



Program Planning, Management, and Budget Division
Housing Department

MEMORANDUM

October 6, 2005

To: Housing Advisory Commission

From: Jane Micallef, Homeless Policy Coordinator
By: Tim Stroshane, Senior Planner

Subject: Public Review of the Alameda County-wide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a recommendation that the City Council approve the Alameda County-wide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan.

SUMMARY

The draft Alameda County-wide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan is a coordinated and collaborative effort by Alameda County and the cities of Berkeley and Oakland to anticipate and address the need for updated plans in response to federal initiatives to end chronic homelessness, to the need to update aging homeless continuum of care plans, and to address continuing needs in the community to address the housing needs of those with serious mental health issues and HIV/AIDS.

NEED FOR THE PLAN

The City of Berkeley, the City of Oakland, and three Alameda County agencies (addressing housing, mental health, and AIDS programs) have released a public review draft of their Alameda County-wide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan. This plan—referred to as the “Multi-Plan”—represents a year-long effort to address four key planning needs:

- ❑ The need to update local homeless continuum of care plans that were adopted back in the late 1990s by the three jurisdictions.
- ❑ The need for a planned and coordinated response to the federal initiative to end chronic homelessness within 10 years.
- ❑ The need by Alameda County’s Behavioral Health Care Services Agency (BHCS) to plan for the provision of housing for its mental health services clients.
- ❑ The need to plan for services and housing to benefit the large, overlapping populations of people in different systems of care (AIDS services and housing, homeless services and housing, mental health services and housing).

The Multi-Plan was sponsored by the following agencies:

- ❑ Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD);

- ❑ Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency (BHCS);
- ❑ Alameda County Office of AIDS Administration;
- ❑ The City of Berkeley (represented by Housing Department and Mental Health Division staff); and
- ❑ The City of Oakland

A Stakeholder Steering Committee, representing key players in homeless, mental health, AIDS and affordable housing communities throughout Alameda County, assisted the sponsoring agencies with plan preparation and active participation. They began work in June 2004 and completed the draft plan in July 2005, which you now have before you.¹

ISSUES

Overarching issues that affect all three systems of care (Homeless Continuum of Care, Behavioral Health Care, HIV/AIDS Services) that participated in this planning process made planning together for systems change even more important. These issues include:

- ❑ Lack of affordable and accessible housing;
- ❑ The similarities of issues presented by consumers, such as difficulty negotiating excessive red tape, cycling in and out of prisons and other institutions, and the prevalence of co-occurring disorders that are not comprehensively assessed, diagnosed, and treated;
- ❑ Similarities of constraints faced by systems and providers, including budget reductions and eligibility barriers to services and housing;
- ❑ System fragmentation in which there is no one-stop center for coordination of services that would otherwise benefit consumers with special needs, or who are homeless. They are afflicted instead by often duplicative request for information, assessments, and offers of services; or, at the other end of the spectrum, consumers fall through the system's cracks, falling into homelessness and unable to obtain affordable housing to stabilize their lives.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purposes of the plan are to:

- ❑ Identify needed improvements to existing programs.
- ❑ Increase coordination among services that have to date been fragmented and partial in their delivery of services and housing to consumers.
- ❑ Attract additional financial resources to put toward addressing gaps in services contemplated in the Multi-Plan.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The sponsoring agencies and stakeholder committee came up with five policy areas where they recommend specific courses of action: Prevention, Housing, Services, Measuring Success, and Leadership Development.

Prevention Recommendations (page 9 of the Multi-Plan)

- ❑ Ensure that all households at risk of homelessness, including households in affordable or public housing, can find complete information about prevention programs, and can access assistance in time to prevent homelessness.

¹ The full plan is available at <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/housing/specialneeds/Multi-PlanHome.html>.

- ❑ Ensure that no youth becomes homeless when exiting state or local care, including the foster care system and institutional settings (treatment or corrections).
- ❑ Link community-based housing and services with institutions, including hospitals, foster care, and incarceration, so that people do not become homeless when discharged.

Housing Recommendations (page 13 of the Multi-Plan)

- ❑ Using existing resources, increase and sustain the amount of housing for the targeted populations in Alameda County.
- ❑ Work with Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) throughout the county to enhance and increase the availability of subsidized vouchers and units for the target populations.
- ❑ Through advocacy efforts, maintain and increase the resources necessary to develop, operate, and preserve appropriate and affordable housing options for single adults, youth, and families whose incomes are at or below 30 percent of the area median income in Alameda County.
- ❑ Expand and sustain the range of housing models operating in Alameda County to include options ranging from intensely supported to fully independent affordable housing.

Flexible Services Recommendations (page 21 of the Multi-Plan)

- ❑ Expand the availability of needed clinical services that can provide culturally- and age-appropriate care to Alameda County's diverse populations.
- ❑ Ensure coordination and accessibility of services.
- ❑ Prepare consumers for tenancy and support them to maintain their housing over the long term.
- ❑ Ensure that culturally appropriate, long-term services are offered to individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or living with disabilities so that they can retain stable housing over the long-term, increase their independence, and have improved quality of life.

Measures of Success Recommendations (page 27 of the Multi-Plan)

- ❑ Coordinate collection of client data between systems.
- ❑ Track outcomes to measure program and system successes and use information about outcomes to target resources and best practices.

Leadership and Political Will Recommendations (page 29 of the Multi-Plan)

- ❑ In consultation with civic, faith, and community leaders from throughout Alameda county, the sponsoring agencies will create an interim leadership structure that can initiate plan implementation immediately through outreach and engagement with the many partners who are essential to the plan's ultimate success.
- ❑ The Interim Leadership entity, consisting of the sponsoring agencies group and the advisory committee, will establish the Permanent Leadership Structure that is responsible for guiding and financing the plan's implementation.

PROCESS FOR PLAN APPROVAL

The Multi-Plan is being circulated for public review to commissions and city councils of cities throughout Alameda County, and the Board of Supervisors will be asked to review and adopt the plan late in the fall of 2005 or early in the winter of 2006.

In Berkeley, the Multi-Plan has already been provided to the Human Welfare and Community Action Commission for their review. The Multi-Plan will also be provided to the Planning Commission, the Commission on Disability, the Homeless Commission, and the Mental Health Advisory Commission and staff will make a presentation describing the Multi-Plan and its provisions. Other commissions will receive copies of the plan for their review and comment (but no staff presentation), including Peace and Justice, Aging, and the Community Health Commissions.

The Berkeley City Council will be asked to review and adopt the Multi-Plan later in the Fall of 2005.

COMMENTS ON THE PLAN

Commissioners wishing to make comments, or adopt statements of support (or both), are invited to communicate their views directly to Jane Micallef at 510/981-5426, or via email at jmicallef@ci.berkeley.ca.us.

Attachment