



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

"Best Climate On Earth"

Office of the Mayor

August 22, 2016

Honorable Jeffrey B. Barton
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
220 W. Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

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SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

RE: Grand Jury Report: "East County Cities" Lack of Response to Homelessness

Dear Judge Barton:

The City of Lemon Grove has reviewed the Grand Jury Report titled, "East County Cities" Lack of Response to Homelessness," filed with the Court on June 8, 2016. In accordance with California Penal Code Section 933 (c), following is the City of Lemon Grove's response to the findings and recommendations in the report.

Response to Findings:

Finding 01: East County emergency and transitional housing is available only in El Cajon and exists primarily for families with children, victims of domestic violence, veterans, the mentally ill, and those willing to join a one-year Christian discipleship program.

Response: The City of Lemon Grove neither agrees nor disagrees with this fact. Without the benefit of the requirements of emergency and/or transitional housing, the City cannot refute or confirm the finding. Lemon Grove is home to multiple churches that are part of the rotational shelter program, each signing up for multiple weeks to support homeless individuals.

Finding 02: East County cities have marginal involvement in homeless issues.

Response: The City of Lemon Grove disagrees with this finding. First, the City of Lemon Grove cannot comment on the programs, policies or involvement in homeless issues related to the other East County cities. Secondly, Lemon Grove's involvement in homeless issues is more than marginal. The City's faith-based community is actively involved in providing free meals to the homeless. Several churches have free food distribution sites. Members of the Lemon Grove City Council and City Staff regularly meet with the City's interfaith leaders to work on short term and long term solutions to assist Lemon Grove homeless.



The City of Lemon Grove has several affordable housing projects located within its 3.8 square mile area. One particular project provides housing for aged-out foster youth and rents to residents who are considered extremely low income.

The third strategy involves the Lemon Grove Sheriff's deputies. Recognizing a need to directly provide assistance to the homeless population in Lemon Grove, a Psychological Emergency Support Team (PERT) clinician is assigned four days a week to ride along with the Sheriff's deputies. This is up from two days a week previously. Lemon Grove deputies also distribute a resource guide for temporary and transitional housing and services.

Response to Grand Jury Recommendations:

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

Response: This recommendation can be implemented in part. Providing City-run prevention, shelter and transitional housing services is a specialized area that requires a high level of expertise. The City of Lemon Grove has neither the human nor monetary capital to provide of these services. However, the City is committed to continue working with its faith-based organizations to support the work that is currently underway to assist the homeless. Additionally, the City is committed to working with the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services department on outreach, programs or services that are available currently or in the future to assist our homeless individuals.

The City is currently working with students from San Diego State University to assess the needs of the homeless individuals in Lemon Grove. Students will assess the issues of Lemon Grove's homeless and suggest solutions to ending their homelessness. The goal is to determine the resources available that match the needs of those living on the streets, in cars and in tents.

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

Response: To be determined by the City Council since there are budgetary implications related to membership dues and allocation of staff time. It should be noted that this group is primarily made up of non-profits that provide services to the homeless; further, the mission of the Regional Continuum of Care Council is to develop strategic policy as well as coordinate resources needed to effectively address homelessness in San Diego.

Respectfully,



Mary T. Sessom
Mayor