

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: May 21, 2012

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Albany Homeless Task Force

REPORT BY: Penelope Leach, Assistant City Manager/Community Services Director
Isabelle Leduc, Senior Services Supervisor
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the formation of a Albany Homeless Task Force and scope of work per the attached Work Plan.

BACKGROUND

For many years the City has been faced with the multifaceted issues regarding homelessness in Albany. Concerns have risen over the past several months regarding the homeless population particularly those living at the Bulb. The Bulb is the area of land, owned by the City, located a half a mile into the Bay at the end of Buchanan Street. It is connected to the rest of the waterfront by a narrow spit of land called the Neck. Homeless encampments are nestled throughout the Bulb where as many as 75 people now live. It should be noted that the publicly owned portion of the Albany waterfront, including the Bulb, has been designated to be part of the Eastshore State Park, but has not been accepted as part of the state park for reasons related to State and regional funding for operations and maintenance as well as the Bulb's current conditions.

Staff is recommending an Albany Homeless Task Force be formed to assist staff through research and community outreach which will help develop policy options for the Council, and that will lay the ground work for making decisions and allocating resources towards ending homelessness in Albany.

DISCUSSION

There has been a rise in the number of persons camping on the Bulb, and also a more noticeable presence of panhandling, recycling pilfering, and shopping cart collections in other parts of the city. Community reaction has been mixed, ranging from "let it be" or "it is a solution not a problem;" to "something needs to be done"; the "something needs to be done" ranges from finding ways to have people "move along" to other locations, improving the conditions to assist them in staying, or investing in human/social services and housing resources. Human/social services in Albany are offered through agencies and organizations other than the city; these include City of Berkeley, Alameda County, faith-based organizations, and non-profits.

Given the complexities associated with homeless issues as well as the complexities in working through the systems, programs, and services already in place with nearby agencies, staff is recommending that the City form a task force to assist staff and Council in research and recommendations for policies pertaining to homeless in Albany. Staff is also recommending that due to these complexities that the task force not “reinvent the wheel.” Homelessness is a nationwide issue for which Federal, State, and County agencies have developed programs. Staff is recommending that the task force use Alameda County’s EveryOne Home program as the foundation for setting policies. The EveryOne Home program is a road map for ending homelessness in Alameda County by the year 2020. A draft work plan that includes a scope of work for the task force as well as a summarized description of the EveryOne Home program is attached.

Staff is recommending the Task Force have a maximum of nine members: up to two active representatives from the Social and Economic Justice Commission; up to two active representatives from the Waterfront Committee; and five additional members consisting of one chosen by each Council member.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The goal for the Albany Homeless Task Force is to recommend options to Council that will lay the ground work for ending homelessness in Albany.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact for forming the Albany Homeless Task Force.

Attachments

Draft Albany Homeless Task Force Work Plan