



August 7, 2023

The Honorable Michael Bowman
Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: City of Rancho Cordova Response to the Sacramento County Grand Jury Report on Homelessness

Dear Judge Bowman,

There are an estimated 10,000 people experiencing homelessness in the Sacramento region. According to the 2022 Sacramento Steps Forward Point In Time Count, about 160 live in the City of Rancho Cordova, down from about 300 in the 2019 count.

The city has a robust strategy, as well as resources in place, to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our community. We believe in a service-first approach, which means working with homeless individuals and families who are actively seeking help and support. We also believe in accountability, which means holding everyone accountable for their actions, building rapport, educating businesses and residents, and quickly responding to calls for service. Our outreach programs include the Homeless Outreach Team and a Homeless Navigator to connect homeless individuals with services and resources; and a commitment of an estimated \$1.6 million annually to address homelessness.

The Homeless Outreach Team or HOT builds relationships with homeless individuals and families to assist them in finding services, education and resources to help them become self-sufficient with the ultimate goal of locating permanent housing. The focus of this team is on connecting homeless individuals and families with food and basic necessities, key documents, transportation, job opportunities, treatment, and both temporary shelter and permanent housing. Another major component involves managing encampments and the maintaining public spaces as safe and sanitary. This team directs the cleanup of trash, hazardous waste and shopping cart retrieval. On the accountability side, it is imperative to maintain public safety. Therefore this team includes Rancho Cordova Police Department (RCPD) officers who can work routinely with our known homeless residents, build relationships, and work fairly with them on an individual level to protect residents and property. Importantly, this team also works collaboratively with regional partners and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in order to coordinate the services

provided to homeless households across nonprofits and county agencies, improve data quality, and reduce duplication of efforts.

In addition to the Homeless Outreach Team, in 2021, RCPD and Sacramento County partnered to launch a Mobile Crisis Support Team. The team, comprised of an RCPD officer trained in Crisis Intervention and a County Licensed Mental Health Clinician, responds to emergency calls to support residents experiencing mental health crises. In addition, the team has a County-contracted Peer Navigator who follows up with individuals with potential mental health needs to ensure they are offered support in navigating care systems and linked to appropriate services.

Recognizing a need for greater investment into our homeless programs and services, in 2022 the City Council approved nearly \$600,000 in enhancements to the Homeless Outreach Team. This increase is better serving homeless individuals and families, residents, and businesses in the city with additional focus on securing necessary interim housing and permanent housing. Additional staffing has been provided to increase response times and efficiency, provide case management to more homeless clients, and increase cart and debris removal and a new Crisis Intervention Team for mental health cases has been launched. Increased housing services include additional access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation opportunities, additional hotel vouchers and food assistance, and funding for Rancho Cordova's first dedicated transitional house for homeless families.

The city has also taken a bold step in creating permanent housing. Over a decade ago, we had a vision for providing a home for our homeless veterans. Today, we have the Mather Veterans Village. This lifechanging facility includes permanent supportive and transitional housing for 150 homeless and disabled veterans and their families and leverages the proximity to the nearby Veterans Administration Northern California Medical Center.

One bright spot in the 2022 Point in Time Count report data was that the number of homeless veterans decreased between 2019 and 2022, from 667 down to 625. There is strong regional momentum to continue this downward trend for veterans to reach a functional end for veterans homelessness. The city, in partnership with Sacramento County, is now continuing on its commitment to ending veterans homelessness in our region by working on an additional fourth phase to the Mather Veterans Village at the same location. The goal of this fourth phase will be to provide an affordable long-term home for senior veterans coming out of homelessness. A high level of care and support will be provided to residents to help them overcome the trauma experienced while homeless. Surrounded by a community of other veterans who have gone through similar lived experiences will contribute to the healing atmosphere.

Rancho Cordova has also been a major participant and contributor to the regional conversations and activities around homelessness through Sacramento Steps Forward

(SSF) and the Sacramento Homeless Policy Council. City staff are involved with SSF and sit on the Continuum of Care (CoC) Advisory Board and several committees. The city's participation has contributed to a \$10 million annual increase in federal CoC program funding to the Sacramento region since 2017. The CoC program funds new and existing permanent housing projects providing access to supportive services and annually helping thousands of homeless Sacramento households achieve long-term housing stability.

Through CoC committee work with SSF, the City of Rancho Cordova has spearheaded the development of the region's HUD-mandated Gaps Analysis. The Gaps Analysis is a comprehensive review of our community's resources available to address homelessness and identifies opportunities to create a more efficient, effective, and equitable system of care. The findings from this analysis have contributed to the recent emphasis on creating the regional Coordinated Access System (CAS) which is aimed at ensuring people needing services have streamlined and clear paths to access the right help. CAS will act as a regionally centralized front door to homeless services including referrals to overnight shelter, homeless diversion funding to prevent households from becoming homeless, and logistical services to help homeless clients overcome transportation barriers.

Rancho Cordova also holds a seat on the regionally-focused Sacramento Homeless Policy Council convened by SSF and is active and supportive of this group's goal to develop shared policy direction on solutions to address homelessness and champion integrated approaches.

The City of Rancho Cordova is dedicated to making Rancho Cordova the safest community it can be. We are committed to increasing public safety and addressing homelessness, as well as partnering with our community to keep it safe, and we have seen significant positive impacts from our work. In 2021, the team housed 63 homeless individuals and families and provided over 2,600 services, such as basic necessities, transportation, documents, and treatment. The team is currently assisting over 100 homeless individuals and families. In 2021, the Mobile Crisis Support Team responded to 374 calls for service, providing services such as welfare checks, mental health evaluations, meetings with residents, and more. And through our regular cleanup services and response to health and safety issues, in 2021 the city removed 100,000+ pounds of debris and retrieved 600+ shopping carts.

In efforts related to homelessness, the city has invested in multiple other affordable housing and shelter projects. The Crossings at New Rancho has been open since 2012 and provides affordable housing to low-income families. The Sunrise Crossings at St. Anton and Crossings at New Woodberry, projects totaling over 100 new units of affordable rental housing, are under construction and coming soon. Through the city's annual Community Enhancement and Investment Fund, the city provides funding to the Rancho

Cordova Homeless Assistance Resource Team (RC HART) to support its annual overnight Winter Shelter for up to 30 homeless adults during the winter months and the Rancho Cordova Food Locker who provides emergency food supplies to homeless residents.

While homelessness remains a major regional issue the City of Rancho Cordova is proud of the efforts we have taken to care for our homeless residents and the partnerships that have been built with local and regional organizations to increase the quantity and effectiveness of services for the homeless. We appreciate the focused concern on this issue, and will continue to do our part with efforts to improve services and increase permanent housing options for our unhoused population in Rancho Cordova.

Sincerely,



On behalf of the City Council of the City of Rancho Cordova
Micah Runner
City Manager, City of Rancho Cordova

Cc: Ms. Erendira Tapia-Bouthillier
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