. The Town's position, policies and actions related to homelessness are summarized in the responses below.

FINDINGS:

F1. CORE teams are most likely to be the first point of entry for the homeless into the County's Coordinated Entry System.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with the finding.

F2. CORE teams can successfully identify a homeless individual in need of physical or mental health services.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with the finding.

F3. CORE teams have the resources to identify if there are vacant shelter beds available in the County.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with the finding.

F5. CORE teams build trust between the homeless and police departments.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with the finding.

F9. The cities of Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, and Walnut Creek, which are in the CBDG Entitlement Cities, are the only cities in Contra Costa County that have an approved written homeless plan to end or reduce homelessness in their respective cities.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with this finding.

F10. The City appears to be in compliance with the California Housing Accountability Act.

Response: The Town of Moraga agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. The City should consider establishing CORE teams either by partnering with one or more cities in the region or by funding its own team.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Contra Costa County Point in Time (PIT) counts for 2015 and 2016 did not identify homeless individuals within the Town of Moraga. A CORE team could be considered if the situation changes such that the Town experiences a substantial increase in homelessness. If a CORE team is formed, given the Town's small size and very limited fiscal resources, it is likely that the Town would explore a partnership with neighboring cities such as Orinda and Lafayette. Due to the Town's limited services and staff, homeless outreach will be conducted through the Police Department who are most often out in the community and the first point of contact with homeless individuals.

R2. The City should consider providing incentives for developers to construct housing for extremely low income, very low income, and homeless populations.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. In 2010, as part of the Town adopting an update to the Housing Element and the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP), a 20 Dwelling Unit per Acre (R-20) zoning district was established within the MCSP area to provide density consistent with State standards to allow for construction of housing for extremely low and very low income housing. The R-20 zoning district allows for a density bonus of up to 27 dwellings units per acre in accordance with Government Code Section 65915 et seq. Housing for senior citizens may have a maximum density of 30 residential units per acre plus an additional three dependent senior residential units. The number of senior residential units per acre may be increased by a ratio of three dependent senior residential units for each reduction of one residential unit per acre below the 30 permitted, up to a maximum of nine such dependent senior residential units per acre.

R3. The City should consider using Successor Agency funds, CDBG and other federal housing funds, impact fees, and city general funds to assist in funding housing for extremely low income, very low income and homeless populations.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, and if implemented would rely upon grants or other non-general fund sources. Nonetheless the Town of Moraga's Housing Element Update, which was adopted in January 2015, includes an implementation action related to seeking affordable housing subsidies. The action calls for the Town to "seek to increase the availability of federal, state, county and local financial assistance for affordable housing in Moraga," including sources such as Section 8 subsidies, mortgage revenue bonds or mortgage tax credit programs to support home ownership opportunities for low and moderate income residents, federal and state subsidies for affordable housing construction, and impact fee waivers for affordable housing projects. This action will be implemented on a continual basis over the next six years (the timeframe of this Housing Element cycle).

R4. The City should consider adopting a five-year comprehensive homeless plan, as soon as possible with a target date of January 1, 2019, to reduce the homeless population in the City.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Contra Costa County Point in Time (PIT) counts for 2015 and 2016 did not identify homeless individuals within the Town of Moraga. The Town is a minimal service government with a limited general fund and no homeless population identified. Therefore, a five year comprehensive plan is not warranted at this time and would not be the most efficient use of the Town's limited resources.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report. The Town Council approved this response at its regular meeting on August 23, 2017.

Sincerely,

Robert Priebe
Town Manager