

City of Port Hueneme

"The Friendly City By The Sea"

November 2, 2010

2010-2011 Ventura County Grand Jury
Honorable Robert A. Peskay, Foreman
Honorable Don Cody, Ed.D., Chairman
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED

NOV 4 2010

VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT
*WHERE ARE YOU SLEEPING TONIGHT?***

The Honorable Robert A. Peskay, Foreman
And Honorable Don Cody, Ed.D., Chairman:

Thank you for your October 24, 2010 letter indicating that the City's June 22, 2010, response was acceptable except Recommendation R-03 that "requires further study".

We apologize for the error. A more accurate response, and correction that we would now make, is that the answer to Recommendation R-03 is being changed to indicate that Recommendation R-03 is being implemented as part of the City's annual budgetary process. As mentioned in the June 22, 2010 response, the City is currently being presented with lowered property and sales tax revenues and inadequate funding for various operational areas and must prioritize its services on an annual basis as part of its budgetary process that starts each February and scheduled for adoption each June. Making every effort to ensure that homelessness is reduced within the County by 50% by 2012 is one of a multitude of goals looked at during the budgetary process.

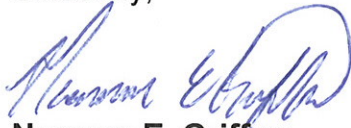
During this fiscal year, some of the homeless services and programs that the City is funding include:

- The West County Winter Warming Shelter,
- The Ventura County Human Services Agency Homeless Services Program,
- The Ventura County RAIN Transportation Project,
- The Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition,
- Turning Point - Our Place Shelter Program,

- Reserving two 2-bedroom housing units on Jane Drive for transitional housing for a local homeless coalition,
- Converting a market rate apartment building to housing affordable to low income persons (four 1-bedroom and one 2-bedroom unit),
- Sponsoring the Ventura County Housing Conference, and
- Developing zoning amendments to address emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, and single room occupancy units in the City.

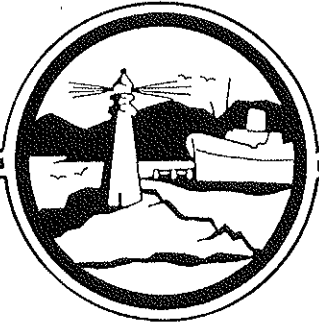
In closing, the City Council has reviewed this response. Should you have any further specific questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Greg Brown, Community Development Director, at (805) 986-6553.

Sincerely,



Norman E. Griffaw
Mayor

c: City Council
City Manager
Community Development Director
Housing and Facilities Maintenance Director



City of Port Hueneme

"The Friendly City By The Sea"

June 22, 2010

Ventura County Grand Jury
Honorable Henry G. Kelley, Foreman
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED

JUN 25 2010

VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

**SUBJECT: 2009-2010 GRAND JURY REPORT
*WHERE ARE YOU SLEEPING TONIGHT?***

Honorable Henry G. Kelley, Foreman
And Honorable Don Cody, Chair:

In accordance with California Penal Code 933.05, the City Council offers the following responses for itself and behalf of the City Manager to the subject Grand Jury Report issued May 20, 2010:

- With regard to the Report's 42 findings, the City Council currently lacks the resources to confirm or dispute the various statements, references, and conclusions. However, we have no reason to believe the Report's findings are incorrect and therefore accept them without further comment.
- With regard to the Report's recommendations, the following responses are offered:

Recommendation R-01: Both public agencies and nonprofit organizations should be adding low-income rental housing. Other entities should be encouraged to do so by governmental agencies.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

Over the past three years since the 2007 Homeless Count, the City and its Redevelopment Agency have produced another 21 units of very-low income rental housing (800-806 Jane Drive, Top Deck Apartments, and "A" Street Apartments). This is in addition to the 96 units of very low and low-income rental units directly administered by the City (Mar Vista, Hueneme Village, and 6 Jane

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Drive rental units), plus 279 tenant-based low-income rental assistance vouchers. The community also has a 90 unit project-based apartment building for low-income households (Casa Pacifica).

Going forward, the City has five low-income rental units due for completion in September 2010 (841 Jane Drive). Nine low-income family-style rental units are expected to commence construction in 2011 (Hideaway Townhomes), and will be owned and administered by the City. Over the next year, the City may consider contributions to the Ventura County Housing Trust Fund that, if enacted, will also help fund the creation of new additional affordable rental housing units.

With regard to encouraging other entities to add low-income rental housing, the City staff has had discussions with several nonprofits to explore the acquisition and conversion/rehabilitation of several non-conforming commercial properties for low-income housing. Current plans include offering a density bonus, relief from development standards, and upwards of \$2 million in redevelopment funding to achieve 28+ new affordable units. A regional nonprofit has indicated it would be pursuing a cooperative sale of one of the non-conforming commercial properties in 2010-11.

Recommendation R-02: The Cities should take a leading role in coordinating services and resources directed at eliminating or minimizing homelessness in their communities through marshaling and motivating volunteers to assist with programs for the homeless.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

The City's Community Development Department in tandem with its Housing Authority now act jointly as the City's local homeless coordinator taking the leading role in marshaling volunteers including law enforcement, employees, and residents to participate in the annual homeless count. In addition, as part of the City's public housing program, non-working family members are assembled monthly to provide community service that can include volunteering to assist with programs for the homeless.

Community Development staff, police volunteers, and faith based organizations also initiate direct contact with homeless individuals and are trained to make appropriate referrals depending on the situation observed (i.e. behavioral health, shelters, adult/child protective services, medical clinics, drug and alcohol, 2-1-1, etc.)

Moreover, the City has established a homeless trust fund of approximately \$800,000 to contribute to the existing network of volunteers and social services for homeless individuals and families. Acting through its Port Hueneme Surplus Property Authority, the City has contracted with a coalition of homeless service

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providers (many of them volunteers), to help fund new or existing programs in the City/County that provide food, housing, and/or support services (Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Interface Children Family Services, and Khepera House). Under this agreement, the coalition is entitled to a minimum payment or credit of \$26,521 per year ("homeless set-aside") for 30 years. Since 1996, the City has been meeting its obligation to the coalition by contributing nearly \$30,000 annually to benefit homeless persons. The City's contributions include the provision of two 2-bedroom dwelling units leased to the coalition for transitional housing plus annual allocations of Community Development Block Grants and Surplus Property Authority funds for services that directly support activities to alleviate homelessness. All of these efforts help to motivate volunteers to assist with programs for the homeless.

Recommendation R-03: The County and the Cities should make every effort to ensure that the original goal of the Strategy, to reduce homelessness within the County by 50% during the first five years (2008-2012), is accomplished.

Response: This recommendation requires further ongoing study.

The Grand Jury's direction that cities should "*make every effort*" to ensure that homelessness is reduced by 50% by 2012 must be balanced with the community's other needs including public safety, infrastructure maintenance, and community health and wellness. The City is currently being presented with operating deficits to its General Fund and must prioritize its services on an annual basis as part of its budgetary process that starts each February with City Council budget adoption scheduled each June. In addition, the recommendation assumes that the existing number of homeless persons will remain at currently identified levels. Given the effects of the ongoing recession, this assumption seems unrealistic. The County and Cities have very little effect on the national and state economy, and it seems the Federal government should expand its role in this area.

Looking back, Port Hueneme and its Redevelopment Agency have expended approximately \$7.2 million on lower income affordable housing programs including homeless services and shelters since the 2007 Homeless count (source: *FY 2007-2011 Redevelopment Implementation Plan Midterm Review*; \$3.8 million on very-low income and \$3.4 million on low-income). In addition to public housing programs, other beneficiaries of this funding included Ventura County RAIN, Ventura County Homeless Services Program, Turning Point, Food Share, Emergency Shelter Program (vouchers), Winter Warming Shelter, Commission on Human Concerns, Interface, Salvation Army, and the VCHHC. Going forward, this level of effort will be seriously challenged by the current ongoing economic recession coupled with state government raids on local revenues.

Recommendation R-04: Cities without a homeless task force, Fillmore, Moorpark, and Port Hueneme, should consider establishing one.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

In conjunction with the Ventura County Homeless and Housing Coalition (VCHHC), a homeless task force was explored for Port Hueneme in late 2008 gearing up for the January 2009 homeless count. City and VCHHC staffs met to discuss ways in which to organize and fund a local task force. In an attempt to educate and interest residents in the 10-Year Strategy, the City placed the Strategy as a link on its web page and highlighted it in the City's electronic newsletter (current circulation of over 800 households). In addition, the City's three citizen-standing committees (Recreation and Fine Arts, Historic, and Aging) were approached with accepting a homeless task force mission.

In short, little public interest was generated and the time and the cost to organize and fund a separate task force is deemed excessive for Port Hueneme given its relatively small number of homeless counted on the streets over the past four years. Specifically, VCHHC's enumeration of homeless persons ranges from 1 to 9 persons in Port Hueneme as follows: Seven adult homeless men and two adult homeless women were reported on the street during the VCHHC's original enumeration conducted on January 23, 2007. One adult homeless man was reported on the street during the VCHHC's second enumeration conducted on January 27, 2009. Five adult homeless men and two adult homeless women were reported on the street plus two other adults vouchered in a motel during the VCHHC's most recent enumeration conducted on January 26, 2010.

Recommendation R-05: Innovative and effective programs developed by Cities and other organizations should be documented and replicated in other areas of the County that lack such programs.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

With regard to documenting and replicating effective programs, the City contributes funding to the Ventura County Housing and Homeless Coalition that performs annual homeless counts, ongoing surveys, technical assistance related to homeless/housing issues, and promoting the 22 recommendations in the 10 Year Strategy to End Homelessness. The Strategy has identified innovative and effective programs across geographic boundaries including establishing a countywide housing trust fund. The vouchering program mentioned in Recommendation R-04 also provides an efficient and effective means of temporarily housing homeless persons using existing organizational and agency resources. Having the VCHHC perform these activities is cost effective and provides credible, countywide data and documentation.

We remain mindful that homeless programs and services that may prove effective at minimizing homelessness in other cities, may not be appropriate or feasible in a smaller community such as Port Hueneme. There may also be different realities between urban versus more rural/agricultural communities.

Recommendation R-06: Cities that have not pursued grant funds, or have been unsuccessful in receiving them, should aggressively seek such funds.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

In partnership with the Santa Paula and Ventura Housing Authorities, the Port Hueneme Housing Authority jointly applied for \$30 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP #2) funds to be used for the purchase and rehabilitation of foreclosed bank-owned residential properties (approximately 65-100 units). The funds were to be used to promote affordable rental housing in the three jurisdictions. The application was unsuccessful.

In connection with the City's participation in the Urban County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the City traditionally seeks and supports allocation of CDBG funds each year for fair housing and homeless service programs. In addition, the City annually obtains a contribution to the West County Winter Shelter from its Surplus Property Authority.

The City continues to seek grants to help fund and operate its own HUD-designated Small-City Housing Authority that serves as a local one-stop resource center where citizens including homeless persons can receive a wide range of information and referrals, legal services, rental assistance, utility assistance, government benefits (Medicaid, food stamps, SSDI, SSI, Veterans benefits, etc.), clothing, and meals.

Recommendation R-07: The County and all Cities should continue to recognize and publicly thank the various nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and other volunteer groups for their ongoing and highly effective support of the homeless population in Ventura County.

Response: This recommendation is being implemented.

The City Council continues to recognize and publicly thank various nonprofit organizations. Recognition is provided via proclamations and speaking at public meetings and events involving homeless and housing issues. Past recognitions included Ventura County RAIN, Ventura County Homeless Services Program, Turning Point, Food Share, PSSA Homeless Services, Port Hueneme Volunteer Chaplains, United Way of Ventura County, and the VCHHC.

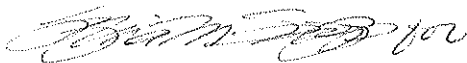
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In closing, should the Grand Jury have any specific questions regarding this response letter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Greg Brown, Community Development Director, at (805) 986-6553.

Sincerely,



Norman E. Griffaw

Mayor

c: City Council
City Manager
Community Development Director
Housing and Facilities Maintenance Director

Honorable Kevin J. McGee
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
Ventura County
P.O. Box 6489
Ventura, CA 93006