



CITY OF
LA MESA
JEWEL of the HILLS

RECEIVED
AUG 17 2016
BY:

July 26, 2016

The Honorable Jeffrey B. Barton, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of San Diego
P.O. Box 122724
San Diego, CA 92102-2724

Re: Grand Jury Report on "East County Cities' Lack of Response to Homelessness"

Dear Judge Barton:

On June 8, 2016, the San Diego County Grand Jury released its report on "East County Cities' Lack of Response to Homelessness", which included a number of findings and recommendations for local government and law enforcement agencies. State law requires that any public agency that the Grand Jury has reviewed, and about which it has issued a final report, provide comments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the agency. This letter will provide the comments for the City of La Mesa, signed by Mayor Mark Arapostathis, for Recommendations 16-58 and 16-59, and the La Mesa Police Department, signed by Chief of Police Walt Vasquez, for Recommendations 16-58 and 16-59.

Recommendations

16-58: Initiate coordinated homelessness-related efforts to increase prevention, shelter, and transitional housing services in East County.

In accordance with California Penal Code Section 933.05(a)(1), the City of La Mesa agrees with this recommendation and it is currently being implemented. Our Police Department currently works with a number of resources throughout the County of San Diego. One of these resources is the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT). In the last year, La Mesa Police has been able to obtain a full time, licensed clinician that rides with police officers four days per week. This clinician and officer team is responsible for contacting and offering resources to many citizens and homeless individuals that are suffering from a mental illness. If the team comes in contact with a homeless person that is not suffering from mental illness, they still have the ability to offer information on services during the contact. All La Mesa police officers have the ability to hand out resource flyers and with the assistance of our County resources, offer help to those that wish to be helped.

The La Mesa Police Department has reached out to the San Diego Sheriff's Department in an effort to join the newly formed East County Homeless Outreach Team. The intent is to have one police officer available to assist on this team and use the many resources that are available to include the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to assist homeless persons in La Mesa.

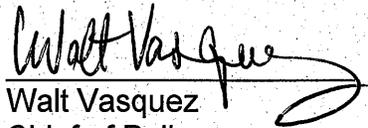
Recommendation 16-59: Join the Regional Continuum of Care Council and participate in its work.

In accordance with California Penal Code Section 933.05 (b)(2), the City of La Mesa agrees with this recommendation. Our Chief of Police, Walt Vasquez was a former representative on the governing board and has been participating in their meetings since becoming La Mesa's Police Chief. The City will work with the RCCC to become a member of the Governing Board.

Yours truly,



The Honorable Mark Arapostathis
Mayor of La Mesa



Walt Vasquez
Chief of Police