

City of Malibu Strategic Plan for Homelessness
Community Advisory Group

Tuesday, February 13, 2018 ♦ 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Malibu City Hall - Multipurpose Room

S U M M A R Y R E P O R T

INTRODUCTION

On February 13, 2018, the City of Malibu hosted the first meeting of the Community Advisory Group for the City of Malibu Strategic Plan for Homelessness. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the project; present findings from initial outreach efforts; facilitate a discussion regarding homelessness issues, challenges and opportunities facing the City of Malibu; envision what success would look like.

Meeting Format

The first meeting of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) occurred on February 13, 2018, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Susan Duenas of the City of Malibu welcomed Advisory members and provided an overview of the purpose of the planning process and initial meeting. Carolyn Verheyen (from MIG, Inc., the consultants selected to assist with Plan development) provided the project overview and facilitated discussions within each segment of the agenda. During the discussion, Esmeralda Garcia from MIG recorded key outcomes and discussion points on a wall-sized piece of paper, or “wallgraphic.” A summary of the main discussion points is provided in the following sections, and a copy of the wallgraphic is attached to this report.

Issues and Challenges

The CAG identified the following issues and challenges related to homelessness in Malibu.

- Fire Safety - Homeless individuals may start fires at encampments to stay warm. Fires at locations not intended for that use pose risks of causing wildfires.
- Affordable Housing - A lack of affordable housing options makes it more challenging to integrate homeless populations within Malibu and even elsewhere in Los Angeles County.
 - It is much more attractive for home owners to convert available housing rental space to vacation rentals instead of offering the housing units to people with affordable housing vouchers.

- Public Health - There aren't enough sanitation facilities for the homeless population to use, and this results in unsanitary conditions that may affect health conditions and the environment.
- Inadequate Information - There is not enough awareness among the homeless and the community-at-large of services currently available.
- Geography - Malibu's geography provides a large wilderness area to navigate, making it easy for homeless people to relocate from one area to another when discovered.
 - The terrain is attractive for those who prefer to avoid any services and do not want to be reached.
- Location for Services - Malibu has inadequate access to medical services and social services.
 - There is a lack of space/locations to provide those services.
 - Siting of facilities is challenging because community members don't want them near their homes.
 - Local rehabilitation centers may be contributing to the homeless population **which has been found to be the case in some southern California cities.**
- Diversity of Needs - The homeless population consists of a variety of people requiring various different types of services to address their specific needs.
 - Some are Malibu residents who become homeless and prefer to stay within the neighborhood after they lose their homes.
 - Some homeless individuals have a pet companion and need a shelter that also provides shelter for their pet.
 - Some have special needs and require services in addition to housing.
- Perception - Some residents perceive that some issues in Malibu are directly caused by the presence of the homeless population.
- Criminal Justice and Mental Health Systems need to change in order to implement regional and local solutions to the homeless issue
 - Policy needs to change at a state level.

Opportunities

CAG members had many ideas about opportunities and potential strategies to address the issues and challenges.

- Closely coordinate and expand outreach to homeless individuals.
 - Stay in touch with the homeless population more consistently with teams of volunteers and by leveraging or partnering with community groups as much as possible.

- Effectively reaching homeless populations is a specialized skill that requires training. Establishing a partnership with Pepperdine University social work students and faculty would build capacity for outreach to homeless populations.
- Create a one-stop communication center such as a 1-800 number.
- Evaluate and restructure services for homeless populations to better meet their needs.
 - Rethink the housing voucher process to make it more accessible and adaptable to the needs of individuals who are struggling.
 - Rehabilitation and Medi-cal services have very narrow and restrictive requirements targeting people with mental or substance abuse needs which excludes some homeless individuals. Providing scholarships or other flexible options would reach a broader population with different needs.
 - Establish a common transitional program to streamline assistance.
 - Prioritize services to visible homeless populations.
 - Brilliant Corners temporary housing flex spending account model may be a good approach to meet unique and individual needs.
 - Build relationships and humanize the issue by providing more individual mentorship and care.
 - Invest in existing groups that already provide services to homeless populations and facilitate regular coordination.
 - Provide facilities that address immediate needs such as showers, laundry machines, storage units, etc.
- Research best practices and prioritize strategies to address the issue more comprehensively.
 - Include measurable outcomes to assess the success of each approach.
 - Research how other municipalities have addressed the issue of homelessness and gather best practices, specifically in New York and Pacific Palisades.
- Increase capacity and modify policies to better address public safety.
 - Launch more restrictive parking enforcement near public open space areas.
 - Restrict camping in fire hazard locations and establish a “clean camp” initiative to ensure no one uses restricted zones, not just the homeless population.
 - Build capacity to improve surveillance and enforcement via auxiliary policy, volunteers, CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), community meetings, etc.

- Revise the red flag warning to include emergency shelter. For example, the Santa Ana Winds and other weather conditions are forecast with enough time to prepare by offering temporary housing vouchers.
 - Outreach to motels and local shelters to provide housing during weather emergencies.
- Community buy-in is essential to achieve a successful strategy and approach. Education and demonstrated progress are needed to earn additional community support.

Definition of Success

CAG members were asked to describe what success would look like, or their vision for the future.

- Reduced number of homeless people living on the street.
- Increased public safety and reduced impact on the City of Malibu community.
- A more coordinated effort.
- Both micro- and macro-level solutions.
- A multi-faceted approach with solutions that are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and address the underlying issues (such as mental health, substance abuse, etc.).
- The City of Malibu taking a leadership role and participating in advocacy at the state level.
- Strong and trusting relationships in place for collective work.
Resources leveraged to build capacity.
- Increased community awareness and participation to change perceptions.
 - Some community issues are not the result of people experiencing homelessness
 - Communication about how issues are being addressed
- A regional approach that leads to solutions and better outcomes.