REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: July 26, 2016

SUBJECT: Response to the recommendations made in the June 8, 2016 San Diego County Grand Jury Report titled: East County Cities' Lack of Response to Homelessness

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Police Department

SUMMARY:

Issue:


Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council:


Fiscal Impact:

None at this time.

City’s Strategic Goals:

This response meets the City’s strategic goal of providing a safe community.

BACKGROUND:

On June 8, 2016, the Grand Jury of San Diego County issued a report entitled, “East County Cities’ Lack of Response to Homelessness.” The Grand Jury in their report, made two recommendations;
1). To coordinate homelessness-related efforts; and

2). Join the Regional Continuum of Care Council (RCCC).

The original report from the Grand Jury is attached (Attachment “A”) to this report, as well as a draft letter of response to the Grand Jury (Attachment “B”) for Council’s review and the Mayor's signature.

The La Mesa Police Department has gone to great lengths to address homelessness and quality of life issues by using the many resources available throughout the County. La Mesa Police, like many other departments, contact a number of individuals, whom, either by choice or circumstance finds themselves to be chronically homeless. The Police Department’s efforts are listed below the recommendations.

The June 8, 2016 Grand Jury Report titled: “East County Cities’ Lack of Response to Homelessness” makes the following specific recommendations to the Mayor and City Council:

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

Police Department Current and Future Actions:

Our Police Department currently works with a number of resources throughout the County of San Diego to coordinate homelessness-related efforts. 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.

The mission of the Regional Continuum of Care Council is to engage stakeholders in a community-based process that works to:

1. End homelessness for all individuals and families throughout the region
2. Address the underlying causes of homelessness
3. Lessen the negative impact of homelessness on individuals, families and communities

Police Department Current and Future Actions:

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.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve forwarding the attached draft letter from the Mayor on behalf of the Council in response to the findings and recommendations of the report in accordance with the instructions provided by the Grand Jury.

Reviewed by: David E. Witt
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:

Walt Vasquez
Chief of Police

Attachments:

B. Draft letter responding to Grand Jury findings and recommendations
CONFIDENTIAL
Mayor, City Council—City of El Cajon  Mayor, City Council—La Mesa
Mayor, City Council—City of Lemon Grove  Mayor, City Council—Santee


Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury herewith provides the referenced report for your review and comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in compliance with the Penal Code of California §933(c). This report was prepared pursuant to §925(a) of the Penal Code.

In accordance with Penal Code §933.05(e), a copy of this report is being provided to affected agencies at least two working days prior to its public release and after being approved by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

Please note that §933.05(e) specifies that no officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to its public release. This report will be filed with the Clerk of the Court and released to the public on Wednesday, June 8, 2016.

Sincerely,

*MELINDA J. RICHARDS, Foreperson
2015/2016 SAN DIEGO COUNTY GRAND JURY

MJR:In
enc.