

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ



Homelessness Response Action Plan



OUR COMMITMENT

In Santa Cruz, homelessness response will:
Balance individual needs and community impacts from prevention to exit.

VALUES

Our City's response to homelessness centers on:

Health
Safety
Collaboration

Transparency
Economic Vitality
Fiscal Responsibility

Practicality
Resource Stewardship

ACTION AREAS



ACTION AREAS & GOALS



BUILDING CAPACITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Effective homelessness response requires a holistic approach. These activities focus on an organizational response to homelessness and housing instability, including greater internal coordination and alignment of services and expanding our and our partners' overall capacity and effectiveness.

Program Administration

- Create and launch three-year action plan, including how to use \$14 million in state aid.
- Increase response capacity through integrating citywide services and adding a full-time, dedicated team.
- With the County, develop a roles and responsibilities matrix.
- Partner with community-based organizations to expand regional capacity to address homelessness.
- Collect and share critical data, systems and metrics with the County and community-based organizations.

Legislative Action

- Develop annual targeted state and federal legislative asks for policy reform and funding related to substance use disorder, mental health, and homelessness response.
- Lead effort to build a statewide coalition of municipalities for legislative changes and funding.

Financial Responsibility

- Identify and cultivate additional revenue streams.
- Create a standardized process requiring detailed financial impacts for any new homelessness response services, ordinances, and policies.
- Develop estimating tools to help generate cost calculations for homelessness support services.
- Re-engineer for integrated, citywide services and deliver a transparent and sustainable homelessness response budget by June 2023.

ACTION AREAS & GOALS



BUILDING CAPACITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Community Engagement

- Build a task force of community and business partners to work collectively on homelessness response solutions for the City.
- Share important updates and information through City communications channels.
- Deliver quarterly updates at Council meetings.
- Provide opportunities for community input and engagement on specific projects.



PERMANENT AFFORDABLE & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Santa Cruz is a leader in proactive and innovative approaches to expanding permanent affordable and supportive housing. Affordability and availability are two of the most significant contributors to our region's homelessness crisis. These actions will advance the City's longstanding commitment to expand housing opportunities in our community.

- Meet or exceed regional housing needs requirements of low- and very low-income categories over the next three years by issuing the target number of housing permits.
- Champion federal, state, and local policy updates to facilitate more housing opportunities in Santa Cruz.
- Work with partner agencies to deliver a plan for Coral Street campus and navigation center and acquire needed properties.
- Collaborate with the County on housing readiness support to aid those transitioning into permanent supportive and permanent housing.
- Develop recommendations for ongoing tenant counseling, landlord support, and rental assistance.



ACTION AREAS & GOALS



BASIC SUPPORT SERVICES

The provision of effective care and support services, including basic hygiene, shelter and storage facilities, will play an integral role in breaking the cycle of homelessness and connecting unhoused residents to the support to work toward permanent housing.

- Collaborate with the County and other local cities to identify 20 new locations for sheltering within the County of Santa Cruz.
- Develop a phased plan to address all levels of sheltering: emergency, transitional, and permanent.
- Eliminate unsanctioned camps within the City.
- Establish safe parking programs, including at least one location with direct services aimed at connection to permanent housing.
- Create a proper waste disposal program for recreational vehicle owners.
- Produce or partner to provide storage for unhoused persons, focusing on easy access, co-located in same space as sheltering.
- Develop standardized hygiene service models and plan for expansion.



CARE & STEWARDSHIP

Establishing effective care and support services for our community's homeless residents will be essential to support their efforts in securing permanent housing. In addition, managing local habitat restoration will play a vital role in protecting the environment.

Providing Care

- Develop recommendations and work with the County to optimize City-funded mental health and substance use disorder response resources.
- Expand City's outreach and shelter team to connect unhoused individuals to County's continuum of care and permanent supportive housing.
- Collaborate with County to develop an easy-to-understand, consolidated guide individuals can use to connect to services.
- With the County partners, explore authorizing Laura's Law to bring court-ordered community treatment for individuals with a history of violence or repeated hospitalizations to the County.
- Partner with community-based organizations to create more transitional employment programs, including expansion of Downtown Streets Team.

ACTION AREAS & GOALS



CARE & STEWARDSHIP

Organizational Stewardship

- Identify and scope top priorities for citywide contracts to support safe and clean community areas and natural resource restoration.
- Adjust City job descriptions to include homelessness response duties, including the creation of a dedicated resource and land management team.
- Develop near-term organizational models for homelessness response by July 2022 and adapt as needed for successful long-term operations.

Environmental Stewardship

- Close San Lorenzo Park Benchlands to camping and restore impacted area.
- Partner with community groups for restoration of affected habitats throughout the City.
- Enforce existing environmental protection regulations and address emergent issues through pursuing new regulations.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Through key partnerships with the County and local agencies and the creation of new response models, we will work to keep Santa Cruz a safe environment for all.

- Equitably enforce criminal behavior by coordinating with County judiciary and other local agencies.
- Communicate requirements and operational plans for Oversized Vehicle and Camping Services and Standards Ordinances.
- Update deployment model for Santa Cruz Police and County staff for homelessness engagement and outreach.
- Partner with downtown businesses to develop a community safety strategy, including expansion of community service officer program.
- Work with the County to assess, prioritize and develop collaborative court programs.