



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, April 27, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER VIDES

SUBJECT: HOUSING FOR A HEALTHY SANTA CRUZ: A STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN SANTA
CRUZ COUNTY

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

In 2019, California had the fourth highest rate of homelessness per 10,000 residents in the United States. Within California, Santa Cruz County has one of the highest rates of homelessness at 79.3 per 10,000 residents.

The most recent annual Homeless Point-in-Time Count, conducted in January 2019, found 2,167 people experiencing homelessness on a single night, which represented 1,440 distinct households. About three-fourths of those households were housed within the County prior to becoming homeless.

To address this social crisis, Santa Cruz County agencies and municipalities within it are working together to establish a framework that provides access to housing for those living unsheltered in our region.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 1) Accept and file the final version of the Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz: A Strategic Framework for Addressing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County to guide the work of the City of Watsonville alongside the County of Santa Cruz through December 31, 2023.

DISCUSSION:

The document was presented to the Board of Supervisors in draft form on November 10, 2020. The community was later engaged by the County Administrator's office (CAO) and the Human Services Department (HSD) to gather final feedback on the document. The final version which provides a strategic framework for future investments and work to address homelessness within the County was adopted by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on their 3/9/2021 meeting.

Implementation of the Strategic Framework establishes a clear foundation for collaborative action to address the problem of homelessness within the County. It establishes benchmarks

for system capacity and performance that can be tracked and reported on over time. The Framework sets a target for a 25% point-in-time reduction in the overall population of people experiencing homelessness by January 2024. It also calls for a 50% reduction among unsheltered homeless persons within the same timeframe.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The recommended action is consistent with the City's policies and goals of the City's strategic plan to work with the County of Santa Cruz and community partners to develop strategies to improve the lives of individuals who are homeless.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to the City of Watsonville in accepting and filing the Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz County framework for addressing homelessness. The City will continue to participate and collaborate with County agencies to implement regional solutions to homelessness. At times when financial resources are identified and needed, staff will bring those items for Council consideration and proper funding allocation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The City Council may choose not to accept the final version of the Strategic Framework.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

1. Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz – A Strategic Framework for Addressing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County