



DATE: February 26, 2019

TO: Members of the City Council

FROM: Council Homeless Subcommittee
(Mayor Arapostathis and Councilmember Parent)

SUBJECT: Creation of Citizen Committee on Homelessness

The Council Homeless Subcommittee met on February 12, 2019, to discuss La Mesa's response to homelessness. As of the 2018 Point In Time Count, La Mesa's homeless count was 41 individuals.

The La Mesa police department is the primary responder in La Mesa for calls for service related to homeless issues. Police officers work with licensed clinicians from the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency to form homeless outreach teams (HOT) and psychiatric emergency response teams (PERT) in an effort to assist the homeless and mentally ill. Recently, La Mesa Police Department was able to negotiate an increase in the amount of hours that the PERT teams spend in La Mesa from 40 to 60 hours per week. La Mesa is a member of the San Diego Regional Task Force of the Homeless which serves as the Continuum of Care for San Diego. La Mesa staff participates on the public safety and steering committees of the East County Homeless Task Force.

On November 13, 2018, La Mesa City Council approved a resolution which allows for community based organizations to apply for the recently released Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funds. As a result of potential funding, the east county cities of El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove and Santee have been meeting in an effort to regionally coordinate homeless response. With the recently released HEAP call for grant funds, the recommended regional approach for funding is as follows: 1) support the application of funds for a housing navigator, 2 housing locators, 2 outreach personnel and a van; 2) funding for rental deposits, rental subsidies, and assistance with short term living expenses; and 3) support a family reunification program.

The Council Homeless Subcommittee recommends that the City of La Mesa create an Ad Hoc Citizen Committee on Homelessness made up of 5-7 community members. The City Clerk would announce a call for applications which would then be brought to the City Council for consideration similar to a board or commission recruitment process. The scope of the work for the Citizen Committee on Homelessness could be to come up with recommendations of what La Mesa should do with respect to homelessness as well what others agencies should be doing with respect to homelessness.