



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Raul Perez

SUBJECT: Homeless Task Force Update

DATE: September 12, 2019

Approved by:

Date:

9/12/19

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager's Office to provide an update to Council on the progress and timeline for the City's Homeless Task Force by the end of the calendar year.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, my office began to execute the idea of a homeless task force in partnership with Destination: Home and the Housing Department.¹ Inspired by the framework and success of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, an interagency effort to curb gang-related activity in San José, the goal was to mimic that taskforce where stakeholders can come together to develop a coordinated effort on homelessness. While my office led the first two planning meetings, we recognized that we lacked the proper resources and did not have the capacity of creating this task force. The following year, we submitted a budget document requesting \$20,000 be allocated to the City Manager's Office (CMO) to continue the Homeless Task Force.² In June 2018, Mayor Liccardo accepted my budget request and directed the City Manager to begin the process of creating the task force and to provide a mid-year budget process on its progress in his Budget Message.

Since then the CMO has begun the effort of facilitating collaboration within city departments and with outside agencies. At council in November 2018, in response to the audit on the City's Homeless Assistance Programs, the CMO shared that they established "Creating Housing and Preventing Homeless" as one of the eight Enterprise Priorities to

¹ https://sanjose.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&event_id=2699&meta_id=651926

² <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/77952>

improve the coordination within City Departments when responding to homeless residents. The CMO also has taken the initial steps of developing the Homeless Task Force in establishing a City-County working group. The first rounds of meetings were held in September and November 2018. In addition at the council meeting, I, alongside Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Jimenez and Rocha, asked staff to come back by Spring 2019 with an updated work plan.³ More recently, at the September 10th council meeting, I with Councilmember Jimenez asked again for an update on the collaborative efforts in and across the City.⁴

While there has been movement to develop a coordinated approach to the homeless crisis, we still have not heard a formal update on the status of this task force. The audit stressed that interdisciplinary, interagency, and intergovernmental action is required to effectively respond yet we see agencies working in silos rather than collaboratively. The Homeless Task Force could serve as a structure that will allow experts across departments and agencies to convene, develop policies, and review programs and practices. It will ensure that initiatives the City embarks on will serve homeless residents and the surrounding communities effectively and successfully. As the biggest issue our City and County is facing, there must be a formalized space that leverages all of our expertise. From the time when I first proposed the Homeless Task Force in 2017, the rate of homelessness in the City of San José has grown exponentially. Coordinated efforts are needed more than ever and it is needed now. I thank the CMO for the work that has been done thus far on tackling this complex issue and I look forward to the update.

³ <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6794834&GUID=F95F54EB-EAEF-4EC9-9AFA-85E543CE949D>

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<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7692597&GUID=1C2A35F8-3D0E-4184-A6AB-FF0C3DA192AF>