Recommendation
Staff recommends that City Council discuss and provide feedback on services for the unhoused in Palo Alto.

Executive Summary
The City Council asked staff to bring an item for discussion about services for the unhoused in Palo Alto. This report provides a summary of the efforts the City currently invests in from policies to quality of life concerns. This item is a broad overview as a study session. Staff anticipates this will lead to the City Council providing a general discussion of priority activities on this topic. Staff will then develop more details on those priorities and return to City Council with more specificity in areas where the City Council asks staff to focus.

This report is organized as follows:
- Areas for discussion by the City Council as part of this study session, to provide feedback on potential options for furthering this work
- Summary of current Palo Alto efforts for the unhoused
- Policy work the City Council has undertaken and the current status
- Programs that have been instituted, City funding that has been allocated to programs to support unhoused, and community partners who provide direct services
- Quality of Life issues being faced by local unhoused residents

Staff has provided significant information on current services, policies and programs to assist the City Council in understanding the current services and support provided to the unhoused in Palo Alto. This information is provided to aid in a discussion on next steps the City Council may wish to take related to the unhoused in Palo Alto. Some programs will require support and interest from the City in a very near term while others may be combined with other City efforts associated with land use policies such as the Housing Element update. Ultimately, as a study session, staff is not seeking a City Council action. Instead, staff is seeking feedback on how the
City Council would like to prioritize needs for the unhoused and how the City will meet the need(s) identified, given current services offered and available resources.

The four areas for City Council consideration are:
   1) Vehicle Dwelling policy
   2) Support for the County’s Community Plan to End Homelessness
   3) Housing and Shelter Development Options
   4) Outreach / Street Outreach Case Worker(s) for Unhoused and Mental Health Support.

All efforts are to continue to assess the continuum of housing options needed to increase available housing as part of the strategy.

**Background**
Providing services for the unhoused in Palo Alto and ultimately ending homelessness has been a long-standing local concern. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be present, the strain on individuals and households has increased the number of people experiencing homelessness, challenged service providers to find new ways to deliver services, and makes this topic even more relevant.

In light of these concerns, the Palo Alto City Council has also been focused on this issue. On January 25, 2021, during a discussion of recovery from the pandemic, the City Council directed staff to:

*...amend the prioritized Community and Economic Recovery workplan and future budget actions with the following: iv. Look at how to allocate additional resources to RV parking, unhoused, and childcare.*

In addition, Santa Clara County has developed the *Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness* (2020-2025: link: [https://housingtoolkit.sccgov.org/take-action/santa-clara-county-community-plan-end-homelessness-2020-2025](https://housingtoolkit.sccgov.org/take-action/santa-clara-county-community-plan-end-homelessness-2020-2025)). The plan focuses on addressing homelessness, the continuum of care needed to help people stay housed, and helping unhoused persons find housing and support services. The County has asked communities within the County to formally endorse the plan. This plan is an update of the previous plan.

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1 Action Minutes from January 25, 2021 Council Meeting:
https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/80334
Discussion
This report details the City’s current efforts to serve unhoused community members and shares some ideas for consideration by the City Council. The City’s current efforts fall into the overlapping categories of (1) Policy, (2) Programs and Program Support, and (3) Quality of Life. These categories are based on the roadmap strategies in the Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness:

Potential Areas for City Council Discussion
This section focuses on potential areas for further discussion as the City Council develops its approach to continuing to serve unhoused community members and ultimately reduce the number of Palo Alto community members facing homelessness. A key component to developing and supporting the unhoused is understanding the continuum of housing options that are necessary to service members of the community at different stages, from emergency shelter, basic human services, and outreach to link people to services, to an increase in affordable housing. The options below are some ideas for City Council discussion.

1. **Vehicle Dwelling** – The City can prioritize resources for providing safe parking spaces for those dwelling in vehicles. Resources can include:
   a. Developing policies that allow safe parking for 4 or more vehicles on private parking lots. This would include streamlining the existing policy to permit operation on the grounds of religious organizations, enabling additional sites, and expanding the number of vehicles allowed.
   b. Adopting a permanent ordinance for safe parking at religious congregations, other private sites, and public lands that provides clear standards and procedures. This would transition the temporary ordinance (no expiration date) to an ongoing ordinance, which could be amended by future City Council action as needed to respond to changing conditions.

c. Pursue the development of larger safe parking lots on public and/or private land. This may include identifying unused city-owned land, partnering with private sector landowners, and/or collaboration with the County for program operations. The County estimates it cost between $15 - $40 per vehicle per night to operate a safe parking program.

d. Review local policy and/or enforcement procedures related to long-term on-street parking requirements.

2. **Support County Plan to End Homelessness** - Adopt a resolution formally supporting the Santa Clara County Plan to End Homelessness

3. **Housing and Shelter Development Options** – The City can pursue construction of emergency, over-night shelters and/or more affordable housing, especially housing for extremely-low and very low-income households. Note: these are high-commitment and costly efforts.

   a. Evaluate creation of a fixed-location shelter in Palo Alto: A permanent, fixed location can provide a point of connection for unhoused persons that is in excess of what can be provided through the rotational shelters (such as the Hotel de Zink).

   b. Identify public land to be used for the development of affordable housing and/or a shelter for unhoused persons. The high cost of land in Palo Alto can make developing affordable housing challenging. By providing public land as a ground-lease or other arrangements, the per unit cost of housing can decrease. The City may also be a partner in developing the type of housing on the site, including who the housing serves.

   c. Seek State / Federal funds (even one time) for the above-named projects. Some funding sources are project specific, and best sought by the project’s operator and/or developer (may be a nonprofit) in collaboration with the City or alone. The City could play a larger role in supporting applications, supporting projects—especially when such projects face challenges from residents who may object to a project’s location.

   d. **Rental Assistance as homelessness prevention** – Direct funds towards rental assistance. The City has supported such relief programs by allocating CDBG funding towards these efforts. Both state and federal relief programs are providing some rental assistance to address the scale of assistance needed in response to COVID-19. The City can serve in an information-sharing capacity to provide information to the public about how to access these programs.

   e. **Housing support for newly unhoused individuals** such as rapid rehousing which quickly moves families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness into housing and provides case management, supportive services, and a time-limited rental subsidy (typically 6-24 months).

4. **Outreach / Street Outreach Case Worker(s) for Unhoused and Mental Health Support**

   a. Building trust with unhoused individuals in order to work with them to address their needs is most effective with the help of a consistent outreach case worker. A City-funded outreach case worker could provide services to other vulnerable populations
who regularly use public spaces such as parks, libraries, and community centers. At present, the City does not have any organization under contract specifically to perform this function on behalf of the City.

As this item is a Study Session and not an action item, the information within this report is a broad overview. Staff anticipates this discussion will lead to the City Council providing broad direction and priorities on this topic and then staff can follow up with more details on those priorities and return to City Council with more specificity in areas where the City Council is interested in focusing.

As a reminder, the City Council has adopted an aggressive list of goals for 2021 and has most recently approved a workplan for its highest priority of Community and Economic Recovery (CER) on March 22, 2021. In this workplan, staff articulated that it has fully allocated City resources, thus additional projects identified as part of this unhoused services effort may impact the pace of completion of some of those projects or others previously identified as priorities by the City Council. To ensure continued progress, staff recommends that the City Council consider ways of including further work on this important topic through existing plans and partnerships such as the Housing Element work and or any partnership with the County.

The following sections provide significant detail about the various programs, policies, and support that is provided for the unhoused.

**Summary of Current Palo Alto Efforts for the Unhoused**

This report provides information about existing policies, programs, and quality of life initiatives undertaken by the City in conjunction with local partners, as well as other programs that serve unhoused persons in Palo Alto. Table 1 below shows how the policies, programs, and quality of life efforts in Palo Alto align with the county-wide strategies. These items are further explained throughout this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>City Category</th>
<th>County-wide Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Financial and/or Rental Assistance</td>
<td>Emergency rent and utility funding assistance (LifeMoves, Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, YWCA of Silicon Valley)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>City Category</td>
<td>County-wide Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Closet and delivery of food</td>
<td>Food Closet and delivery of food to vulnerable residents needing to shelter in place during COVID (Downtown Streets Team)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Search</td>
<td>Assistance to help homeless and low-income individuals secure housing (LifeMoves, Silicon Valley Independent Living Center)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Parking at Congregations</td>
<td>Safe parking overnight for households dwelling in vehicles. Up to 4 vehicles may participate per congregation. Includes access to restrooms, showers, and connection to services. To date: 1 permit approved; 2 permits in review.</td>
<td>Policy (permit review and issuance)</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Parking on Public Land</td>
<td>Provides a place for households in vehicles to park vehicles 24 hours a day. Includes access to restrooms, showers, and connection to services. 1 site in Palo Alto at 2000 Geng Road, serving up to 12 vehicles.</td>
<td>Policy + Program Support (lease of land)</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Supplies for unhoused children</td>
<td>Services and support to families living in Recreational Vehicles including school materials, computer equipment, and other essential supplies such as PPE, cleaning supplies, gas cards, food, etc. (Karat School Project, Kafenia Peace Collective)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Shelter Program</td>
<td>Support of Rotating Shelter program in local congregations provided by LifeMoves – Hotel de Zink (year-round) and Heart &amp; Home Collaborative (seasonal)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower/Laundry Services</td>
<td>Support of mobile shower and laundry services in South Palo Alto for the unhoused. (We Hope)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street and Parking Garage litter</td>
<td>Provision of jobs via a City contract that focuses on reducing trash from full garbage containers, providing litter removal for sidewalks, alleyways, and garages, and reporting vehicles and/or activities of concern to the proper authorities. (Downtown Street Team)</td>
<td>Program Support (Public Works contract)</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Program Support (Public Works contract)</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-Medicine Equipment</td>
<td>Purchases of equipment to enable telehealth and compliance with HIPPA records retention for the unhoused and also low income. (Peninsula HealthCare Connections.)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development Program/Basic Needs stipends for work experience</td>
<td>Provide comprehensive support services for homeless/ unemployed to secure employment. In addition, stipends to support unhoused individuals providing peer to peer outreach and staffing at the Downtown Food Closet (Downtown Streets Team)</td>
<td>Program Support</td>
<td>Strategy 1, Strategy 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Santa Clara County’s coordinated assessment system (a consistent, county-wide intake process), all unhoused people complete a standard assessment tool (the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool or VI-SPDAT) that considers the household’s situation and identifies the best type of housing intervention to address their situation.

**Attachment A** shares information about Palo Alto’s unhoused population based on households who took a VI-SPDAT assessment during Nov 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020 and stated an affiliation with the City of Palo Alto. According to the VI-SPDAT assessment, 240 homeless households have an affiliation with Palo Alto. The chart below shows the household type for the unhoused.

![By Household Type](image)

**Figure 1: VI SPDAT Data**

In addition to the VI-SPDAT count, the County has also done “Point-in-Time” Counts of the unhoused in the county. Every two years, during the last ten days of January, communities across the United States conduct comprehensive counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. The last Point-in-Time Count was done in 2019 and it showed 313 Total Unhoused in Palo Alto (299 unsheltered and 14 sheltered). That report can be found online at: [https://bit.ly/3tR0M4C](https://bit.ly/3tR0M4C).

These biennial Point-in-Time Counts estimate the prevalence of homelessness in each community and collect information on individuals and families residing in temporary shelters and places not meant for human habitation, and ultimately help the federal government better understand the nature and extent of homelessness nationwide. As required of all jurisdictions receiving federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide homeless services, Continuums of Care (CoC) across the country report the findings of their local Point-in-Time Count in their annual funding application to HUD.

**Policy**
**Safe Parking Policies & Permitting**

One way to assist households dwelling in vehicles to find permanent housing is to provide safe places for those households to park the vehicles in which they are living. Known as “safe parking programs,” the nature of the programs varies among communities. The Council has implemented a policy framework that allows 2 types of safe parking programs to legally operate in Palo Alto: (1) congregation-based safe parking and (2) safe parking on publicly owned lands.

Congregation-based safe parking allows a permitted religious institution to host up to four (4) vehicles overnight in its parking lot. The permittee must work with a qualified safe parking program operator, provide certain amenities to the participants, and follow the City’s conditions. For congregation-based programs, the City acts to review an application, notice the application, process any appeals, participate in community outreach, conduct the 90-day program check in, and respond to any complaints received regarding operations at a site. Currently, the City performs these services at no cost to the applicant/permit holder. The City acts as a partner to support program establishment and to deal with any operations challenges. The City does not provide funding or oversee operations or program management.

To date, three congregations have submitted safe parking applications. Several other congregations have verbally indicated an intention to submit applications. At the time of this report writing, one permit has been issued for the congregation-based programs.

Though there is broad support for the safe parking program, the reaction to the submitted applications has been mixed. The City has heard from residents who are supportive of the programs, and neighbors with concerns. Some of the concerns have been addressed, yet not to the satisfaction of all residents. Staff anticipate some permits will be appealed to the Council.

The City has also leased public land to Santa Clara County for the operation of a 24-hour safe parking program at 2000 Geng Road. The site opened for operation on February 16, 2021. The City has provided a quality site that can serve up to 12 households dwelling in recreational vehicles (RVs). The site offers restrooms, showers, and space for additional programming. Some of the programming opportunities may not be fully realized until the pandemic subsides. Through leasing the land at no-cost, the City has provided a significant resource that enables this program. The Council also adopted an ordinance to provide the policy framework to support the program.

**Hotel de Zink**

The City provides a permitting framework that allows the Hotel de Zink shelter system to operate in local congregations. Hotel de Zink has been serving as an emergency shelter that rotates locations to congregations throughout Palo Alto and Menlo Park. The program is hosted
at a different congregation each month, where volunteers set up nightly beds and serve home-cooked meals for homeless adults who would otherwise be forced to sleep in cars or on the streets. Clients may stay at Hotel de Zink for up to 90 days, which provides them with stability, safety, and a team of experienced staff working to help them become self-sufficient (source: www.lifemoves.org/directory/hotel-de-zink/).

The name Hotel de Zink honors Palo Alto’s first shelter for the unhoused, originally created in 1931 during the Great Depression after residents approached the Palo Alto City Council to assist those who were in need of assistance. The shelter was named after Palo Alto Police Chief Zink who served the Palo Alto community for three decades between 1922 and 1952 and was very supportive of the shelter (source: www.paloaltohistory.org/hotel-de-zink.php). Though the original shelter name is used, the modern Hotel de Zink is not a single shelter location, it is instead a network of faith-based sites who offer space that is used as a shelter on a rotating basis and managed by LifeMoves. The City provides funding to Hotel de Zink through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

There is also a seasonal (winter) rotating shelter program for women in local congregations run by Heart & Home Collaborative which operates under the same permitting framework as Hotel de Zink.

During much of the COVID-19, the shelters became “stationary.” As protocols and practices have become more well-known and vaccination of the more vulnerable is underway, the shelter will resume monthly rotations.

**Programming & Program Funding**

The City of Palo Alto supports services to the unhoused as well as homelessness prevention through three main funding sources: HSRAP, CDBG, and Emerging Needs Fund (all further explained below). Attachment B contains the specific City of Palo Alto expenditures on the unhoused/homelessness prevention for FY 2021. At a high level, funding for the unhoused is geared towards unhoused support and homelessness prevention as shown here:
Unhoused Support:

- Workforce Development
- Basic Needs Stipends for work experience
- Food
- Seasonal Homeless shelter
- School Supplies for homeless children
- Case Management
- Tele-medicine Equipment
- Shower/Laundry Services

Homelessness Prevention Support:

- Rental/Financial Assistance – There are local and the State rental assistance programs available to local residents during the COVID pandemic. LifeMoves – Opportunity Center is designated by the County as the Emergency Assistance Network Agency for financial assistance for Palo Alto [https://www.lifemoves.org/directory/opportunity-services-center/](https://www.lifemoves.org/directory/opportunity-services-center/). Information about the State’s program can be found at [https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/](https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/).

**Program Funding Sources**

1) Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP)

- Funding Source – Palo Alto General Fund
- FY 2020-21 Funding amount
  - $549,306 – total funding (annual allocation); $122,835 – homeless services sub total
  - $40,000 – one-time funding reserve; a $50,000 reserve was established in FY 2015 by the City Council to be used during future budget cycles. In FY 2019, $10,000 was spent on the Heart and Home Collaborative.
- HSRAP funding cycle is for two years. Current two-year cycle ends on June 30, 2021.
- Funding Categories – Applicants propose programs and services in response to a “Priority of Needs” recommended by the Human Relations Commission (HRC) and included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.
- Funding Recommendations made by the HRC and approved by the City Council.
2) Community Development Block Grant – (CDBG)
   - Funding Source – Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
   - Current Funding amount: HUD determines the amount of each entitlement grant by a statutory formula which uses several objective measures of community needs, including the extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relationship to other metropolitan areas. Palo Alto, historically, has received approximately $500,000 in entitlement grant annually. After including the program income which is generated from loan repayments and rental income in excess of expenses on specific properties acquired or rehabilitated with CDBG funds and unused CDBG funding from previous years, the total available funding is approximately $700,000 to $800,000 annually.
   - Every year, approximately half of the available CDBG funds are used for homeless services/homelessness prevention. The other half is used for housing rehabilitation, public services and improvement facilities, and a portion for CDBG program administration.
   - Funding Categories – The CDBG program has five primary activity areas in which to allocate funds: Public Services, Planning and Administration, Economic Development, Housing Rehabilitation, and Public Improvement and Facilities. Funding recommendations are made by the HRC and approved by the Council.

Annual allocations for both HSRAP and CDBG funding is reported as part of the annual adopted budget in the Community Services Department and Special Revenue Fund Summary sections respectively. Go to Attachment C for FY 2020-21 CDBG funding allocations.

3) Emerging Needs Fund
   - The Fund assists nonprofits with short-term and/or urgent funding needs outside of the HSRAP process.
   - Funding Source – Palo Alto General Fund
   - Funding amount – FY 2020-21
     - $50,000 base budget + $41,300 additional for COVID Relief Efforts; $39,600 – Subtotal - homelessness, homelessness prevention
   - Funding Cycle open year-round for Emergency Needs and four times per year for Emerging/Critical Needs
   - Funding Categories: Emergency Needs; Critical Needs; and Emerging Needs
   - Agency may not receive funding more than once in a two-year period
   - Funding recommendations made by the HRC and approved by a designee of the City Manager
4) Other Potential Funding Sources
The City is working with the State and Federal advocates to stay aware of upcoming funding opportunities. Though there are a few opportunities forthcoming through the proposed Governor’s budget, it is important to note that many funds related to the unhoused are sent to the counties for distribution. This necessitates continued coordination between the City and the County related to unhoused services. Some funding opportunities of which the City is currently aware include the following in the Governor’s proposed budget: Project Homekey (to be used for acquisition or rehabilitation of hotels, motels, or hostels to provide housing to individuals and families experiencing homelessness); competitive grants to counties through the Department of Health Care Services for the acquisition and rehabilitation of sites to expand the continuum of behavioral health treatment resources; and funding through the Department of Social Services for the acquisition and rehabilitation of adult residential facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly. Additionally, Santa Clara County Measure A funds projects could include a mix of rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

Community Partners
City staff work with a variety of partners in serving the unhoused, most of which receive funding from the sources above. These organizations are partners not only in provision of services but also in providing expertise and local knowledge in serving the unhoused. County-wide partners are also a valuable partner; providing expertise in serving the unhoused as well data provision and county/state funding sources.

- **Community Working Group** – Affordable housing developer. Local sites include the Opportunity Center, 801 Alma and Alma Gardens.
- **Destination Home** - A public-private partnership that uses collective impact strategies to accomplish its mission of ending homelessness in Santa Clara County.
- **Downtown Street Team** - Job training, leadership skills development, peer to peer outreach efforts, case management and job opportunities for homeless individuals. Also operates Downtown Food Closet.
- **Heart & Home Collaborative** – Seasonal rotating homeless shelter for women at local congregations.
- **Karat School Project** – Services and support to families living in Recreational Vehicles including school materials and other essential supplies such as PPE, cleaning supplies, gas cards, food, etc.
- **LifeMoves** – Provide financial assistance to low income and homeless residents of Palo Alto, as well as food, shelter (Hotel de Zink), case management, and an array of other services at the Opportunity Services Center.
- **Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing** - Works to increase the supply of housing and supportive housing that is affordable and available to extremely low income and/or special needs households. Lead county agency on issues of homelessness.
• **Peninsula HealthCare Connections** – Medical clinic located at the Opportunity Services Center which provides affordable healthcare to underserved and at-risk community members, particularly individuals experiencing homelessness.

• **We Hope** – Provider of shelter, food and job training. Based in East Palo Alto, but open to Palo Alto unhoused. They also provide a weekly mobile shower and laundry services in South Palo Alto for the unhoused.

**Vehicle Dwelling Outside of Safe Parking Programs**

City staff collaborate with Stanford External Relations (Office of Community Engagement and Office of Government Affairs) to convene City, County, Palo Alto Unified School District, non-profit, Stanford, and philanthropic stakeholders to discuss the status and support for RV dwellers living along the El Camino Real corridor in Palo Alto. The group has focused on understanding and meeting the needs of families, the new safe parking efforts, sharing news and resources, and developing a survey to get more information about the needs of vehicle-dwelling families.

The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (Graduate School of Education) provided consultation on a survey which is currently being implemented by Karat School Project (KSP) and WeHope. Stanford also collaborated with KSP and partners on a community clean-up of the El Camino Real corridor which included some families who had moved to the Geng Road safe parking location. This collaborative effort continues to look at solutions and options for these members of our community.

**Vehicle Parking**

The Palo Alto Police Department has been working diligently to engage appropriately and productively with unhoused members of the community, both those living in vehicles and those staying in public places, particularly downtown. Efforts focus on providing hope and help, with police personnel routinely offering connection to social services and available resources in collaboration with the Community Services Department.

In early 2021, after a rise in property accumulating on sidewalks and the roadway along El Camino Real and in other areas of town, the Police Department increased the frequency with which officers addressed abandoned property and vehicles that may be parked for more than 72 hours on any public street. Overall, the strategy aims to ensure vehicles are operable and not abandoned, as required by state and local laws. The strategy also addresses health and safety issues; ensuring that public sidewalks and streets are not blocked and are kept free of abandoned items, trash, or debris. As a result, the conditions along El Camino Real have improved.

The Community Service Officers (CSO) in the Police Department provide notice to all vehicles that they must drive at least ½ mile after being parked for 72 hours. The notice is conducted via warning flyers. The posting also coincides with interaction and contacts with those parked along
El Camino Real or other locations. At this time, CSOs can refer households to available services. Staff continue to monitor the situation on a regular basis to ensure legal compliance continues. More information about this process is detailed in the City’s blog post, recently issued to help inform the public on this complex issue.²

The City has received a number of complaint emails from residents expressing dismay and concern about the practice of enforcing the 72-hour parking rule. In addition, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) discussed the topic at the March 17, 2021 meeting. At that meeting, some HRC members expressed a desire to allow vehicles to park longer than 72 hours; to develop a permit program so that those on a wait list for a safe parking site do not have to move every 72 hours; or to otherwise soften the means of conveying the requirement that vehicles remain operable and periodically move.

**Quality of Life**

Staff works to track the current situation facing unhoused individuals in Palo Alto by being in regular communication with local service providers. This includes regular monitoring of HSRAP and CDBG grantees. Since the onset of COVID-19, the Office of Human Services hosts a bi-weekly meeting with providers of services to vulnerable populations. Attachment D shares personal stories received from some of the providers and clients.

In consultation with local providers of services to the unhoused, there are several key issues facing local unhoused residents that they brought forward:

- **Local Shelter Space** - At present there are only two shelter options in Palo Alto, and both are rotating shelters without a fixed place of operations. Both are operating at 50% capacity (up to 10 participants each) due to COVID restrictions. Furthermore, COVID has compounded the issue of access to County shelters, as the process to get into any shelter has been centralized through the Santa Clara County shelter hotline (except for Hotel de Zink and Heart and Home). For the unhoused individuals without phones, this process is very difficult to navigate. Most of the shelters are concentrated in South County.

- **Open Public Places During COVID** - Pre-COVID, many individuals experiencing homelessness would spend their time in libraries, community centers, coffee shops, and grocery stores. These spaces are now either fully closed or they do not allow indoor gathering. Even places where unhoused people used to receive hot meals have closed or implemented take-and-go or outdoor dining. This has led to an inability for these individuals to charge their devices such as their phones, which has further isolated them. Also, most public restrooms have been closed. So as housed individuals have been sheltering in place, the unhoused have faced a lack of places to go and take shelter, making an already-vulnerable population much more vulnerable.

² Link to City blog post: https://medium.com/paloaltoconnect/parking-issues-on-el-camino-real-a-complex-community-issue-fda6a0ee314d
• **Unhoused individuals who are undocumented:** Undocumented immigrants are unable to receive most government assistance, such as CALFRESH (food stamps), General Assistance, and even Medi-Cal benefits. Inability to access public benefits presents serious challenges and barriers especially to the unhoused population. Furthermore, without these benefits, these individuals are also unable to obtain free government phones. Without access to a free phone, they are further isolated and have difficulty communicating with case managers, social workers, etc.

• **Employment** – Unhoused individuals face barriers to employment. Government and non-profits work with employers to help them understand the population and encourage employers to offer opportunities and job training. Due to the high unemployment caused by the recession, finding low-wage job-training opportunities for unhoused persons is even more challenging than before.

• **Permanent Affordable Housing** – More permanent affordable housing is needed to ensure unhoused persons can exit homelessness. This includes:
  - Permanent supportive housing, which provides long-term rental assistance, case management and supportive services to the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals and families in the community;
  - Rapid Rehousing which quickly moves families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and provides case management, supportive services, and a time-limited rental subsidy (typically 6-24 months);
  - Housing that focuses on newly unhoused individuals, those that do not meet chronic homeless status. Often these individuals are successful with minimal supportive services if given a subsidy or affordable unit as they are not facing as many barriers to long-term stability as many chronically homeless individuals.
  - Housing for extremely low-income households; and
  - “Low barrier housing” that is flexible to meet the unique needs of unhoused individuals, especially those with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Note: “Supportive Housing” is a term used to include all types of permanent housing programs, including both rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

• **Homelessness Prevention** – Preventing homelessness is far less expensive and easier than helping a person exit homelessness. Most American households are one missed paycheck or one medical disaster away from homelessness. With the high cost of housing in the Bay Area, challenging economic times, and other challenges, many households lack savings to weather any income loss. Due to high rents, available rental assistance monies can only serve a limited number of households. Through the CARES Act, the City funded LifeMoves to provide additional rental assistance to prevent homelessness. The need surpasses available resources and remains for ongoing
investment in rental assistance programs as a key strategy for homelessness prevention.

- **Statewide, County, and City Eviction Protections** – Due to the pandemic, the State, County, and City all adopted eviction protections to keep people housed. Most recently, SB 91, which was signed into law January 29, 2021, extends eviction protections to COVID-19-impacted tenants and established the State’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The Act extends tenant protections included in the Tenant, Homeowner, and Small Landlord Relief and Stabilization Act of 2020 (AB 3088) to June 30, 2021. These protections were originally set to expire on February 1, 2021. Without intervention through additional programs or regulations, there could be a wave of evictions leading to a rise in the unhoused.

**Other Communities**
Other communities are working on the topic of the unhoused in a variety of ways and the City Council wanted to know more about some other efforts, especially about the programs in the neighboring jurisdiction of Mountain View. The City of Mountain View has invested over $5.7 million and has been working on their strategies and actions for over 5 years with this as a priority to address the needs of the unhoused. A recent report summarizes their efforts on a variety of initiatives for the unhoused (link: https://www.mountainview.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=33531). Their funding includes other funding commitments, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Mountain View’s strategy includes a range of housing programs, from prevention to early intervention to more intensive services to either keep residents in, or return them to, housing. In addition to the programs to assist the unhoused, Mountain View is also implementing, on a phased schedule, Measure C, the large vehicle parking restrictions measure. Implementation of those parking restrictions will be done in a phased approach beginning in May 2021. The phasing will allow people to better take advantage of available services.

**Stakeholder Engagement**
Staff continues to work with community partners that provide services to the unhoused in Palo Alto. Additionally, residents have communicated to the City Council, both, about interests in addressing needs for the unhoused as well as interest in seeing tightened regulations regarding the unhoused in the community. Engagement will continue in the future phases of this work.

**Resource Impact**
As described in the Discussion section above, the City currently provides funding in support for services to the unhoused and there is still need. The programs described in the Areas for Discussion subsection of the Discussion Section vary in cost. Further exploration of costs would be needed if any particular new programs were desired to potentially pursue.

Specifically, regarding applications for funding. The receipt and management of funds, as well as the associated management of the projects, would require the allocation of significant staff
time and redirection from current staff priorities. Such work is specialized, important, and would need adequate attention to be carried out successfully.

Environmental Review
The action recommended is not a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act. However, depending on the future work associated with this, there may be subsequent qualifying actions.

Attachments:
- Attachment A: CityofPaloAlto_Unhoused_Analysis_12_1_2020
- Attachment B: Funding for services for the unhoused - FY 20-21
- Attachment C: FY2020_21 CDBG Projects
- Attachment D: Stories from Providers
240 homeless households who took a VI-SPDAT assessment during Nov 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020 have an affiliation with the City of Palo Alto through answering “Palo Alto” to any of the following assessment questions:

- If employed, what city do you work in?
- If you go to school, in which city is your school?
- In which city do you spend most of your time?
- Which city did you live in prior to becoming homeless?

City of Palo Alto affiliated households (Palo Altans) are 4% of the total number of households who took the VI-SPDAT during this period (6,344 households).

The 240 households are comprised of 272 adults and 35 children. Please see the demographics below:
Demographics of Homeless Palo Altans (Cont’d)

Race by Ethnicity

- American Indian or Alaska Native (n=6): 50% Hispanic/Asian, 50% Non-Hispanic/Non-Asian
- Asian (n=9): 100% Hispanic/Asian
- Black or African American (n=55): 5% Hispanic/Asian, 95% Non-Hispanic/Non-Asian
- Multi-Racial (n=13): 31% Hispanic/Asian, 69% Non-Hispanic/Non-Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n=5): 100% Hispanic/Asian
- White (n=139): 36% Hispanic/Asian, 64% Non-Hispanic/Non-Asian
- Client doesn’t know/Refused/Data not collected (n=13): 69% Hispanic/Asian, 15% Non-Hispanic/Non-Asian, 15% Data not collected

Veterans Status and Foster Care Background

- Veteran status: 13.3%, 32
- Foster care background: 12.9%, 31
Enrollment of Unhoused Palo Altans in Shelters, Feb 2020 to Jan 2021

- 205 homeless households who enrolled in a shelter program during Feb 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021 have an affiliation with the City of Palo Alto through reporting a zip code within the City of Palo Alto from their last address or answering “Palo Alto” to any of the following VI-SDPAT assessment questions:
  - If employed, what city do you work in?
  - If you go to school, in which city is your school?
  - In which city do you spend most of your time?
  - Which city did you live in prior to becoming homeless?
- City of Palo Alto affiliated household (“Palo Altans”) are 4% of the total number of households (4,842) who enrolled in a shelter program during this period (these enrollments exclude FEMA Isolation Hotels/Motels).

Household Enrollments at Sunnyvale Shelter

- 91%, 286
- 100%, 314

Households Enrolled in Shelters Located in Sunnyvale

- 90%, 488
- 100%, 542

Households Enrolled in Shelters Outside of North County

- 97%, 4359
- 3%, 120

Clients enrolled at the Sunnyvale Shelter, the North County Cold Weather Shelter, and Project Roomkey Hotels in North County.

Clients enrolled at shelters outside of Sunnyvale and Palo Alto.
households enrolled in hotels/motels for medically vulnerable households (non-congregate shelters)

- Palo Altans: 100%, 1107
- Other: 5%, 50

households enrolled in all other shelter programs

- Palo Altans: 4%, 179
- Other: 96%, 4026

Non-congregate shelters include hotel/motel programs for homelessness individuals who have underlying conditions making them vulnerable to complications of COVID-19.

All other shelters excludes hotels/motels and includes interim housing (provides shelter to clients enrolled in housing programs and waiting to be housed) and all other emergency shelters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Program Descriptions</th>
<th>Program Funding</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>Type of Contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Downtown Streets Team, Inc. (DST)</td>
<td>Stipends for peer to peer outreach efforts by DST Team members.</td>
<td>$38,786.00</td>
<td>HSRAP Grant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Downtown Streets Team, Inc. (DST)</td>
<td>Provide comprehensive support services for homeless/unemployed to secure employment.</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>Emerging Needs Fund</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Downtown Streets Team, Inc. (DST)</td>
<td>Hot meals provision and delivery of pre-packaged meals for vulnerable community members arranged by Downtown Food Closet Volunteers and delivered to doorsteps to meet food and limited contact.</td>
<td>$100,000.00</td>
<td>CDBG Annual Entitlement Grant</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Downtown Streets Team, Inc. (DST)</td>
<td>Workforce Development Program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Heart &amp; Home Collaborative</td>
<td>Support the extended operation of a seasonal homeless shelter for women during COVID-19 emergency.</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>Emerging Needs Fund</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>LifeMoves</td>
<td>To purchase grocery gift cards for unhoused/low-income members of the community, emergency fund assistance and PPE equipment and supplies for staff at the homeless drop in center to be able to continue providing services during COVID.</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>Emerging Needs Fund</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Peninsula HealthCare Connections</td>
<td>Purchase of equipment to enable telehealth services by a healthcare clinic for low-income and uninsured community members as needed by the COVID-19 emergency.</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
<td>Emerging Needs Fund</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Silicon Valley Independent Living Center</td>
<td>Rent Relief Assistance. To address the short term needs of City of Palo Alto residents at risk of being displaced by rent increases, utility payments, emergency situations, and other market forces due to COVID-19. The target population of the proposed project are individuals and families in search for affordable, accessible housing.</td>
<td>$11,232.00</td>
<td>CDBG Annual Entitlement Grant</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>WeHope</td>
<td>Support of mobile shower and laundry services in South Palo Alto for the unhoused.</td>
<td>$9,600.00</td>
<td>Emerging Needs Fund</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** $1,097,169.00

**Attachment B**

**CITY OF PALO ALTO EXPENDITURES ON HOMELESSNESS/HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FY 2020-21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Descriptions</th>
<th>Program Funding</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>Type of Contract</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Streets Team, Inc. (DST)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silicon Valley Independent Living Center</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeHope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HSRAP - Human Services Resource Allocation Process**
**CDBG - Community Development Block Grant**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Charities</td>
<td><strong>Long Term Care Ombudsman Program:</strong> Advocate for the rights of seniors and disabled residents in long term care facilities located in Palo Alto.</td>
<td>$9,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifeMoves</td>
<td><strong>Case Management:</strong> Assistance with housing and job searches, referrals and mentoring at the Opportunity Services Center.</td>
<td>$29,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto Housing Corporation</td>
<td><strong>Support Services:</strong> Counseling services, employment assistance and crisis Intervention to residents of Barker Hotel (25 units) and Alma Place (106 units).</td>
<td>$29,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silicon Valley Independent Living Center</td>
<td><strong>Case Management:</strong> Assistance to low-income Palo Alto residents with disabilities, veterans and older adults to secure affordable, accessible housing.</td>
<td>$11,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA of Silicon Valley</td>
<td><strong>Domestic Violence Services:</strong> Crisis intervention, emergency shelter, comprehensive case management, counseling/therapy, children’s play therapy and legal services to individuals and/or households experiencing domestic violence.</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Sentinel</td>
<td><strong>Fair Housing Services:</strong> Fair housing counseling and investigative services through casework, increase knowledge of fair housing laws and individual counseling on the fair housing laws to improve understanding of residents and housing providers rights or obligations.</td>
<td>$37,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Streets</td>
<td><strong>Workforce Development Program:</strong> Comprehensive support services for homeless/unemployed individuals to secure employment.</td>
<td>$236,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifeMoves</td>
<td><strong>Rental Assistance:</strong> Financial assistance to eligible low-income Palo Alto individuals/households impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic to cover rent, security deposits and/or utilities payments.</td>
<td>$294,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>Funding amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silicon Valley Independent Living Center</td>
<td><strong>Rental Assistance:</strong> Financial assistance to eligible low-income Palo Alto residents with disabilities, veterans and older adults impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA of Silicon Valley</td>
<td><strong>Rental Assistance:</strong> Financial assistance to eligible low-income Palo Alto residents experiencing domestic violence and impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Streets</td>
<td><strong>Downtown Food Closet:</strong> Delivery of groceries to Palo Alto households categorized as vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravenswood Family Health Network</td>
<td><strong>COVID19 Testing and PPE:</strong> Funds to purchase adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure staff safety and provision of COVID-19 testing to low-income Palo Alto residents.</td>
<td>$67,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravenswood Family Health Network</td>
<td><strong>Mobile Health Clinic:</strong> Improve COVID-19 testing, education, and immunization by delivering services via mobile clinic to low-income Palo Alto residents. Additionally, after the pandemic the mobile clinic will provide medical and dental care access to low-income Palo Alto residents.</td>
<td>$354,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifeMoves</td>
<td><strong>Hotel De Zink:</strong> Extended operational hours (increased from 9 hours to 14 hours) at Hotel De Zink emergency shelter. Clients will receive extended hours of supports and services in the emergency shelter</td>
<td>$54,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attachment D:
Stories from Providers who Receive Homelessness Prevention Funding

From LiveMoves – Opportunity Services Center

A local single mother with three children tested positive for COVID-19 last November which resulted in a loss of income. She received financial assistance to pay her full December rent and late bills and returned to work the next month. However, she needed assistance in February 2021 after testing positive COVID 19 again. She received rental assistance to cover her full February rent and was able to return to work. Fortunately, she was able to save her housing. However, she is weary of the possibility of experiencing another financial hardship caused by COVID-19 variants due to being an essential food service worker.

From Peninsula HealthCare Connections – Clinic at the Opportunity Services Center (they are a separate nonprofit, but use space the OSC.)

I think I would like to share our experience (so several stories) of unhoused individuals we have served that are lifelong residents of Palo Alto, deeply connected to the community in a variety of ways, that even with a subsidy and supportive services are not able to live there. This is such a loss for these individuals and definitely contributes to longer bouts of homelessness and refusal of services in some cases. For many people, housed and unhoused, being a Palo Alto resident has very deep, emotional and cultural ties and being forced out of your community due to financial reasons is devastating.

From Downtown Streets Team

- Wendy is a disabled senior living on the streets in Palo Alto. She receives monthly SSI (Supplemental Security Income) payments in the amount of $725 each month. Due to her disability and age, she is unable to obtain employment. She desperately wants to have stable housing, however, she doesn’t qualify for any of the local affordable housing properties because her income isn’t enough to meet the minimum income requirements. As a rough estimate, an individual usually needs to make at least $1000 per month to qualify for local affordable housing properties. The monthly maximum federal amount for SSI benefits for an eligible individual is $794, which unfortunately, is nowhere near enough to meet minimum income requirements, and in many cases, not even enough to be able to afford monthly rent, as many local affordable housing properties have units that rent at $1000+ per month. Many of our elderly, disabled, and unhoused community members in Palo Alto who live off of SSI benefits frequently face these barriers in qualifying for affordable housing.

- Wyatt is a man who is experiencing homelessness, living on the streets in Palo Alto. Wyatt came to us for assistance with many issues, one of which is access to space. He has too many things to be able to carry them around in a bag or two with him, and of course due the nature of being homeless, he doesn’t have access to a home or other
safe place to store his belongings. As such, he is forced to carry all of his belongings around with him, which leave him vulnerable to theft and harassment and restrict his ability to easily travel elsewhere for services (such as going to San Jose) since all of his belongings won’t fit with him on public transportation. Many of our unhoused community members face this issue, as there aren’t any local and affordable storage options. The Opportunity Center has lockers available, but they are very small lockers and they are only available to their clients. Furthermore, COVID-19 has compounded his access to space, as there is now a lack of access to safe, public spaces for him to spend his day time. Pre-COVID, he would often spend his days staying safe, warm, and dry in a library, community center, coffee shop, or grocery store. Now, not only does he struggle to find safe public spaces to spend his time, he also struggles with finding a place to routinely address his personal hygiene and to charge his phone to be able to communicate with us and others about his needs.

• Jessica is an undocumented person experiencing homelessness in Palo Alto. She currently lives in her vehicle, and she wants to turn her life around for her young son, however she faces many barriers to legitimate employment, public benefits, and affordable housing. She also struggles with mental health and substance abuse issues, both of which are byproduct of her experience as an undocumented woman in our community. She is fully capable and ready to work to support herself and her son, but without a valid authorization to work, she is unable to get a legitimate job. Due to her undocumented status, she is also unable to receive public benefits that other unhoused community members are eligible for – she isn’t even eligible for health benefits through Medi-Cal (only emergency-only benefits). Without income from benefits and/or employment, she isn’t eligible for affordable housing, and she likely can’t even qualify for some affordable housing that is funded by HUD. All of these barriers continue to pile up and overwhelm Jessica and others living with this experience.