



CITY OF MARINA

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February 9, 2017

The Honorable Judge Mark E. Hood
Presiding Judge, Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, California 93901

Re: City of Marina Response to Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “Housing Homeless Women?”

Dear Presiding Judge Hood:

The City of Marina recognizes the issues and challenges associated with affordable housing in our area and particularly housing for homeless women and continues to try and address these issue the best we can as a community.

As requested by the Civil Grand Jury, the City of Marina respectfully submits the following responses to Findings F4, F5, F6 and F7 and to Recommendations R4, R5, R6, and R7 of the Grand Jury’s Final Report entitled “Housing Homeless Women?”

Findings

Finding 4: Funding is provided by Monterey County and cities to build low cost housing most of which is unaffordable for homeless women.

Response: The City of Marina agrees with the finding. While funding is provided by the County and by the City of Marina to develop low-income housing in our community, the number of units currently developed, entitled, or that are in the early planning stages of development that will be available to the Very-Low Income homeless women is not sufficient to address the existing need. As a proportionate share to our population, the City of Marina notwithstanding our limited resources is one of the leading cities in the County in providing new affordable housing for the low and very-low income. For example:

1. As part of the Development Agreement with Marina Community Partners and with assistance from the City of Marina, a 108unit University Villages project by South County Housing was completed and opened in early 2015. The project is part of Phase I of the Dunes Development. This project was financed primarily with Low Income Housing Tax Credit and HOME funds administered by the State Department of Housing and Community Development.
2. In late 2014 Interim Inc. opened Rockrose Gardens, a 21unit project for the low income and very low-income single adults with serious mental issues who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The primary funding sources for this project were HUD Section 811, Mental Health Services Act, State HOME program, and Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The City of Marina provided CDBG Funds working with the HOME program for this project.

3. The City of Marina is currently working with the Veteran's Transition Center (VTC) on a proposed 73unit permanent housing project for the Extremely Low and Very-Low Income homeless and disabled veterans both single and with families. The City is working with the VTC on acquiring funding and mitigating impacts on the proposed site in Marina.
4. In May 2016 the City of Marina certified its Housing Element and will be completing the Housing Element update process in 2017. Specific programs identified encourage the development of adequate housing for the City's special needs groups including single parent and homeless.

The City of Marina continues to be proactive and a leading city in providing affordable housing for the broad spectrum of housing needs from workforce housing to the homeless. It is important that other peninsula cities share not only financially in addressing affordable housing needs, but also physically in developing and building these sites in their cities. It is also important to note, that the number of units that can be built for affordable housing in the future may be limited due to lack of water. Developing a water supply that meets current housing as well as future housing demands without overdrafting the water aquifers within the City of Marina boundaries is critical.

Finding 5: There are insufficient resources to house the homeless, evidenced by the increasing number of encampments and people living in the street.

Response: The City Council agrees with the finding that there are insufficient resources to house the homeless. There are hundreds of blighted, dilapidated former Army homes on the former Fort Ord properties in Marina. These homes are hazardous (full of lead and asbestos) and are structurally falling apart. The cost to property remove this housing is in the tens of millions of dollars, which the City of Marina does not currently have the resources to fund.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of homeless individuals and encampments routinely occupy these homes and the vacant properties surrounding these homes. These are not safe conditions for the homeless and those that occupy these properties which are posted "no trespassing" areas are putting themselves in danger. The City of Marina does not have the resources to patrol these areas regularly.

Finding 6: The cities of Monterey, Salinas and Marina and Monterey County have identified property owned by them that could be used for low cost and transitional housing, but it is currently not being utilized.

Response: The City Council agrees with the finding. The City has various sites identified for low cost housing and is currently working towards developing plans for these sites. An area known as Cypress Knolls consists of 165 acre which is currently owned by the City and entitled for a 712 unit senior development. This is located between Patton Parkway and Imjin Road between California Avenue and Highway 1.

The City has a Development Agreement with Marina Community Partners (MCP) consisting of Phases I, II, and III. Phase I of this property has already been taken down by MCP and is under construction. Phase II and III are still owned by the City, however, as part of the Development Agreement, will be eventually purchased by MCP.

Finding 7: Safe overnight parking for homeless women is scarce in Monterey County.

Response: The City Council agrees with the finding. Due to lack of resources, safety, and sanitation issues, the city currently does not have any adopted programs or policies that provide for overnight parking in vehicles.

Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Monterey County and cities within it, shall include more very low cost housing in their action and development plans, beginning with their 2017 plans.

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented. In 2016 the City certified its new Housing Element which identifies programs and development plans for affordable housing. This plan includes policies that support housing priorities for special needs groups and those in need of emergency shelter.

The City has Development Agreements with Marina Community Partners and which provide for low cost affordable housing in their current phase under construction and also in future phases II and III.

The City also has a Development Agreement with Cypress Marina Heights which has recently begun construction of a new 1,050unit development in 2016. This Development Agreement includes requirements for additional low and very-low cost housing.

City also has included very low cost housing in the entitlements approved for the land area known as Cypress Knolls.

The City also has a Below Market Rate Housing Program adopted in 2008 which provides a framework for very low cost housing with current and future development plans.

Recommendation 5: Monterey County and cities within it shall cooperate with non-profits on proposals for alternative temporary shelters for the homeless.

Response. This recommendation has been implemented. In 2014 the City provided funding and land and assisted Interim Inc. in the construction of a 21unit development for low income and very low-income single adults with serious mental issues who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The City has been working with CHISPA for several years now in trying to partner and put together a 47unit senior assisted living project.


Recommendation 6: Monterey County and cities within it shall identify which of their owned property could be utilized for very low cost and transitional housing by June 2017.

Response: As discussed in previous responses, the City has already done this. Cypress Knolls and the Dunes Development have already been identified for potential very low cost and transitional housing.

Recommendation 7: Monterey County and cities within it shall increase permits for safe overnight parking for homeless women living in their vehicles by June 2017.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented. While the City has concern for those who park in vehicles overnight, the City does not have the resources to provide a program for overnight parking. Providing safety and sanitation is important to establishing a program such as this. The City's stretched resources are allocated to addressing the homeless individuals and encampments in the already existing blighted homes and vacant land around these areas.

Respectfully submitted,


Bruce Delgado, Mayor
City of Marina