



City of Albany
MEETING OF THE HOMELESS TASK FORCE
Thursday, April 18, 2013 – 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Albany Senior Center – 846 Masonic Avenue –South Room

Meeting Outline

	ITEMS	TIME
1.	Adoption of March 21, 2013 Meeting Notes	7:00 – 7:05 PM
2.	Staff Updates: Needs Assessment	7:05 – 7:10 PM
3.	Review and finalize Homeless Task Force Options for presentation to City Council May 6	7:10 – 8:05 PM
4.	Report on MHSA Advisory Committee – Member Thrush	8:05 – 8:20 PM
5.	Homeless Bill of Rights - Member Johns	8:20 – 8:40 PM
6.	Recurring item: Research on program that serve people who are homeless	8:40 – 8:50 PM
7.	Items for future Agenda	8:50 – 8:55 PM
8.	Adjournment	9:00 PM

Attachments:

- a) Draft Options for discussion (final to be presented to City Council May 6)
- b) March Meeting Notes

Next regular meeting: Thursday, May 16, 2013, 7:00 PM – at the Senior Center



DRAFT

**City of Albany
Homeless Task Force
Thursday, March 21, 2013 – 7:00 pm
Albany Senior Center, 846 Masonic Avenue – South Room**

Meeting Notes

Members present: April Anthony, Ruth Cashmere, Barbara Chambers, Brian Johns, Lisa Kleinbub, Paul O’Curry, Sharon Pipkin, Steve Thrush and Julie Ann Winkelstein.

Member absent: Gordon McCarter

Staff present: Jeff Bond, Ann Chaney and Isabelle Leduc

1. Adoption of February 21, 2013 Meeting Notes

Motion: Motion was made by Member Pipkin and seconded by Member Thrush to accept the February 21, 2013 meeting notes. Motion carried all in favor.

2. Staff Update

- Staff Leduc reported on the visit to the Bulb by the Alameda County Healthcare for the Homeless Program March 14.

3. Presentation on EveryOne Home – Kathie Barkow

- Kathie Barkow provided historical information that led to the Housing First Model.
- The Housing First Model commits to solving homelessness with permanent housing and providing the level and length of rental subsidy needed and supportive services once housed that ensure that people can maintain housing and improve their lives.
- Examples of Housing First/Direct Access to housing programs in Alameda County include Square One in Berkeley, Oakland Path to Rehousing Initiative (OPRI), Full Service Partnerships County-wide and AC Impact which serves the cities of Oakland, Fremont, Hayward and Livermore.

4. Presentation on Needs Assessment – Alex McElree, Executive Director, Operation Dignity, Inc.

- Operation Dignity, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides homeless Veterans, families and people who are homeless with housing and comprehensive support services.
- Services include mobile outreach on the streets, drop in services and referrals, housing assessment and counseling, case planning and management, advocacy, health services and education, transportation assistance, transitional and permanent housing.
- The action plan for the proposed needs assessment would include beginning and maintaining engagement with target population while distributing food, water, coffee, blankets, socks and tents.
- Administer a short needs assessment to determine factors that will affect next steps in housing procedures.
- Time allocation is 90 days
- Cost: \$30,000

5. Review of Options to End Homelessness in Albany

- With the presentation of options to Council fast approaching, staff recommended a special meeting of the Homeless Task Force on April 3, 2013 at 7:00 PM to go over the options.
- All Members of the Task Force said that they could make the meeting
- Staff suggested that until the special meeting, Members go over the current list of options distributed at the meeting and send to staff any comments/modifications.

6. Report from Homeless Bill of Rights.

- Member Johns provided a brief overview of his research and it was suggested that more time be spent on this item at a future meeting.
- Member Johns mentioned that time and effort should be spent on harm reduction methods such as sanitation, water, garbage disposals, advocacy

7. Report on MHSA Advisory Committee – Member Thrush

- Due to lack of time the item was tabled until the next meeting.

8. Recurring item: Research on program that serve people who are homeless

- Due to lack of time the item was tabled until the next meeting.

9. Items for the Next Agenda

- MHPA report
- Homeless Bill of Rights
- Options to End Homelessness in Albany

10. Adjournment: 9:25 PM

**Homeless Task Force
 Options for Ending Homelessness in Albany**

1. Alternatives that Rely on Existing Policies and Programs

1.A. Housing First Model

Description: Places persons who are homeless directly into permanent, stable housing, rather than in a transitional living environment. Permanent housing could include unit(s) in a privately-owned apartment building, subsidized apartment, etc., located throughout the County, including Albany (i.e. scattered sites). Case management often accompanies this model.

Service needs/overall goal:

- Assist persons in finding safe and sanitary living options
- Provide housing subsidies/vouchers
- Provide case management, which helps link persons to supportive services, such as housing, primary/mental health care, education, job training/placement, legal assistance

Background: This model is embraced by Federal, State and County governments, including Alameda County’s *EveryOne Home* program. It provides the level and length of rental subsidy needed, and supportive services once housed, that ensure that people can maintain housing and improve their lives. While no income is required to qualify for housing, those having some level of income experience shorter waiting periods. Studies find that supportive services tend to stabilize lives and prevent a return to homelessness. Pre-conditions for treatment acceptance or compliance are not required.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Be supported by Federal, State and County* governments.	Foster a fear of isolation and loss of autonomy among persons who are homeless when entering a new environment
Provide assistance to the City due to an existing programs and funding opportunities	Require the City to compete with other jurisdictions (or submit grant applications) for federal monies to fund housing costs
Rely on an existing network of organizations already in place; thus would not require “reinventing the wheel”	Require persons who are homeless to provide some level of income (e.g., SSI, Disability, Veterans benefits, wages)

* Alameda County *EveryOne Home* envisions a system of care by 2020 that will ensure all extremely low-income residents have a safe, supportive and permanent place to call home.

May be combined with: All Options

1.B. Enforce the Albany Municipal Code (AMC) with limited support services

Description: Would direct Albany Police to enforce AMC Sections 8-4 and 5-9 prohibiting overnight camping at parks and the waterfront. A timeframe would be set for commencing enforcement. Prior to enforcement, supportive social services and housing resources would be applied to assist those persons interested in locating alternatives.

Service needs/overall goal:

- Assist persons in finding safe and sanitary living options
- Provide case management
- Enforce ‘no overnight camping’ ordinance after offering services
- Restore area for open space use

Background: Overnight camping is prohibited in any Albany park, recreation, open space, waterfront or Albany Hill area per Ordinance Section 8-4.4. Enforcement is occurring at all these locations, except the waterfront area (Albany Bulb). Overnight camping is also inconsistent with various local, regional and state plans and regulations (e.g., McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, Albany’s general plan, Measure C, Regional Water Board), which designate the Albany Bulb as conservation and/or open space.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Reestablish the Bulb as public open space/park land, consistent with McLaughlin ESP, Albany General Plan/Zoning Ordinance, Voices to Vision, Measure C (Voter Initiative)	“Push” persons who are homeless to other parts of Albany or communities
Encourage reuse of public parkland by people of all ages	Not likely improve the quality of life for all persons at the Bulb who are homeless
Allow for environmental clean-up and return to a more natural state	Not achieve the goal of ending homelessness in Albany
Provide services to assist persons in locating alternatives	Raise legal questions as a ‘defense of necessity’ (i.e., no other shelter alternative)
Include efforts to eliminate poor sanitary conditions	

May be combined with: 1.A., 1.C., 2.B.

1.C. Transitional or Permanent Housing in Albany

Description: Identification of a non-profit to own and operate dwelling(s) (e.g., 1 or more) homes/apartments) which allow people to live for six months to two years and receive intensive services, such as job training and placement, substance abuse and mental health counseling, education, etc.

Service needs/overall goal:

- Provide a safe place to live while receiving intensive services
- Provide home/shelter for ____ or few individuals
- Provide intensive supportive services
- Enlist volunteer professionals to support this effort

Background: A home setting would be, operated by a non-profit organization with a supportive staff and/or volunteers and intensive services. Daily interaction/supervision would have the goal of improving the person’s confidence, social interactions, ability to reduce dependencies, etc. A possible scenario for this option might result in the purchase (or lease) of a house in Albany, which is currently vacant or dilapidated. Residents typically pay 30 percent of their income for housing and services.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Provides shelter and services while waiting for permanent housing	In contrast to the Housing First model, this option does not provide a permanent solution to housing
Allows for recovery to begin	Possible resistance from public to house formerly homeless persons in urban neighborhoods

May be combined with: All Options

1.D. Phased Transition

Description: Approach would involve the identification and mitigation of existing camps that pose the significant life safety and environmental risk. The remaining camps would be allowed in designated areas while support services and alternative housing are arranged. Remaining residents must demonstrate good faith efforts to make transition.

Service needs/overall goal:

- Assist persons in finding safe and sanitary living options (permanent or transitional)
- Provide housing subsidies/vouchers for permanent housing
- Provide case management
- Enforce ‘no overnight camping’ ordinance only after offering supportive services
- Restore area for open space use

Background: Per Option 1.B above, overnight camping is prohibited in Albany’s park and open areas. This Option supports enforcement of the City’s ordinance, but recommends it be implemented through a phased approach. This approach would focus on campsite removals by a set of criteria.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Improve safety of residents	Require some encampments to be removed in near term
Mitigate environmental risk to the Bay	Continue to discourage some potential park users due to presence of encampments
Advance Bulb towards implementation of the Eastshore State Park	Over time, would push residents that do not draw on support programs to other areas of the City or to other communities
Phases demand on social services providers	Require criteria on how determinations for campsite removals would be made
	Careful monitoring of campsites required
	Require careful consideration be given to equal protection principles

May be combined with: 1.A., 1.B., 2.B.

1.E. Status Quo (Do Nothing)

Description: Persons who are homeless would continue to live at the Bulb in substandard housing, without running water or adequate sanitary facilities; Albany Police would continue to patrol twice daily without enforcing AMC Sections 8-4 (Parks, Open Space) and 5-9 (Law Enforcement); Albany Fire would continue to respond to 911 calls; City would continue to provide dumpsters, and periodically provide outreach by assembling health, housing, legal professionals to talk with persons about their issues and opportunities.

Service needs goal:

- Assist persons who are interested in locating housing (permanent or transitional)
- Assist where possible in securing housing subsidies/vouchers for permanent housing
- Promote efforts by others to provide case management
- Promote efforts by others to provide primary and mental health care

Background: Homelessness is a nationwide issue and it is not uncommon for persons who are homeless to seek refuge in areas away from the general public. This approach would not necessarily retain status quo as the population could fluctuate.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Not discernibly increase current City costs	Not be consistent with Albany Municipal Codes and their city-wide enforcement
Provide “an” alternative to homelessness	Not be consistent with McLaughlin ESP, Albany General Plan/Zoning Ordinance, Voices to Vision, and Measure C (Voter Initiative), which designate the Bulb as “open space”, not “residential”
Continue to allow persons at the Bulb to have a sense of community, which they believe has been created	Not eliminate substandard environmental, sanitary and housing conditions
Support current policy of tolerance	Continue to discourage some public users due to the presence of large dogs, existing aesthetic and environmental conditions
Continue providing mobile health services and trash services	Result in an immediate evacuation without benefit of positive alternatives, if an emergency occurred (e.g., epidemic)
	Fail to conform to Albany’s water quality obligations

May be combined with: _____

2. Alternatives that Rely on New City Policies/Program

2.A. Dignity Village Model

Description: Assemble/Create a “village/campground” of temporary accommodations, such as tents or semi-permanent structures, to provide transitional housing to persons who are homeless. The location in Albany, its size, and number of persons to be served, has not been determined.

Service needs goal:

- Portable toilet(s) and shower(s)
- Medical services - evaluations/treatment, rehabilitation for substance abuse
- Housing assistance to transition to safe, affordable housing
- Job training/placement
- Legal

Background: Portland, Oregon’s Dignity Village provides temporary, semi-permanent structures for about 60 persons. The Village is a nonprofit entity located on 1+ acres of city-owned land next to the city’s composting yard. The contract between the City and the Village states that the Village is responsible for managing and maintaining the campground, establishing and enforcing rules, not allowing more than 60 residents at any one time, assisting residents to transition to safe, affordable housing, submitting quarterly reports to the city manager, cooperating with police, etc. Facilities include a central gathering/meeting place with electricity and heat from a wood stove, access to telephones, computer and internet, temporary showers, and portable toilets. The Village is a self-governing community, with an elected Board of Directors.

Albany’s model would capture some or all of the Dignity Village concepts, and provide temporary accommodations in semi-permanent structures for a set number of persons (to be determined).

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Help stabilize and prepare individuals to enter permanent housing	Prolong persons living in substandard housing conditions
Provide autonomy and dignity	Result in resistance from general public
Result in a contract between property owner (Albany) and residents, with specific conditions and renewal clause	Be costly, if at the Bulb, due to its remoteness: potable waterline extension and/or water tank; site drainage; portable restroom and shower*
Provide certain level of shelter with no income	Be in conflict with various regulatory

requirements	requirements, McLaughlin ESP Plan, Albany General Plan/Zoning, Voices to Vision, etc. Require Measure C vote if located at the Bulb
Require self-governing/rules; maintenance and management by residents	Continue to be inconvenient for access to services/food and water/basic needs
Foster teaching one another	Require residents, who tend to be intensively independent and sometimes reclusive, to work together to maintain/manage/ensure safety/comply with rules
Create a supportive community	Fail to conform to Albany's water quality obligations, if at the Bulb
Be preferred by persons who are homeless due to a sense of independence and commonality	

* Portland's Village provided electricity to common buildings.

May be combined with: 1.C., 2.B.

2.B. Drop in Day Service Center in Albany

Description: A daytime center that serves low-income or no-income persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Services to be provided may include case management, housing placement assistance, legal assistance, primary health and mental health referral services, a food pantry and clothing dispensary. Facilities could include restrooms, showers, laundry, and storage lockers.

Service needs goal:

- Physical location for services and service providers (e.g., storefront, office space)
- Staffing (professional service providers/volunteers)
- Phones, computers, work areas
- Restrooms, showers, storage lockers (possible laundry)

Background: Most supportive services for persons who are homeless, or facing homelessness, are located in the cities of Berkeley and Oakland. While AC Transit provides direct bus access to these communities, the distances and time are such that an entire day may be needed to deal with one or two service agencies. If multiple return trips are needed, it can cause frustration, and ultimately cause an individual to abandon efforts to receive services. A drop-in service center is one way of bringing assistance closer to those who need it. An existing City facility could be used but might displace other activities.

PROS	CONS
This Option would/could:	This Option would/could:
Provides easier access to services that address basic needs of homeless persons in Albany	Possible resistance from public
Shift focus from law enforcement to social service agencies	Cause some people to believe this option could result in prolonging a person’s homeless situation

May be combined with: All Options.

Footnotes:

- 1 The term ‘public’ or ‘Albany residents’ shall refer to residents who are housed.
- 2 All options, which include abandonment of sites, will involve clean-up activities and sustained enforcement by the City.

Short-term efforts at Ending Homelessness in Albany

Healthcare

- Provide general health services (in close proximity to Albany's homeless)¹
- Provide dental/vision care (reach out to local dentists/optometrists for free care)
- Provide transportation to next regional Remote Area Medical (RAM) event
- Cooperate with City of Berkeley for Mental Health Services²

Transportation

- Provide transport to housing, health care, etc. services in Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond (e.g., non-profit/private persons/informal transport; city-sponsored transport)³

Housing

- Provide permanent housing by working with Alameda County EveryOne Home program⁴
- Provide transitional housing

Facility(ies)

Provide:

- Drop-in center in Albany
- Provide center with case management staff who help place persons in transitional or permanent housing (county-wide), and foster self-sufficiency (e.g. Ritter House, San Rafael)
- Toilet (porta potty) at Bulb
- Dumpster at Bulb⁵
- Showers and laundry

¹ Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless proj. (mobile medical clinic visits Waterfront about once/month)

² Albany now has members on Berkeley Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Advisory Committee. Albany staff is reviewing recently released MHSA FY12-13 Plan update, including proposed new program "New Adult Homeless Outreach Program" that could provide all encompassing services in Berkeley and Albany (e.g., outreach, referrals, education, crisis intervention, short term counseling for women, elderly, and TAY, adults and older adults living on the street or in "area homeless encampments").

³ Berkeley Community Health Clinic; Berkeley Food and Housing Project; RotaCare Richmond (free medical clinic); Homeless Action Center; Social Security offices; food pantries; etc.

⁴ EveryOne Home representative spoke to Homeless Task Force; city staff in communication with EveryOne Home staff to explore Albany's options.

⁵ Albany, in cooperation with Waste Management, providing dumpster services at least once every two months.

Funding/in-kind services

- Identify current available funding sources for housing, social services, health, education, jobs, job skills
- Develop long term plan for funding housing/supportive services: private, federal, county, local, etc.
- Create Albany non-profit for community involvement/funding - "Albany Cares"/seek public contributions
- Advocate for increased cooperation with Alameda County
- Seek cooperation/involvement with UC Berkeley and corporate world

Education

- Conduct census of homeless city wide
- Research model programs; what other cities/counties/non-profits have done
- Seek to inform community perception about homelessness (e.g. from fear and misunderstanding to understanding)
- Create Community Resource Guide for health, housing, etc. services

Legal/Legislative

- Create judicial advocacy program to deal with legal issues
- Advocate for safe return for people coming out of prison/re-entry program
- Research/advocate "out of the law enforcement cycle" approach
- Support AB-5: Homeless Bill of Rights (sponsored by Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco))

Programs

- Link homeless persons with job/employment opportunities, job placement
- Create "Buddy" system; mentoring to assist individuals
- Promote community service in exchange for services (e.g., transportation, health)
- Support comprehensive and effective harm reduction drug and alcohol programs
- Foster self-sufficiency through stabilized housing with casework services (e.g., Ritter Center in San Rafael using housing located county-wide)
- Support Dial 2-1-1 (information/referral)⁶
- Create "Wet" houses (e.g., Seattle residence for homeless chronic alcoholics)

Environmental

- Mitigate the environmental impacts of at Bulb⁷

⁶ Albany contributes \$5,000/year from CDBG funds toward Dial 2-1-1.

⁷ Persons at the Bulb are using WM dumpsters to clean-up abandoned and personal campsites.

Draft

Excerpted from input from
Albany's Homeless Task Force (rev. 4/1/13)

- Preserving the environment at the Bulb