

Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Peak and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Susan Duenas, Public Safety Manager

Approved by: Reva Feldman, City Manager 

Date prepared: October 25, 2017 Meeting date: November 13, 2017

Subject: Update on Efforts to Address Issues Related to Homeless Individuals

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive and file report.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

DISCUSSION: Throughout the Los Angeles region, homelessness has increased significantly over the last few years. This year, the County of Los Angeles identified over 50,000 homeless in the Los Angeles region. Malibu is located in the West Los Angeles Service Planning Area. The County identified approximately 5,500 homeless in the West Los Angeles area, including 900 homeless in Santa Monica and over 1,000 homeless in Venice. In Malibu, the County identified 180 homeless, but informal counts estimate the number to be closer to 300. Historically, beach cities have had a high number of homeless. While Malibu's homeless count is not as high as some of our neighboring cities, it is still of great concern. The City is currently addressing issues related to homelessness through a combination of social service outreach and traditional law enforcement to ensure the safety of all Malibu residents.

In September 2016, the Malibu Task Force on Homelessness established a partnership with The People Concern to assist homeless individuals in Malibu. The People Concern is a highly-respected, well-established, professional organization that provides comprehensive, coordinated services to homeless individuals in nearby communities, such as Santa Monica and Pacific Palisades.

To help support the efforts of The People Concern, in Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the City awarded a \$76,000 General Fund Grant Program. The City also awarded a grant of \$1,500 to Malibu's Community Assistance Resource Team to support their efforts to assist homeless individuals.

The People Concern began its work with a two-person, full-time professional outreach team, engaging homeless individuals on the streets, hillsides, and beaches of Malibu, gradually building trusting relationships with the goal of linking them to comprehensive services. The People Concern emphasizes finding permanent housing solutions, especially for the most vulnerable.

In their first year, the outreach workers contacted 185 homeless individuals in Malibu. Sixty-three of these individuals were only encountered once. Most of the individuals who are being encountered on a regular basis are receiving services. As of September 30, 2017, 24 of these individuals are off the streets and 11 have been housed. The rest are in varying stages of accepting services.

Recently, The People Concern and the Venice Family Clinic (VFC) secured private funding to expand services. The Malibu team is now supported by a medical doctor, a psychiatrist, a full-time Housing Locator and full-time Clinical Case Manager. These additional resources are providing much-needed street based mental and medical healthcare, case management and identification of housing opportunities, which allows the outreach team to focus more of their time and efforts doing outreach and engagement on the streets of Malibu as opposed to administrative work.

The City was recently awarded a grant of \$50,000 through the County of Los Angeles Measure H to develop a Homeless Plan. The goal of developing a plan is to improve the effective use of existing resources, identify new strategies and resources, and align with the County's Homeless Initiative. A lot of good work is being done in Malibu, but there is no overarching strategy and common goal to tie actions together. In addition, the City needs to make sure that the work that is being done by one group is not counter-productive to the work of another and all efforts are headed toward a shared goal.

The City has also recently supported two Homeless Connect Days, one that was held in June 2017 and another that will be held on November 29, 2017. This event, which is organized by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's office, provides free one-stop services for homeless individuals to connect with housing assistance, food stamps, Medi-Cal, veterans' benefits, haircuts, care packs, health screenings and legal services.

In addition to the efforts made by The People Concern, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) is also addressing safety issues related to homeless individuals. According to Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff's Station statistics, calls for service over the past few years for issues related to people who are homeless has varied from approximately 30 per month to more than 100 per month, depending on the season. However, the average number of calls is increasing.

Since 2013, arrests, citations, and other appropriate actions that LASD deputies have taken include:

- 400 arrests for being drunk in public
- 200 individuals have been taken to psychiatric care facilities involuntarily
- 100 individuals have gone to psychiatric care facilities voluntarily
- More than 100 arrests for trespassing
- Approximately 250 illegal camping citations
- Numerous citations for other issues including panhandling, urinating in public, fighting, and making criminal threats.

In March 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors authorized funding for the LASD Mental Evaluation Teams (MET). Funding is currently available for 23 teams throughout the County. MET teams pair specially trained LASD deputies with mental health clinicians and respond to calls that require special handling of mentally ill people who are threatening others or being disruptive. The City and the Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff's Station have requested and received regular assistance from the MET services. The hope is that by routing those individuals to psychological services rather than jail, patients will get the treatment they need and improve instead of cycling in and out of the criminal justice system.

Despite these efforts, managing the issues related to homeless individuals remains very challenging partly due to forces outside of the City's direct control. For example, the LASD deputies can only cite or arrest someone if a law has been broken, and even then, the impact is temporary at best. Most laws that homeless people break are low level crimes that result in little to no jail time. There has also been a shift in the courts away from "criminalizing" behavior that may be deemed "involuntary" for a homeless person. In other words, if they are sleeping on a public sidewalk because they do not have a home, it is considered by the court to be "involuntary."

Another challenge is shopping centers, some of which have struggled with a large number of homeless individuals. While shopping centers are private property, they invite the public to visit for business purposes. Anyone can sit on benches or outdoor tables for as long as they like so long as there is no disruptive behavior. When there is disruptive behavior LASD deputies can make an arrest. Recently, some of the local centers have increased their private security and LASD has also increased patrols to address these issues.

Also, when homeless individuals hang out on private property, or areas that are not within the City's jurisdiction, the City is limited in what it can do. There are private properties in Malibu where homeless individuals congregate, or live on, partly because the property owners do little or nothing about it. The City actively works with these property owners to address the issue, but there are limits to what can be done. The Los Angeles County Library is an example of an area that that attracts homeless individuals. The City is in

regular communication with the County to keep the property clean and the City has spent \$130,000 in Library Set Aside Funds to hire a full-time security guard at the Library.

Lastly, there are some very well-meaning groups in the community who are working to assist the homeless community by providing meals, clothing, sleeping bags and tents. While this activity has good intentions, it also has the unintended consequence of attracting more homeless people to Malibu.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. The People Concern Malibu Outreach Team Year End Summary
2. Lost Hills Sheriff's Department Homeless Related Calls for Service

The People Concern Malibu Outreach Team

Year End Summary

09/30/2016 – 09/30/2017

In its first year, The People Concern's Malibu Outreach Team met or exceeded all of its proposed goals. Highlights for the first year include:

Outcomes

- 184 homeless individuals contacted on the streets of Malibu
- 76 homeless individuals with multiple contacts were engaged (level 1) who are now at varying stages of accessing supportive services
- 68 enrolled in ongoing services with housing and goal plans now in place
- 30 linked to additional intensive, street-based (level 2) services from The People Concern's interdisciplinary teams (which include physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, mental health professionals and substance abuse experts)
- 24 moved off of the streets (in either interim or permanent housing)
- 17 vouchers secured for scattered site permanent supportive housing
- 12 are document ready and approved for upcoming vouchers
- 10 holding vouchers and actively looking for apartments at year-end
- 11 permanently housed

Priority List

A priority list was generated at the beginning of the year based on community concern, input from the Sheriff's Department and vulnerability (identified by the Team through field based assessments).

The priority list started with 16 individuals and was reduced to ten by year's end due to housing or relocating six individuals. Of the original 16 individuals on the priority list, four have been permanently housed, two have left Malibu to relocate to Colorado, one has a voucher in hand and is looking for an apartment, three are receiving intensive clinical case management and have been approved for vouchers through the agency's Multi-Interdisciplinary Team (MIT). All ten of the individuals remaining on priority list at the end of the year are considered engaged.

Community Interactions

Overall, the Outreach Team was warmly received by the community of Malibu over the course of the year and has developed an extensive network of community support. A dedicated phone hotline, outreach email and outreach business card was established for the community to facilitate referrals to the Team. Team members were contacted directly on a daily basis from both members of the community and homeless individuals in need. The Team participated in the annual Homeless Count and worked effectively with the MTFH, the Sheriff's Department, Zuma Beach lifeguards, other homeless service providers and community leaders to coordinate efforts and make a significant and positive impact on homelessness in Malibu. The Team also coordinated efforts with the County sponsored Westside Coordinated Entry System (CES) and participated in CES monthly case management meetings to coordinate and efficiently use County resources to target Malibu's hardest to reach individuals. The Team conducted ride-alongs with multiple community stakeholders, including members of the MTFH, the Mayor Pro Tem Rick Mullen, and Public Safety Manager Susan Dueñas, to provide a close-up view of the work the outreach team does. The Malibu Times wrote articles about the Team and its successes in both outreach and securing housing. The People

Concern's Executive Director, John Maceri, along with the Team facilitated a successful "Best Practices" presentation / meeting with key stakeholders engaged in helping homeless individuals in Malibu to encourage better communication, collaboration and a spirit of community teamwork. The Team participated in a holiday donations drive at City Hall that secured an abundance of clothing, food, and other items that was extremely valuable in meeting both homeless individuals' immediate needs, and helping to develop trust and rapport to convince them to work on their long-term needs and goals.

Outreach Team Expansion

As part of our goal to significantly improve the health and housing outcomes of all our homeless clients, The People Concern and Venice Family Clinic (VFC) secured private funding to expand the services offered specifically through The People Concern's Malibu and Pacific Palisades Outreach Teams. The Malibu Team is now supported by a medical doctor (Dr. King), a psychiatrist (Dr. Ryan), a full-time Housing Locator (Jaime Gallardo) and full-time Clinical Case Manager (Janine Vockeroth). These additions to the team are providing much needed street based mental and medical healthcare, case management and housing opportunities, which allows the outreach team to focus even more of their time and efforts doing outreach and engagement on the streets of Malibu.

Next Steps

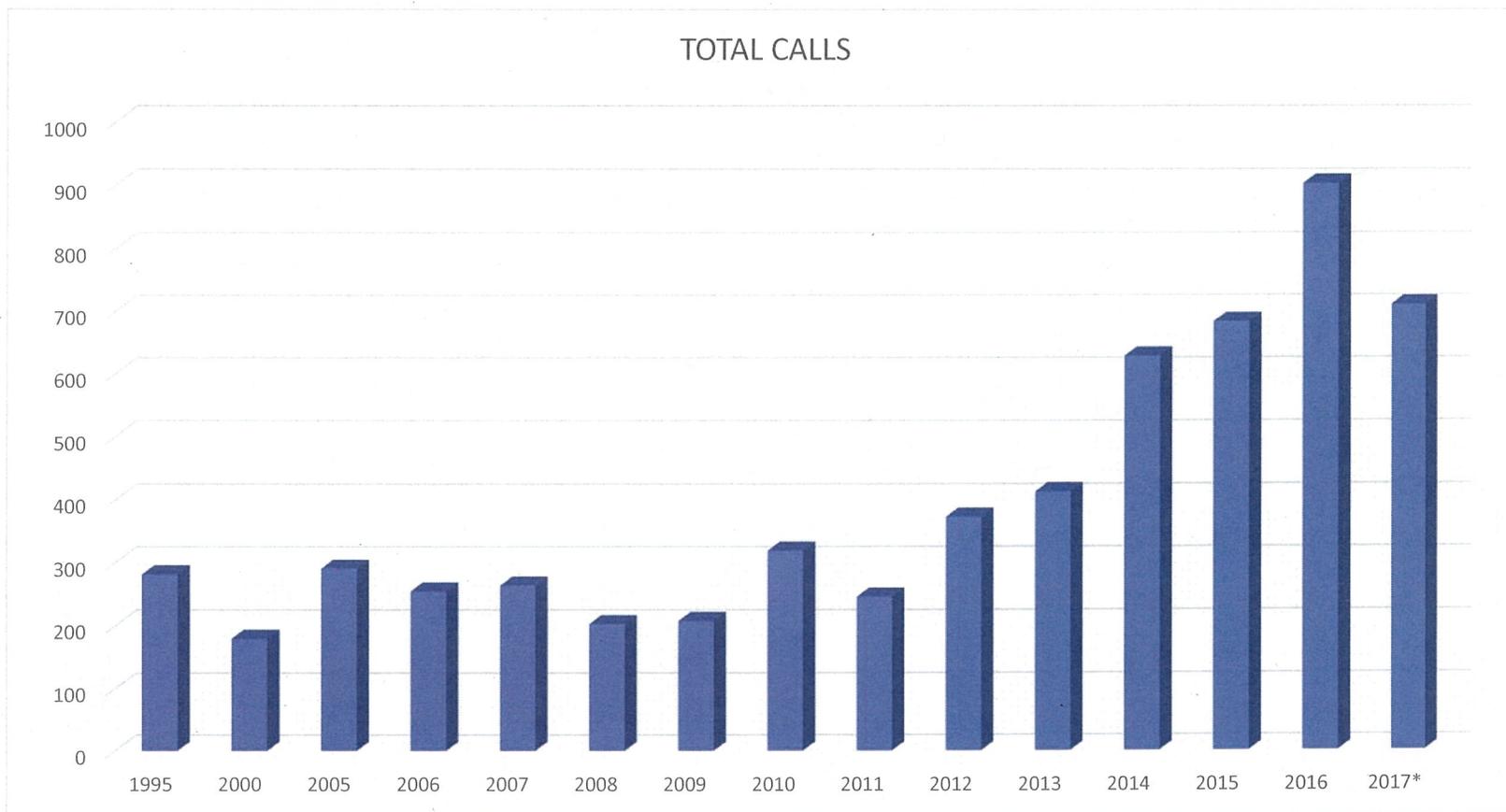
Overall, the Team made a significant and positive impact on the Malibu homeless population over the last year. Currently, there are only 45 individuals who are being contacted on a regular basis that are still not open to services and are considered not engaged. In the year ahead, the Team will seek input from the MTFH and the community to expand the priority list. The Team will work closely with its community partners to coordinate efforts, problem solve and continue to build trust and rapport with those who have been on the streets of the Malibu the longest, still remain on the streets, and continue having a high profile in the community. Specifically, the Team will target hard to reach individuals presenting options for housing and connecting them to intensive, wrap-around services when necessary and as new opportunities present themselves.

The Team also successfully enrolled 68 individuals into ongoing supportive services over the last year. Included in these 68 are 12 individuals who are approved for housing vouchers, and another ten who have vouchers in hand and are currently looking for apartments. The Team will continue to support The People Concern's Housing Department, Multi-Interdisciplinary Teams and new VFC team members to continue moving these individuals forward in achieving their goal of permanent housing.

Currently, the Team is working with the MTFH in coordinating this year's Holiday Drive, which will once again be held at City Hall, as well as with Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's office and other community partners to organize the next Malibu Homeless Connect Day on November 29th.

Malibu/Lost Hills Sheriff's Station

Homeless Related Calls for Service in Malibu



*Year to date