

DATE: January 28, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Parneet Dhindsa, Human Services Manager
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VIA: Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

TITLE: *Pathways to Housing*—Homeless Response Strategy and Expenditure Plan



STUDY SESSION MEMO

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study Session memorandum is to provide an overview of the draft *Pathways to Housing*—Homeless Response Strategy Implementation and Expenditure Plan (Attachment 1) and obtain City Council feedback on the vision statement, guiding principles, and goals and strategies that set forth a roadmap for addressing homelessness in Mountain View over the next seven to 10 years.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness in the Bay Area has reached a crisis level, driven in large part by a shortage of affordable housing. **In 2023, 9,903 people were experiencing homelessness on a given night in Santa Clara County. Of those, 562 people were homeless in Mountain View.** In Santa Clara County, for every 1 household that exited homelessness, another 1.5 households entered homelessness in 2023. In Mountain View, for every 1 household that exited homelessness, another 2.6 households entered homelessness. As housing costs continue to rise, so does the number of people experiencing homelessness. Since 2016, the City recognized that the homelessness crisis was a regional challenge exacerbated by a lack of financial resources and a complicated regulatory environment of court decisions and conflicting laws (Attachment 2). The City’s approach to address homelessness, with both short-term and long-term strategies, has evolved in response to these challenges.

The City’s multi-pronged approach has been to proactively collaborate with and leverage funding from the lead government agency for homelessness and prevention services in our region, the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing, and collaborate with the local emergency assistance network and community-based organizations (CBOs). The focus has been on strategies that help the most vulnerable residents enter and make progress along a pathway to permanent housing.

For close to a decade, the City has dedicated nearly \$1 million in limited-period (one time) funds per year to programs and services for people experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, as well as nearly \$170 million in aggregate funding to increase the supply of affordable housing. In addition, the City has made important organizational changes to provide ongoing focus and staff resources to address homelessness and the needs of the unstably housed. Detailed information about the City’s homelessness response since 2016 is covered in the following sections of Attachment 1:

- ➔ Measure A funding partnership with the County of Santa Clara (Executive Summary, Page 8).
- ➔ Temporary emergency relief efforts and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Executive Summary, Page 10).
- ➔ Investments and staffing (Introduction, Pages 29 to 30).

Table 1 below provides a high-level summary of the City’s homelessness response highlights.

Table 1: Summary of City’s Homelessness Response Highlights

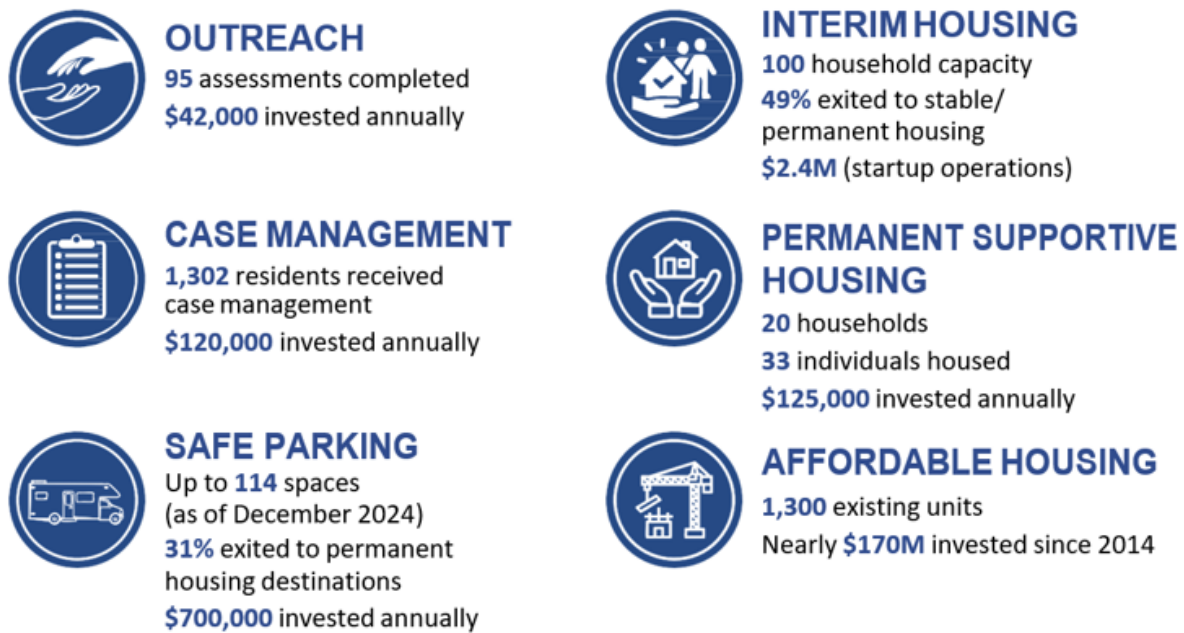
Timeframe	Highlights
2017-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Parking Ordinance First Safe Parking Program Community Outreach Officer position Joint funding with County for CSA Case Management services
2020-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council endorsement of Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness COVID-19 Rent Relief Program <i>Coordinating Together</i> standing meetings Displacement Response Strategy initiated
2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless Response Strategy included in Council Work Plan LifeMoves Mountain View 2022-2027 Affordable Housing Strategic Plan adopted Mobile Home Rent Stabilization Ordinance Human Services Division created
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Department established 2023-2031 Housing Element Pro-housing Designation

City’s Focus Areas

Through the coordinated efforts of the Housing Department, Human Services Division, and Police Department’s Neighborhood and Events Services Unit, the City has supported affordable housing development, market-rate housing development, rent stabilization and tenant protections, safe

parking, interim (or transitional) housing, permanent supportive housing, outreach, emergency sheltering, case management, supportive services, and basic services, including hygiene and sanitation. The City also collaborates closely with CBOs, volunteer groups, and government agencies to combine and leverage resources to help as many people in need as possible. The City has convened a monthly standing meeting called “Coordinating Together” since March 2020 to coordinate efforts and share information about local resources and services.

Figure 1 below provides a high-level summary of the City’s focus areas roughly aligned with the County of Santa Clara Supportive Housing System with outcomes based on Fiscal Year 2023-24 data.



*As of December 2024

Figure 1: Summary of City’s Focus Areas

Council Strategic Priority Project

To sustain the City’s long-standing commitment to addressing homelessness and to establish a roadmap for future action, the City Council Fiscal Years 2021-23 Work Plan included a project to develop a Homeless Response Strategy and Expenditure Plan (the Plan). The project supports the **Community for All** and **Intentional Development and Housing Options** Strategic Priorities and aligns with the City’s 2023-2031 Housing Element, Displacement Response Strategy, and the 2020-2025 Santa Clara Community Plan to End Homelessness, the County of Santa Clara’s roadmap for ending homelessness in the region.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Plan

The Plan includes an overview of existing programs and services, an analysis of challenges and needs, and a set of five goals with strategies and actions to address these needs. **The primary focus of the Plan is to promote regional collaboration and leverage the City’s existing resources, authority, and expertise, with actions that continue and enhance a core set of current services and explore additional opportunities to build on the City’s existing response.** There is also an expenditure plan that prioritizes the timing of each strategy and identifies the need for new partners and resources to implement new and enhanced strategies.

The Plan is intended to be a living document that will incorporate ongoing review and regular updates based on changes in administrative or legal guidance, community priorities, funding opportunities, and future iterations of the 2020-2025 Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness. The City’s Plan is aligned with the County Plan to End Homelessness that sets clear, achievable goals to reduce homelessness throughout the County. Given the severe shortage of affordable housing, the goal is not to strive for an unrealistic “functional zero,” where the system has the capacity to house everyone who is homeless. Rather, the aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible and build a system in which homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

Plan Development

On March 28, 2023, staff released a Request for Proposals for services to develop a Homeless Response Strategy and Expenditure Plan. Of the 22 registered prospective bidders, the City received four proposals. Two firms were interviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of staff from the Human Services Division and Housing Department. The committee selected Homebase as the most responsive and qualified organization to help develop the Plan.

The Plan development process occurred in three phases, which are on Pages 33 and 34 of the Plan:

- **Phase 1:** Assessment of Local and Regional Homelessness, such as review of existing conditions and local and regional homelessness initiatives;
- **Phase 2:** Stakeholder Engagement and Input, including the creation of an advisory committee to develop a deeper understanding of challenges, help inform the development of a vision and guiding principles, and build consensus on the City’s path forward to further address homelessness; and
- **Phase 3:** Synthesis of Data and Development of Strategies.

Stakeholder Engagement and Input

The stakeholder engagement process sought input from diverse groups, including people who have historically been underrepresented in decision-making, such as people who have been homeless and service providers working with specific groups (e.g., survivors of domestic violence). The methods of engagement and outreach strategies are summarized below.

Advisory Committee

- **Description**: Diverse membership representing entities who will be involved in the Plan’s implementation, including people with lived experience and groups that are often underrepresented and underserved by traditional systems. Members were also invited to the community forums and focus group sessions where topic areas pertained to their areas of expertise.
- **Purpose**: Information-sharing, facilitated discussion, shared understanding of community needs, and input into the Plan’s vision statement, guiding principles, goals, and strategies.
- **Members Invited**: Alta Housing; a representative of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community; Chamber of Commerce; Community Health Awareness Council; Community Services Agency of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills; County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services; County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing; City project team; Destination: Home; Foothill Community College; Lord’s Grace Christian Church; Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District; Mountain View Police Department; Mountain View Whisman School District; MOVE Mountain View; Ravenswood Family Health Network—Mountain View Clinic; Reach SV; Santa Clara County Housing Authority; Silicon Valley Community Foundation; Sobrato Philanthropies; three lived-experience members (who were compensated for their time); and The United Effort Organization.

Working Sessions—Focus Groups

- **Description**: Housing service providers and advocates, service providers and advocates for vulnerable populations, the business community, and staff from the City’s Housing, Community Services, Library, Fire, Police, and Public Works departments as well as the Multicultural Engagement Program.
- **Purpose**: Information-sharing and discussion of the realities and misconceptions about homelessness in Mountain View and participants’ concerns and priorities.
- **Members Invited**: Alta Housing, Bill Wilson Center, Ava’s Market, Cafecito, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, Charities Housing, Coalition for Sustainable Planning, Community

Action Team, Cushman & Wakefield, Day Worker Center of Mountain View, Dignity on Wheels, EastWest Bookstore, Fulfil Solutions Health Trust Meals on Wheels, HomeFirst, Hope's Corner, Hope Hangar, LifeMoves, Mountain View Tenants Coalition, Monte Carlo Restaurant & Bar, Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence, Red Rock Café, Senior Adults Legal Assistance, Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, Solidarity Fund, STAND 4 Inc., The Danco Group, W.F. Batton Management Company, YMCA, and YWCA.

Interviews

- **Description:** One-on-one/small group interviews with advocates and community members.
- **Purpose:** Additional conversations with stakeholders to follow up on prior topics raised and answer questions.
- **Members Invited:** Several individuals were prioritized by the City project team for interviews based on their level of engagement with the City in addressing homelessness.

Community Forums

- **Description:** Meetings open to the public with facilitation, small-group conversations, and Q&A.
- **Purpose:** Information-sharing, feedback, and input.
- **Members Invited:** Open to the public with personalized invitations to the following groups: County of Santa Clara Office of Supervisor Simitian, Junior Achievement of Northern California, League of Women Voters, Project Sentinel, Solidarity Fund, South Bay YIMBY, United Way, representatives for Congresswoman Anna Eshoo and Assemblymember Marc Berman, and members of City advisory boards, including the Downtown Committee, Environmental Planning Commission, Human Relations Commission, Public Safety Advisory Board, Rental Housing Committee, and Senior Advisory Committee.

Figure 2 below provides a summary of the stakeholder engagement process, including the number of attendees or members for each engagement method.

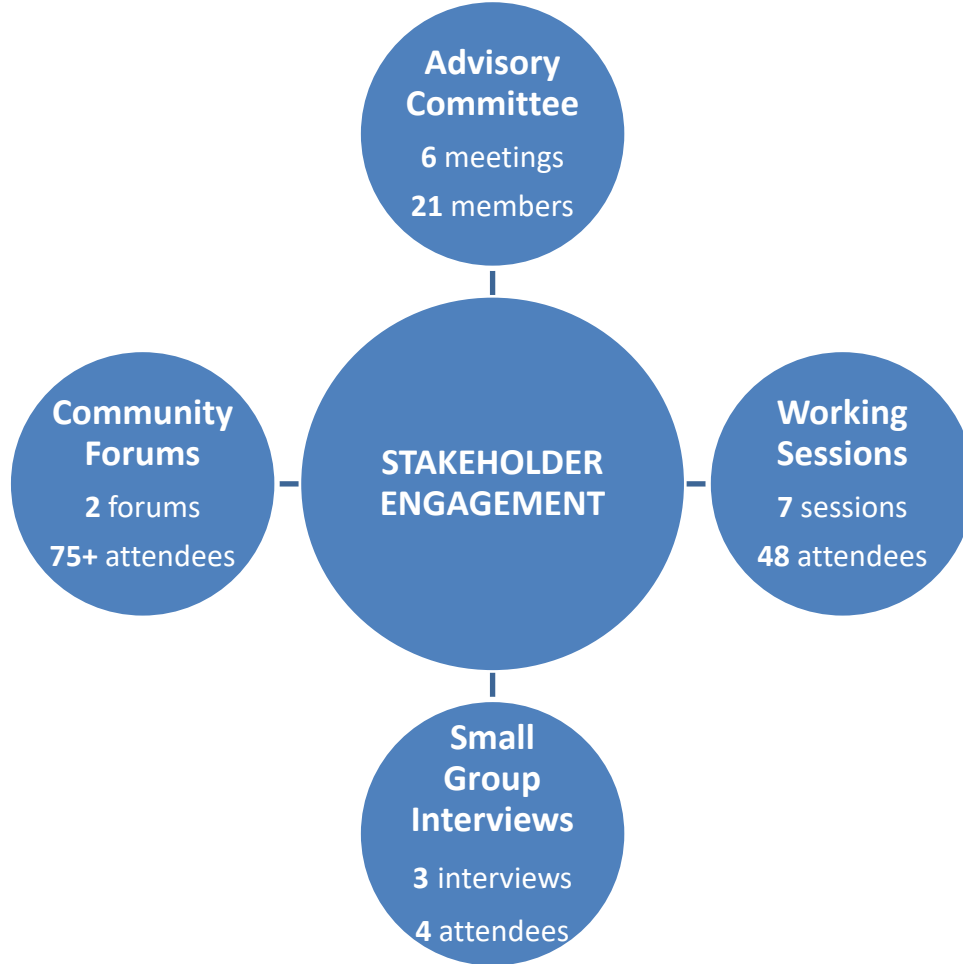


Figure 2: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Process

Key Sections of the Plan

The Plan has seven sections, as listed in the Table of Contents on page 2.

This section of the memorandum provides a high-level summary of the following key sections:

- ➔ County and City Homelessness (Pages 17 to 27);
- ➔ County and City Homelessness Response (Page 28);
- ➔ Analysis of Current Situation: Challenges and Opportunities (Pages 35 to 51);
- ➔ Roadmap: Vision, Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action (Pages 52 to 64); and
- ➔ Implementation and Expenditure Plan (Pages 65 to 73).

County and City Homelessness

This section of the Plan provides several pages of data in informative graphic displays describing the level of homelessness, where homeless people are sleeping, the flow into and out of homelessness, the level of housing cost burden faced by renters, the primary event or condition leading to homelessness, and the demographics of people experiencing homelessness.

Highlights of Mountain View statistics are below:

- **75%** of Mountain View's **562** homeless residents were unsheltered (2023 Point-in-Time Count);
- **107** households were placed in permanent housing, and **283** households requested assistance for the first time (2023-24 Homeless Management Information System);
- **2.6** households entered homelessness for every **1** household who exited (2023-24 Homeless Management Information System);
- **60%** of households were renters, **36%** of which were cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened (2018-2022 U.S. Census Data);
- The primary event/condition leading to homelessness was: lost job (**24%**), alcohol or drug use (**11%**), divorce/separation/breakup (**9%**), and eviction (**8%**) (2023 Point-in-Time Count);
- **54%** of homeless individuals were Hispanic/Latinx (2023-24 Homeless Management Information System); and
- **60%** of homeless individuals were male, and **77%** were single adults (2023-24 Homeless Management Information System).

County and City Homeless Response

As shown in the **Figure 3** below, the City supports several elements of the County of Santa Clara's Continuum of Care through funding, partnerships, and in-kind support.

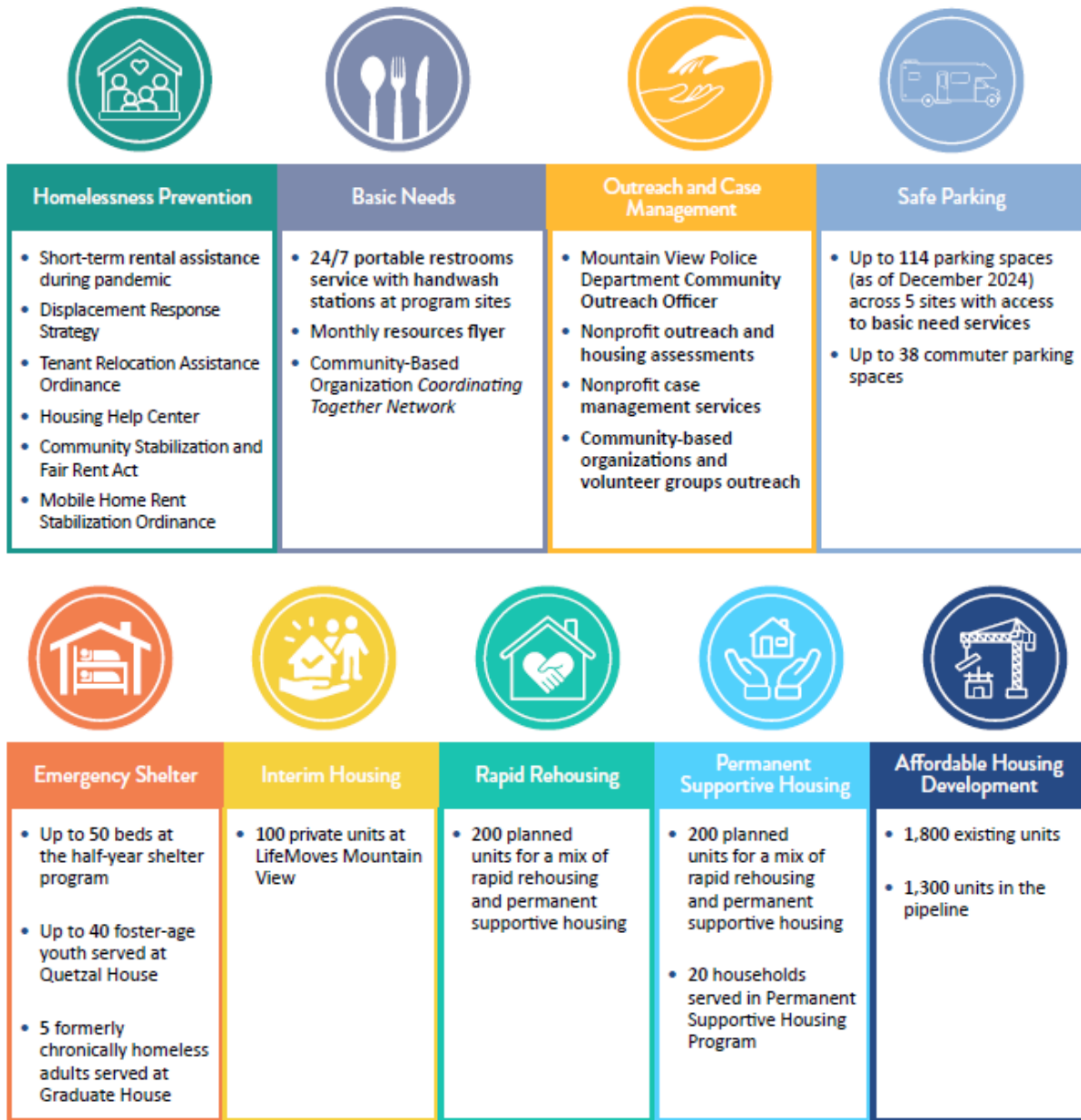


Figure 3: City’s Response within the County of Santa Clara Supportive Housing System

Analysis of Current Situation: Challenges and Opportunities

The project team conducted a review of homelessness data and the City’s existing programs and services, as summarized above. In addition, the team reviewed the information provided through the stakeholder engagement process, including regular feedback from the advisory committee and input from other stakeholders to better understand the needs and opportunities to enhance

services for homeless residents and those at risk of homelessness. Through this analysis, five themes emerged which are the basis of the Plan’s goals and are summarized in **Figure 4** below.



Figure 4: Themes from Data Analysis and Stakeholder Feedback

Roadmap: Vision, Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Actions

The Plan provides a timely opportunity to reflect on the City’s work over the past eight years, set forth a roadmap for addressing homelessness in Mountain View over the next seven to 10 years, and explore ongoing funding needs and sources to replace annual reliance on limited-period

funds. The Plan includes a vision statement and set of principles, which guide the goals, strategies, and actions, collectively referred to as the Strategy and Action Plan (the Strategy), which is summarized below and provided in full in Appendix A (Pages 75 to 78).

Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The vision statement reflects the City’s ongoing commitment to respond to homelessness through regional collaboration, dignity and compassion, and equitable access to services. The guiding principles shown in **Figure 5** below guide the strategies and actions and were developed based on stakeholder engagement and input.

Vision

The City of Mountain View is committed to working with its local and regional partners to help people at risk of losing housing remain housed and help those experiencing homelessness access services and secure available and safe housing.

Guiding Principles



Figure 5: Guiding Principles

Goals and Strategies

The Plan identifies **five goals** for the City to prioritize in the years ahead requiring local and regional investments, commitments, and partnerships. Each goal has a set of corresponding **strategies (13) and actions (42)**. The goals and strategies are provided in **Figure 6** below. **The actions are provided in Appendix A on Pages 75 to 78.**



Figure 6: Goals and Strategies

Council Question No. 1: Does Council agree with the recommended Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies or have other feedback?

Implementation and Expenditure Plan

The Plan sets a course for collective action to guide planning for further addressing homelessness in Mountain View. **The City will take a phased approach (with immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions) to fund continuing, enhanced, and new programs and services over the next seven to 10 years.** This approach will include a consideration of City funding (either limited-period or ongoing), grant or philanthropic funding (as applicable), and, over time, incorporation of established programs into the City’s base budget. Specific sources for funding are not currently identified. If the Plan is approved by Council, recommended funding would be built into long-range forecasts, as would any funding sources that may be developed. Until then, the City will continue to partner, leverage, and compete for appropriate federal- and state-level grants.

The Implementation and Expenditure Plan lists action items within each strategy and goal, including information regarding timelines, lead department/division, and cost range. Of the 42 recommended actions, 10 actions are recommended for funding in the short- or medium-term, including five existing programs recommended for continued funding (**Table 2**), two existing programs recommended for enhanced funding (**Table 3**), and four new programs recommended for funding (**Table 4**). These programs are summarized in the tables below and described in more detail in Pages 65 to 73 of the Plan.

Table 2: Existing Homeless Initiatives






INITIATIVE	PARTNER-PROVIDED FUNDING	CITY-PROVIDED ONE-TIME FUNDING
 Safe Parking	\$1,100,000 (County)	\$700,000
 Permanent Supportive Housing Program	\$90,000 (County)	\$125,000
 Homeless Prevention Case Management	\$19,287 (CSA and CDBG)	\$120,000
 Outreach to Vulnerable Populations	\$22,673 (CSA)	\$42,000
 Hygiene and Basic Health at Program Sites	N/A	\$30,000
Total:	\$1,231,960	\$1,017,000

Table 3: Enhanced Homeless Initiatives












INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	FUNDING	RECOMMENDED COST
 Permanent Supportive Housing Program	 Medium-Term	Ongoing	\$100,000
 Outreach to Vulnerable Populations	 Medium-Term	Ongoing	\$40,000
Total:			\$140,000

Table 4: New Homeless Initiatives

INITIATIVE	TIMELINE	FUNDING	RECOMMENDED COST
 Pilot Multi-City Street Outreach	 Medium-Term	One-Time	\$150,000
 Homeless Prevention Emergency Rent Relief Program	 Short-Term	Ongoing	\$100,000
 Pilot Funding to Local Organizations	 Short-Term	One-Time	\$50,000
 Pilot Mental Health First Aid Training	 Short-Term	One-Time	\$25,000
Total:			\$325,000

Question No. 2: Does Council agree with the actions recommended for short- and medium-term funding?

Fiscal Implications

The Implementation and Expenditure Plan includes recommendations to continue funding existing homeless initiatives, which are currently funded using one-time funds, such as the General Fund, General Housing Fund, Successor Housing Agency Fund, and public benefit funds, at a cost of approximately \$1 million per fiscal year. The availability of these funding sources is subject to change. As homeless initiatives are fulfilled through annual funding contracts with partner providers, the contract amounts may be modified on an annual basis based on the budget at that time. Over time, staff recommends a phased approach as part of the annual budget process to transition this \$1 million in funding from the use of one-time funds to inclusion in the base budget to continue **existing, ongoing programs**, as permitted by budget conditions. The Implementation and Expenditure Plan also proposes \$265,000 in ongoing funding for **enhanced and new programs** and \$225,000 in one-time funding. This totals \$490,000 in new proposed expenditures that would also be phased in as budget conditions allow.

Of note, on November 5, 2024, Mountain View residents overwhelmingly supported the vision for the Mountain View of Tomorrow and passed Measure G by 72% to create an additional tier to the existing property transfer tax for transactions over \$6.0 million. The measure is anticipated to generate approximately \$9.5 million on an annual basis. Per City Council direction, 5% to 15%

of this additional source of revenue will be dedicated to other general governmental services, including road maintenance, active transportation, small business support, and homeless support services, among others.

Conclusion

Since 2016, the City has been a regional leader in responding to the homelessness crisis and has made strategic and meaningful investments in effective programs and services that are serving those in the community who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. However, the shortage of affordable housing and high costs of living in Santa Clara County, the Bay Area, and the state continue to drive up rates of homelessness. The City is committed to doing its part to address the homelessness crisis within the context of the available resources, authority, and expertise of a small-sized city responding to a complex regional issue. The City cannot solve homelessness on its own. The City developed the *Pathways to Housing—Homeless Response Strategy Implementation and Expenditure Plan* to reflect on the City’s work over the past eight years and serve as the roadmap for addressing homelessness in Mountain View over the next seven to 10 years through actionable goals, strategies, and a plan for expenditures and implementation. The proposed continued focus is to work in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and CBOs on strategies that help unhoused and unstably housed residents enter and make progress along a pathway to permanent housing.

Question No. 3: Does Council have additional considerations for staff to include in the final Plan?

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

Question No. 1: Does Council agree with the recommended Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies or have other feedback?

Question No. 2: Does Council agree with the actions recommended for short- and medium-term funding?

Question No. 3: Does Council have additional considerations for staff to include in the final Plan?

NEXT STEPS

Staff will incorporate Council feedback from the Study Session and return to Council in Q2 2025 with the final *Pathways to Housing—Homeless Response Strategy Implementation and Expenditure Plan* to seek Council adoption.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting, website and social media channels, Council meeting notices, and a copy of the report was sent to the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing, County Supervisor Abe-Koga (District 5), the Coordinating Together Group, and the Pathways to Housing Strategy Advisory Committee, Working Sessions-Focus Group attendees, and interviewees.

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- Attachments:
1. *Pathways to Housing*—Homeless Response Strategy Implementation and Expenditure Plan Draft
 2. Homeless Regulatory Context Summary