

# The Mayor's Summit on Homelessness

April 30, 2014



**HTA**

Prepared by Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates

ATTACHMENT 1

# Table of Contents

About the Summit.....	3
Homeless Statistics in the Tri Valley .....	5
Guest Speakers & Synopsis of Presentations .....	7
Discussion Topics .....	12
Summary of Feedback .....	13
Discussion Group Conclusions .....	18
Next Steps .....	18
Appendix A: Press Release regarding Mayor John Marchand’s visit to the White House	

## About the Summit

The Mayor's Summit on Homelessness was convened on April 30, 2014 by Mayor John Marchand of Livermore to discuss local and regional solutions regarding homelessness. The City of Livermore is a mid-size city with a population of just over 80,000 in Eastern Alameda County. Livermore along with cities of Dublin and Pleasanton make up the Tri-Valley area, a relatively affluent area with distinct pockets of need.

As the issue of homelessness continues to grow in the Tri-Valley, the communities have struggled to provide adequate services for this population. The 2011 *Eastern Alameda County Human Services Needs Assessment* found that poverty is increasing in the Tri-Valley. The number of Livermore residents receiving general assistance, CalWorks, and MediCal has tripled between 2003 and 2011. Additionally, the number of Livermore residents receiving food stamps has increased six fold between 2003 and 2011. The rise in the number of households accessing these programs show that many more families are at greater risk of becoming homeless.

In addition to statistics, the Needs Assessment also included focus groups, interviews and surveys that confirm homelessness is a growing issue. Themes that emerged from the *Human Services Needs Assessment* included:

- There is “not enough affordable housing to meet the growing demand” and that, as a result, low income and very low income households face housing insecurity, and;
- “Increased homelessness has amplified the demand for a variety of housing options and services,” and this need “is pronounced particularly among homeless men” who have limited options for shelter in the Tri-Valley.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Livermore Homeless Refuge is the only shelter that accommodates single men but it is only open from November 1 to April 30 and during inclement weather.

Throughout the Tri-Valley region, the needs of persons experiencing homelessness are being partially addressed by multiple service providers. While the homelessness problem is regional in scope, shelters, in particular, and other homeless services, in general, are unevenly distributed throughout the region with the majority of services being located in Livermore.

Recognizing the growing need in the community and the opportunity for better alignment and coordination of resources for the homeless population, regionally and across sectors, Mayor John Marchand convened this Summit to develop actionable strategies to address homelessness. The Summit was designed to broaden the conversation about homelessness in the Tri-Valley to all interested stakeholders. More than 200 participants attended the Summit including concerned residents, representatives from the local faith community, service agencies including the Tri-Valley Haven, Abode Services, Open Heart Kitchen, Shepherd's Gate, and the Livermore Homeless Refuge, the neighboring communities of Dublin and Pleasanton, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development/Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA).

---

<sup>1</sup> “Eastern Alameda County 2011 Human Services Needs Assessment: Findings Report,” commissioned by the cities of Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and prepared by Resource Development Associates.

The Summit focused on sharing information about strategies that work and resources that Livermore and the Tri-Valley area could access to prevent and reduce homelessness. Mayor Marchand framed the conversation at the outset and a number of guest speakers from local, regional and federal housing and homeless-serving agencies made brief presentations to all participants. The participants broke into problem solving work groups for the remainder of the Summit to discuss specific questions and brainstormed solutions across a number of areas related to addressing homelessness.

At the conclusion of the Summit, the groups reported out the results of their conversations and prioritized solutions. The groups focused on the high cost of housing and limited availability of affordable units; the need to co-locate and coordinate services; filling gaps in transportation and child care along with educating the community about who is experiencing homelessness and the issues these individuals face daily.

Many of the participants committed to work together to develop effective solutions to homelessness in Livermore and throughout the Tri-Valley area. Because complex issues such as homelessness cannot be solved individually or with a small group, we recommend engaging a diversity of stakeholders from throughout the Tri-Valley and Alameda County to work together to solve the issue.

The remainder of this report describes these proceedings and their results in greater detail.

### **Post-Summit**

As part of Mayor Marchand's commitment to this issue, he was invited by First Lady Michelle Obama to participate in the "Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness" at the White House on June 4, 2014. The "Mayors Challenge" is a collaborative effort between the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Representatives from each of these agencies participated in the Mayor's Summit on Homelessness.

## Homeless Statistics in the Tri-Valley

As required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Alameda County conducted a bi-annual, county wide Homeless Count on January 30, 2013. The results from the study found that 4,262 people were homeless throughout the County. Although this number is similar to the previous Homeless Count in 2011, significant fluctuations occurred in several subpopulations. For example, there was a decrease in the number of homeless families with children and the chronically homeless while there were increases in the number of homeless with a mental illness.

The information below is compiled from the 2013 Homeless Count and generated by Alameda County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Not all agencies that provide services to people experiencing homelessness enter their client data into the County's HMIS, including the Tri-Valley Haven (shelter/support services), Livermore Homeless Refuge (single night drop in/no services), and Shepherd's Gate (shelter/support services). Nevertheless, these statistics provide an approximation of the type and variety of people without permanent residences throughout Tri-Valley.

<b>Livermore</b>		<b>Total Clients - 76</b>
<b>Total Households - 66</b>		
Adults		66
Children		10
Male		36
Female		40
Single adult		53
Families with Children		10
Families wo/Children		3
<b>Homeless last three years</b>		
First time homeless		26
2-3 Times		20
Entire time		20
<b>Employed</b>		
Yes		11
No		42
<b>Veteran</b>		
Yes		5
No		61
<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>		
Yes		24
No		42
<b>Long Term Disability</b>		
Adults		40
Children		0
<b>Disability**</b>		
Mental Health		24
Chronic Health		11

Physical	10
Alcohol	9
Drug Abuse	9

\*\* Count will exceed total clients due to multiple client values

<b>Dublin</b>		<b>Total Clients - 15</b>
<b>Total Households - 14</b>		
Adults		13
Children		2
<hr/>		
Male		8
Female		7
<hr/>		
Single adult		10
Families with Children		2
Families wo/Children		2
<hr/>		
<b>Homeless last three years</b>		
First time homeless		6
2-3 Times		3
Entire time		3
<hr/>		
<b>Employed</b>		
Yes		0
No		14
<hr/>		
<b>Veteran</b>		
Yes		1
No		13
<hr/>		
<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>		
Yes		3
No		11
<hr/>		
<b>Long Term Disability</b>		
Adults		5
Children		0
<hr/>		
<b>Disability**</b>		
Mental Health		4
Chronic Health		4
Physical		2
Alcohol		2
Drug Abuse		3

<b>Pleasanton</b>		<b>Total Clients - 32</b>
<b>Total Households - 24</b>		
Adults		23
Children		9
<hr/>		
Male		18
Female		14
<hr/>		
Single adult		19
Families with Children		5
Families wo/Children		0
<hr/>		
<b>Homeless last three years</b>		
First time homeless		14
2-3 Times		6
Entire time		4
<hr/>		
<b>Employed</b>		
Yes		4
No		20
<hr/>		
<b>Veteran</b>		
Yes		4
No		20
<hr/>		
<b>Domestic Violence Victim</b>		
Yes		4
No		20
<hr/>		
<b>Long Term Disability</b>		
Adults		14
Children		4
<hr/>		
<b>Disability**</b>		
Mental Health		12
Chronic Health		7
Physical		8
Alcohol		5
Drug Abuse		5

\*\* Count will exceed total clients due to multiple client values

## Guest Speakers

Summit guest speakers spoke about their organizations and the strategies they employ to address homelessness. These strategies included local, regional and national approaches that clearly targeted prevention or reduction of homelessness. The guest speakers, backgrounds and a summary of their presentations are as follows.

**Reverend John Bosh** has been the Lead Pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church since 2007. Originally from North Carolina, Pastor Bosh holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Sociology from Appalachian State University, a Master of Divinity degree from Trinity Lutheran Seminar, and has completed doctoral coursework from George Fox University. From 2009-2011 he served as Board Chair for the Haitian Timoun Foundation and has served on the Leadership Board for Alameda County EveryOne Home. Pastor Bosh currently serves as the President of the Livermore Homeless Refuge. Prior to arriving in Livermore, Pastor Bosh served on the south side of Chicago in an economically depressed community and was in leadership positions in the Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) ministry.

### Presentation Summary

Expanding temporary housing in our community is not the goal, but it is part of a long-term solution to help people find permanent-supportive housing solutions. Even if the entire country were to adopt housing-first philosophy and model, it will take time to locate people and walk alongside them on their path to housing. A temporary housing option like the Livermore Homeless Refuge is not a destination, but rather a stop along the way. We represent a bridge among many other bridges, positioned in the long continuum of services for the chronically homeless.

**Alicia Anderson** is the Community Health Services Manager for Abode Services. Alicia began her career working locally and internationally with at-risk youth and adults. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Global Studies from Azusa Pacific University and a Master's degree in Social Work from San Jose State University. During her first several years at Abode, she worked with individuals experiencing homelessness on the HOPE Mobile Health Clinic and the Greater HOPE. In her current role, Alicia provides leadership to the HOPE Mobile Health Clinic, the HOPE street outreach team and AC Impact, a Housing First program which seeks to support the chronically homeless in Alameda County.

### Presentation Summary

Homelessness is only one aspect to an individual's life. It does not highlight where they have come from or where they are going, their strengths, dreams, motivation. The single unifying factor among all people who are currently experiencing homelessness is that they need a safe, stable, affordable, and permanent place to live. Lacking safe and stable housing can exacerbate or cause mental health symptoms, overuse of alcohol or drugs and health conditions. The very act of surviving homelessness makes it difficult to focus on anything other than getting your basic needs met.

People are homeless in Livermore because they are from Livermore. They have friends, family, healthcare, jobs, histories, and hopefully futures here. Abode implements AC Impact and the VA's VASH program vouchers to move people from situation homelessness to stable housing. These programs have been working successfully in Alameda County for several years, but there is still not enough affordable housing for those who need it. In many circumstances, the only choice we have is to move people out of Livermore and Alameda County to obtain housing. Affordable units can still

be found in Tracy and San Joaquin County but often people have to move as far away as Martinez, Antioch, Vacaville or Fairfield.

**Marjorie Rocha** is a 33-year veteran of the housing field. She began her career in housing counseling and mediation and fair housing investigation. She later became Director of ECHO Housing, the only HUD-approved housing counseling and Qualified Fair Housing Enforcement organization in Alameda County. Marjorie provided technical support to the Rent Stabilization Task Forces for the Cities of Fremont and San Leandro and for Alameda County. She developed and implemented Homeless Prevention Programs in Livermore and Berkeley. Alameda County sought Marjorie's expertise to establish a revolving loan fund program to house CalWorks recipients. Her work has led to the successful preservation of safe, affordable housing for over 5,000 Alameda County families.

Presentation Summary

ECHO has delivered housing counseling and referral services in the Tri-Valley since 1979. Since 2008, we have been providing homeless prevention rental assistance and case management services for Livermore residents that are at risk of losing their housing.

There are an insufficient number of affordable housing units in the Tri-Valley to meet the demand. This problem is exacerbated because there are fewer and fewer landlords that are willing to work with someone to help them obtain or maintain their housing. The landlords in the Tri-Valley must understand that they are part of the solution. Our staff has found that some landlords collude to request rent increases that force people to move or set rents for vacant units far above the fair market. Many property owners refuse to work with our homeless prevention programs because they, or someone they know, have had a negative experience with other rental assistance programs, such as Section 8. Even if a landlord is willing to accept a tenant, they often require a deposit that is twice the amount they would normally charge.

**Chief Michael Harris** was sworn in as the Chief of Police for the City of Livermore on August 19, 2013. Chief Harris was born and raised in Modesto, California and worked for the Modesto Police Department for over 20 years before coming to Livermore. Chief Harris holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, a Master's Degree in Emergency Services Administration, and, is a graduate of the FBI Command College in Quantico, Virginia. During his time with the Modesto Police Department, Chief Harris worked numerous assignments including Patrol, Investigations, SWAT, Internal Affairs; Patrol Watch Commander, Assistant Division Commander, and Commander of the Investigations, Support and Operations Divisions.

Presentation Summary

The heart of the Livermore Police Department's mission is service to all residents of Livermore. Law enforcement is a significant part of that mission along with crime prevention to improve the quality of life within our community.

With respect to the issue of homelessness, the Police are often involved in and required to deal with the symptoms of the issue including; public intoxication, aggressive panhandling, trespassing, encampments, littering, and disturbing the peace. As part of our law enforcement duties, the Livermore Police will respond as required to a call, but that will not solve the problem of homelessness.

There are 4 ways officers can and should help to serve our community.

1. Officers must be educated to recognize issues that a homeless person is experiencing and know appropriate intervention strategies.
2. The Police need to have pre-established relationships with social service agencies. These associations are critical to help us intervene in situations and support ending the cycle of homelessness.
3. I believe that street outreach is critical. The City is allocating \$80,000 to partner with Abode Services to create a Homeless Street Outreach Team in Livermore. The Team will work with the homeless on the street, in the arroyos, or wherever they congregate. As the Homeless Outreach Team develops trust and rapport with homeless, they will work with the person to obtain services and build the necessary skills to acquire and maintain housing.
4. We are also assigning certain officers to deal with homeless to ensure there is a dedication to and an ownership of the required tasks.

**Elaine de Coligny** is the Executive Director of EveryOne Home, an organization leading the implementation of Alameda County's plan to end homelessness by the year 2020. Prior to joining EveryOne Home in 2007, Ms. de Coligny spent 15 years as the Executive Director of a community based organization that provided shelter, supportive housing, and services to women, children, and survivors of domestic violence. She served on the County's Homeless Continuum of Care Council since 1997 and as its Co-Chair from 2002 until 2007. In that role she participated in the development of the Alameda Countywide Homeless and Special Needs Housing Plan, now known as the EveryOne Home Plan. Ms. de Coligny has won numerous local and national awards for her work.

#### Presentation Summary

I want to talk about several myths, truths and tensions about homelessness in our communities.

**Myth # 1 -** The homeless people we see on our streets are not from here.

The truth is, most homeless people, especially unsheltered persons, tend to stay in the place they consider "home." Often they grew up in that city, have family nearby, or their last permanent address was in the area. The County's homeless management information system shows that there are homeless people from every city in Alameda County.

**Myth # 2 -** Homeless people want to live the streets, they do not want housing.

We often equate people declining an offer of shelter or a treatment program as a desire to live outdoors. In fact, the vast majority of people who are offered permanent housing accept it. Like us, these individuals want to come and go as they please; eat, drink, and watch what they want on TV. People say no to shelter for a wide range of reasons, for example, many do not want to live in a group setting.

**Myth # 3 -** It is a waste of money to pay for people's housing.

It has been proven over and over that permanent supportive housing cost the same or less than the medical and law enforcement costs of leaving people on the street. As we shift our focus to solving homelessness by investing in permanent housing solutions, we still have many people that require a compassionate emergency response. People need food and shelter now while we work to create access to existing housing and build more units. This creates tremendous pressure on public

resources and we need to be careful not to sacrifice the emergency humane response for the permanent solutions.

**Robert Ratner, MPH, MD** is the Housing Services Director for the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Behavioral Health Department. He is a member of the EveryOne Home Leadership Board and is actively partnering with his colleagues in Public Health to create an integrated health program in Oakland to help disabled, homeless individuals. He has over fifteen years of experience working on health care services integration and housing as a health care issue. Dr. Ratner received his public health and medical training from UC Berkeley and UC San Francisco and is currently a volunteer faculty member at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. He spent six years as the director of a supportive housing program for formerly homeless individuals at LifeLong Medical Care in Berkeley.

Presentation Summary

Within Alameda County, an estimated 35,000 living below the federal poverty line have a mental health issue. At least 5% of these persons experience at least one episode of homelessness each year. There are many factors that make it challenging for people with mental illness to find, obtain and maintain housing.

- Their behaviors lead to lease violations and problems with roommates or family members. It is difficult to obtain housing when a person has an eviction on their record and a history of being a poor tenant.
- People with mental illness have very low income. Their disability checks are too small to cover typical rents and the person often has very poor credit.
- There is stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness by landlords.
- There is an inadequate amount of supportive services and housing resources available to help people with mental illness find and maintain their housing.

The majority of the affordable housing units in Alameda County are targeted to people with income of 50% of median income, or \$31,250 per year. This is not affordable for a person with mental illness receiving \$900.00 per month of Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Of the estimated 35,000 people living on SSI in Alameda County, there are only 4,732 housing vouchers and 1,860 affordable housing units available to them.

**Stacy Studebaker** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for the Veterans Administration (VA) in Palo Alto. She is the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Coordinator managing both Transitional and Emergency Housing programs. Stacy coordinates multiple initiatives to End Veterans Homelessness. Her family has owned and operated the Railroad Café in Livermore for over 20 years.

**Kate Butler** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for the Veterans Administration (VA) in Palo Alto. She is the Supervisor of the Central Valley HUD/VASH Team, which assists Veterans in Alameda, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties to obtain permanent housing through the use of HUD/VASH vouchers. Kate and her husband are Livermore residents.

Presentation Summary

There are many reasons that a veteran will become homeless including their inability to find affordable housing and lack of access to health care. A veteran may not be able to earn a living wage because military occupations and training are not always transferrable to the civilian workforce. Coupled with this, many homeless veterans continue to live with the lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse.

Although the overall number of homeless veterans has decreased by 24% since 2010 the VA remains committed to providing assistance make ensure that no veteran is homeless. The 2013 Homeless Count found that there were 1,732 homeless veterans in the Bay Area. Of that total, 492 of the homeless veterans are in Alameda County.

In conjunction with HUD, the VA is providing qualified veterans a voucher that will pay for their first 6 months of housing through the VASH (Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing) program. A veteran can contact Abode Services to obtain one of the 60 vouchers that are allocated to Alameda County. The vouchers are distributed on a first come, first serve basis. There are no specific set asides for any city or area of the county.

**Eduardo Cabrera** currently serves as the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) liaison to the Interagency Council on Homelessness for the western region of the US. He began his career at HUD as a Community Builder Specialist and became the Regional Coordinator for HUD's Colonia and Migrant Farm worker Initiative. Mr. Cabrera received a bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University and a Master's from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Presentation Summary

Homelessness is extremely expensive for communities. It increases the cost of police enforcement, emergency medical services and other public services.

HUD is encouraging all partners to implement a Housing First model and consider it to be a best practice to move people from homelessness to permanent, supportive housing. Housing First begins with the conviction that safe, decent housing is a basic human right and it should not be denied to anyone. The goal of this program is to place people experiencing homelessness in housing as quickly as possible and provide them with the necessary supportive, wrap around services to ensure they will maintain their housing.

Housing First has been adopted in hundreds of cities throughout the United States. The 100,000 Homes Campaign used the Housing First model to provide homes to 101,975 people (*including 31,171 veterans*) in 186 communities.

Alameda County is successfully implementing Housing First. Throughout the last 7 years, Abode's Greater HOPE program has successfully maintained housing for 42 people who were previously homeless and have a mental illness. Additionally, in the last 12 months, AC Impact program has housed 30 long term street homeless from the cities of Livermore, Fremont, Hayward, San Leandro, and Oakland.

## Discussion Topics

After the panel presentations, participants broke out into five discussion groups that addressed five topic areas. Discussion questions were provided to encourage the groups to identify solutions in the various topical areas. The groups prioritized their identified solutions and then reported out their top priorities to the full Summit body. Each group had a facilitator, who helped to guide the conversation and to chart the salient findings, and a note taker. The charts and detailed notes are summarized in the next section of this report.

Group discussion topics and discussion questions were as follows.

### Providing services to chronically homeless

- What services, actions, or resources will help chronically homeless individuals to stabilize their lives and to maintain housing?
- Which of these is most effective? What makes them effective?
- How do they reduce homelessness?

### Preventing at-risk persons from becoming or returning to homelessness

- Why does someone become homeless or return to homelessness?
- What services, actions, or resources are most likely to prevent someone who is living on the edge from becoming or returning to homelessness?

### Service gaps and barriers to accessing homeless services

- What are the barriers to accessing services?
- Why would someone choose not to ask for help?

### Regional strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness

- How can the cities of the Tri-Valley work together to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- How can the Tri-Valley increase collaboration with Alameda County and other city partners to prevent and reduce homelessness?

### Other critical gaps in local services

- Are there other gaps in services in Livermore and the Tri-Valley that have not been identified or addressed?

## Summary of Feedback

### Providing services to chronically homeless

This group discussed the chronically homeless and what solutions might ensure that services reach those individuals and effectively support them to move away from homelessness. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the involvement of persons, who were homeless or experienced homelessness, in the design and implementation of services. The questions discussed were as follows:

- What services, actions, or resources will help chronically homeless individuals to stabilize their lives and to main housing?
- Which of these is most effective? What makes them effective?
- How do they reduce homelessness?

### Priority Solutions from the Group

- The group discussed the potential co-location of services for homeless individuals in a “day center.” Such services might include, for example, laundry, a food pantry, mailboxes, and additional programmatic supports. These types of resources could help to stabilize homeless individuals. Outreach workers at these centers could support engagement with chronically homeless.
- The group also suggested that a more extensive continuum of supports would be valuable to stabilizing the chronically homeless. For the chronically homeless it was particularly important to bridge the gaps in health, mental health and substance abuse services. Better connections need to be made to the Alameda County continuum of services.
- Given the high cost of housing in the area, the group felt it was important to provide inexpensive alternative housing. For example, the use of vacant buildings or inexpensive pre-fabricated housing might provide affordable housing opportunities for the homeless. Other alternatives for addressing the high cost of housing might be to create a program that provided first and last month's rent for those transitioning from homelessness, thereby reducing the cost barrier to obtaining housing.
- Advocacy, outreach and interpersonal connections are important to helping the chronically homeless. Many of these individuals have multiple needs, and it was suggested that advocates could provide one-to-one support and case management as a bridge to safety net services (e.g. Social Security, MediCal, etc.).
- Leadership at different levels should include convening an ongoing steering committee that would examine and track the causes of homelessness, involving homeless persons in developing solutions, and supporting homeless persons to be advocates for themselves and their community.

### Other Solutions from the Group

- Other solutions included a range of opportunities for bridging the divide between homeless persons and the communities in which they live. The group discussed: the need to change public perception through stories, communication and organization; the importance that the homeless maintain their personal dignity; connecting and empowering homeless persons in the community through the arts, sustainable community gardens and individual sponsorships could support the move away from homelessness.

### Preventing at-risk persons from becoming or returning to homelessness

This group explored strategies to prevent at-risk persons from becoming or returning to homelessness. The group addressed the bigger picture context, including their impressions that elected officials need to understand the impact that increasing income disparities are having on individual citizens and society as a whole – homelessness being one manifestation of this disparity. This perspective aligns with the growing conclusion nationally that homelessness is connected to a bigger picture and that addressing homelessness requires collaboration at a larger scale. The discussion questions addressed included:

- Why does someone become homeless or return to homelessness?
- What services, actions, or resources are most likely to prevent someone who is living on the edge from becoming or returning to homelessness?

### Priority Solutions from the Group

- Wraparound support for citizens in transition is critical to preventing homelessness. Many people become homeless when facing a difficult transition in their lives or living conditions, for example: exiting the military and trying to re-enter civilian life; or leaving foster care as young adults without adequate skills, maturity or experience and no reliable means of economic support. For individuals such as these who are undergoing difficult transitions, wraparound supports can provide tangible and interpersonal supports that help them to avoid falling into homelessness.
- Sustainable income from employment is crucial prevention strategy. A key resource for avoiding homelessness is a living wage job. Given the high cost of living in the Tri-Valley area, minimum wage jobs do not always cover the cost of housing, even with multiple wage earners in a family. Therefore, living wage jobs and job training programs for those jobs are necessary to assist those at risk for homelessness to obtain and maintain sustainable incomes. At the same time, this group recognized that, even with a job, many have become homeless during the recession because of temporary economic challenges. In these instances, banks and credit unions should work with individuals' in-need in order to prevent the loss of housing.
- Providing an accessible network of formal and informal supports can help to prevent homelessness. Unfortunately there is not widespread knowledge of the existing support services available for those at risk of homelessness. We need to improve the knowledge of these supports across the region. Additional supportive services could also prevent homelessness, including, for example, personal sponsors to provide guidance and crisis intervention when needed.
- Increasing the stock of affordable housing will also prevent homelessness by providing affordable options for at-risk individuals. A similar solution would include federally and locally funded transitional housing and rent subsidy programs. There are also policy related strategies for increasing affordable housing, including addressing landlord abuse, providing landlord incentives to accept Section 8 vouchers and providing local earmarked funds for affordable housing.
- A higher level of collaboration among all invested stakeholders will be needed to effectively address the issue of those at risk for homelessness. The group suggested that local leaders could coordinate all providers into a network that can work together to achieve "collective impact" across the region. This approach could lead to a better coordinated system and effectively increase the scope and types of services that would prevent individuals from becoming or returning to homelessness. Some suggested, for example, the need to increase the role of faith based institutions. Others suggested such a network might need to create additional supportive services such as a focus on children in poverty and expanding public transportation.

### **Service gaps and barriers to accessing homeless services**

This group began their conversation with a focus on identifying the biggest barriers to accessing homeless services. The biggest barriers seemed to be lack of access and coordination. Services are geographically dispersed and are particularly difficult to get to if one is low-income and homeless; so the location of services and improvements in transportation were discussed. The group also felt that agencies are not well coordinated, and some participants learned about existing resources of which they were previously unaware. This adds to the challenges of not having enough services and housing subsidies in the Tri-Valley area. The discussion questions addressed were as follows:

- What are the barriers to accessing services?
- Why would someone choose not to ask for help?

### **Priority Solutions from the Group**

- One Stop Centers<sup>2</sup> were identified as a way to reduce service gaps and barriers to access because they could provide multiple resources in one location, including referrals to other providers. This system of services should have a “No Wrong Door” approach whereby clients can access services and referrals from any starting point.
- Case Management was also suggested as a means of increasing access and confronting barriers. A homeless participant in the group spoke of the frustration of trying to navigate the service system on her own. Having someone available to help people make the right connections and complete complex paperwork would improve the provision of timely and sufficient services
- Additional and thoughtful investment by city, county, state, and private donors can help to fill gaps. The need for more funding was discussed as well as the need to allocate funds thoughtfully according to the actual needs in the community.
- Another gap identified was the lack of community awareness regarding the issue of homelessness. The group discussed the need to educate the community in an attempt to shift the current cultural attitude about homelessness.
- Information and education gaps were also identified. For example, the group believed it was necessary to educate the community regarding available resources, gaps in service, the real cost of homelessness, and the need to ramp up outreach efforts to both the homeless population and the community at large. The group acknowledged their own lack of awareness about existing services and collaborations.

### **Regional strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness**

This group discussed county-wide and regional strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness in the Tri-Valley area. The strategies ranged from long-range affordable housing projects to education projects and better coordination of existing services. The questions discussed by the group included the following:

- How can the cities of the Tri-Valley work together to prevent and reduce homelessness?
- How can the Tri-Valley increase collaboration with Alameda County and other city partners to prevent and reduce homelessness?

---

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with Workforce Investment Act Career One Stops.

### **Priority Solutions from the Group**

- Create an affordable housing project in Tri-Valley (after looking at models elsewhere). Given the problem of high cost housing in the region, affordable housing is very much needed. However, the group thought it important to gather best practices of what is working in similar places.
- Create a One Stop service location for homeless that provides streamlined services, case management, outreach, mail center, job support and rapid rehousing. This solution was considered by other groups as well, but this group identified the need for a regional One Stop.
- The group suggested expanding city employment opportunities for those who have lost employment. This could also include developing a program to help people get housed while providing them a city job.
- Increase the number of landlords providing housing access to low income individuals. One strategy for doing this would be to provide landlord incentives and education on available resources such as Section 8 and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. This process would help landlords understand the benefits of these programs, such as direct payment from the government, stability, etc.
- Economic development and expanding job opportunities can prevent and reduce homelessness. Therefore a solution is to spur economic development to create jobs and provide corporations incentives to hire the homeless.
- Policy can support prevention and reduction of homelessness. The group thought it important to engage the state in this conversation and encourage policy solutions that are a fit for areas like the Tri-Valley. Legislators and state staff should be educated on the issue of homelessness is taking shape in this region.
- Improve regional coordination of services to address a population that is both local and regional. Programs such as Everyone Home and Genesis should be considered.
- Transit in the area was discussed, particularly the need to improve transit at both a local and regional level so that services, housing and jobs can be more accessible.

### **Other Solutions from the Group**

- The group also discussed the absence of housing for veterans in Livermore and the need to advocate for HUD-VASH with landlords to ensure vets are housed.
- An informational website could be used to increase public education and the knowledge of what exists across the service continuum.
- The group also discussed the possibility of changing zoning and building regulations to allow for more second units. This might provide both more available housing and more low cost housing opportunities in the area.

### **Other critical gaps in local services**

This group was designed as a catch-all for gaps in services not discussed in other groups. Much of the discussion in this group focused on the variety of types of outreach which are needed to reach those who are homeless or on the edge of homelessness. The group discussed key resources that were inaccessible but critical to improving the plight of homeless individuals, such as childcare and transportation. In addition issues of shelters, day centers, and service centers were discussed and broken down in terms of the need for those resources for particular groups such as teens, single

males and families. The group also discussed the challenges of the high cost of living in the region and the lack of resources for low income persons. The guiding question for the group was as follows:

- Are there other gaps in services in Livermore and the Tri-Valley that have not been identified or addressed?

#### **Priority Solutions from the Group**

- The group discussed the need for a day center where multiple drop-in services could be provided including on-site counseling and case management.
- Need for additional housing/shelter resources: The group noted the geographic inequity and that shelters needed to be provided in neighboring cities. One key solution in this regard was converting a vacant building into a shelter in Livermore and adding a shelter in Pleasanton. Shelters were needed for single males, families with teens and those with medical issues.
- The group noted there were gaps in the service continuum such as transit vouchers and childcare.
- Outreach and its importance came up in a variety of contexts: the need for outreach funding (Live Scan, training, childcare links, LARPD, engaging the school district); the role of outreach in addressing the fear of accessing services; the need for outreach to address at risk populations such as people in vehicles or families in crowded conditions; and the need for outreach to provide services such as meals and health services so that people can stay in their homes.
- Education and information were identified as a gap and a central information resource was seen as a solution. This central resource should provide a consistent and efficient way to share info (housing options included). The group discussed some existing coordinating groups that meet regularly.
- Adjustment to housing policy was also seen as an opportunity. For example, raising the income cap for affordable housing could help people on the margin to afford housing. Revising the city General Plan Housing Element could narrow gaps and hold the local community accountable. We could explore a partnership/ merger between the County Housing Authority and Livermore Housing Authority.

## Discussion Group Conclusions

Though each of these discussion groups had a unique theme, the conversations had significant overlaps and convergence. The following themes are a starting point for a deeper discussion and action steps.

- The need to address the high cost of housing in general and the limited availability of affordable housing. This is a long term problem for Livermore and for the region. A number of solutions were proposed for new housing or for making existing housing more affordable. The need for temporary shelter was also affirmed.
- The need to co-locate and coordinate services. Several groups discussed the need to make it simple for a homeless person to access what they needed and, in some cases, to provide them with navigation support through what can be a maze of applications and requirements. Case management is needed to support complex and/or chronic situations.
- Filling gaps in services such as transportation and child-care was seen as essential to both prevention and providing a bridge to housing and stability for those already homeless. However, it is important to identify and address gaps in a way that improves access and fills a real need.
- Information and education was seen as a pivotal need in the community at multiple levels. The community needed to become more aware of the challenges faced by the homeless in order to build support for them to exit homelessness. At the same time providers needed a more consistent and accessible source of information regarding the continuum of services and resources so that they can ensure that their clients have full access to all available services to support their journey away from homelessness.

## Next Steps

This Summit was an important initial step toward creating a coordinated response to the issue of homelessness in Livermore and the Tri-Valley region. The participants stand ready to continue to engage together to refine strategies that will reduce homelessness. The dedication and passion of advocates, policymakers, volunteers, and many others in the community were evident at this Summit.

Next steps will begin with engaging service providers, faith community, local government staff, and interested community members to discuss the ideas generated from the Summit and provide recommended actions to implement. Due to the complexity of this issue and the need for a diversity of ideas, representatives should be from each of the Tri-Valley cities as well as regional agencies who are confronting this issue in Alameda County.

The objective of the discussion groups will be the same as the Summit; what can be done to prevent and reduce the number of homeless persons in our community. The work in Livermore and the Tri-Valley can make the best use of limited resources and weave them with other communities and the County's work for the greatest impact on homelessness.

Topics for discussion could include the following.

- Develop a comprehensive list of existing homeless services provided in the Tri-Valley.
- Do the existing services prevent people from becoming homeless, returning to homelessness or reduce the number of households that are currently homeless? If so, which ones? What makes them successful in preventing or reducing homelessness? Are there gaps in the service delivery system to achieve these goals? If so, where?
- Assess the quality of the statistics regarding the populations of persons that are experiencing homelessness in the Tri-Valley. Is the data correctly counting all populations? To improve our understanding of who is actually homeless, should the Tri-Valley complete an independent count to know who and how many people are experiencing homelessness?
- Discuss of the viability of each of the ideas generated by the Summit discussion groups and speakers. Include the pros and cons of each idea. What would it take to implement the idea? What are the barriers to implementation?
- Prioritize recommended actions.

The discussion group will report the recommended actions to the Council's subcommittee on homelessness to obtain feedback and direction before moving forward with implementation. The action item work groups will provide information on their activities at least quarterly to the Council's subcommittee and the full discussion group.

## Appendix A

Press Release regarding Mayor John Marchand's visit to the White House



## Press Release

**City of Livermore**  
1052 South Livermore Avenue  
Livermore, CA 94550  
Phone: (925) 960-4000

6/4/2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE #06042014

**Subject :** **Livermore Mayor John Marchand Invited to Participate in White House Event on Veteran Homelessness**

**Contact :** Troy Brown 925-960-4040

**Livermore, CA** – On June 4, 2014, City of Livermore Mayor John Marchand will be participating at a White House event at the invitation of First Lady Michelle Obama on veteran homelessness. The “Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness” kicks-off today with a panel discussion on reducing veteran homelessness. “I will be showcasing Livermore’s unique perspective and significant resources which can provide meaningful and long-term solutions to this critical issue. I will be working with our Congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to keep our Livermore VA Hospital open and to expand its services to our veterans as the need for those services continues to increase.” stated Mayor Marchand. “I look forward to sharing the event’s discussions with the Tri-Valley community.”

The White House invitation came as a result of Mayor Marchand’s recent Summit on Homelessness. The “Mayors Challenge” is a collaborative effort between the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Representatives from each of these agencies also participated in the Livermore Summit. The National League of Cities is also a partner in this White House effort.

Marchand added, “Working with the ‘Mayors Challenge’ will allow Livermore to leverage federal resources and develop a local strategy to make sure every veteran in the community has access to stable housing and the supportive services they need to stay off the street. I believe our VA Hospital can be an integral part of that solution.”

For more information, visit <http://www.hud.gov/veterans>.

### **About the City of Livermore**

Incorporated in 1876, the City of Livermore ([www.cityoflivermore.net](http://www.cityoflivermore.net)) is the easternmost city in the San Francisco Bay Area. With just over 83,000 residents, Livermore’s heritage is an eclectic blend of wine-making, cattle ranching and agriculture, cultural arts, and cutting edge technology. The city’s renowned reputation in science, technology and innovation is showcased at Sandia National Laboratories and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory which has been internationally recognized for its work in discovering Element 116 on the Periodic Table – Livermorium. The Livermore Premium Outlets on Interstate-580 and the city’s award-winning downtown provide a wide range of shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

###