

## EXHIBIT A

### RESPONSE OF THE PASO ROBLES CITY COUNCIL TO GRAND JURY REPORT REGARDING HOMELESSNESS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

#### INTRODUCTION:

The 2009-2010 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury prepared a report titled, "Homelessness in San Luis Obispo County: Are We Solving the Problem?" The Paso Robles City Council is required to respond to Findings 5, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8. Consistent with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code, the Paso Robles City Council is responding to each required finding and recommendation.

#### FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

##### Finding #5:

In Paso Robles, which has a large homeless population, there is no shelter.

##### Response to Finding #5:

*Since 2001, the City has provided grants of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds averaging \$21,000 per year to Transitional Food and Shelter, which operates a "Motel Voucher" program to provide shelter for homeless that are too ill to stay at a regular homeless shelter. The table at the end of this response lists the amounts of the annual grants.*

*Since 2005, the City has provided grants of CDBG funds averaging \$4,000 per year to the El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO) to operate a homeless shelter in Atascadero. The City supports this shelter as a number of its clients come from Paso Robles.*

*Additionally, the North County Women's Resource Center established a domestic violence shelter, which is a type of homeless shelter, in Paso Robles in the mid 1990's.*

*In more than 25 years, no party has filed an application to develop a homeless shelter in Paso Robles.*

##### Finding #11:

The widely endorsed *Path to a Home: San Luis Obispo Countywide 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* has been accepted, but not "adopted", by cities and the county.

##### Response to Finding #11:

*At its meeting of February 3, 2009, the Paso Robles City Council received a presentation on the "Path to a Home" document. The Council took action to (1) receive the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness; (2) Endorse the guiding principles; and (3) designate a City Councilmember for ongoing County-wide collaboration. Mayor Picanco was selected as the designated representative for the City of Paso Robles.*

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*The “Path to a Home” plan was developed by a county-wide committee. However, the process by which that plan was prepared is not appropriate for “adoption” by local governments.*

*An appropriate process for local adoption would include the following:*

- *Direction from the local elected body regarding plan contents and objectives;*
- *Full analysis of the compatibility of a draft plan with a local jurisdiction’s General Plan and other adopted policy and land use documents;*
- *An analysis of the fiscal impacts of the recommended actions;*
- *Environmental review of the draft plan;*
- *Public workshops and hearings.*

*None of the above was proposed or occurred with the Path to a Home plan.*

#### Finding #12:

The county, with support from cities and private groups, wants to build a homeless service campus in San Luis Obispo.

#### Response to Finding #12:

*As noted in the City’s Response to Recommendation #5, below, the City has supported the operation of the Maxine Lewis Shelter, Prado Day Center, ECHO Shelter, and Transitional Food and Shelter’s Motel Voucher Program. Finding #12 and Recommendation #8 appear to propose that the City support shelters in both San Luis Obispo and in Paso Robles. The City does not have resource capacity to also provide increased level of support to a shelter that will predominantly serve homeless located 30 miles away and in another jurisdiction.*

#### Finding #13:

The need for low cost housing in the county substantially exceeds supply.

#### Response to Finding #13:

*This has been an ongoing challenge in the County. The City continues to address this need by providing support for affordable housing projects using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, federal Home Investment Partnership Act (HOME) funds, state CalHome funds, and Redevelopment Low and Moderate Income Housing (LMIH) Funds. Since 1988, the City has supported the following affordable housing projects:*

- *Housing Rehabilitation Loans: Between 1988 and 1991, the City used nearly \$1 million in CDBG funds and \$50,000 in LMIH funds to provide loans and grants to rehabilitate housing occupied by low income households. A total of 82 units were rehabilitated under this program*

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- Los Robles Terrace: In 1991, a grant of \$119,730 in LMIH Funds assisted the development of Los Robles Terrace, a 40 unit apartment complex for low- and very low-income elderly and physically-disabled persons at 2840 Spring Street.
- Disaster Assistance Loan: In 1995, a loan of \$10,000 in LMIH funds was made to a low income homeowner to repair damage to the owner's home at 915 Olive Street from a mudslide caused by heavy rains.
- New Self-Help Single Family Homes: Between 1995 and 1997, a total of \$200,600 in CDBG funds (\$160,000 of the City's allotment plus \$40,600 from the countywide Special Urban Projects Fund) were used to assist 33 low income homeowners purchase self-help homes in the Spring Meadows Tract developed by Peoples' Self-Help Housing Corp. on the east side of Airport Road, south of Scott Street.
- First-Time Homebuyers Assistance: In 1997, 2000, and 2001, the City used a total of \$855,000 in CDBG, LMIH, HOME, and CalHome funds to make low-interest, deferred-payment second trust deed loans for low income first-time homebuyers. From these efforts, 25 homes were purchased in Paso Robles.
- Habitat for Humanity: In 2002, a grant of \$35,000 in LMIH funds assisted development of three single family homes for low income households at 2939, 2947 and 2949 Vine Street.
- Creekside Gardens Apartments: In 2005, a grant of \$635,000 in LMIH funds assisted development of 29 unit low income senior apartment project at 401 Oak Hill Road.
- Canyon Creek Apartments: In 2006, a grant of \$559,000 in LMIH funds assisted development of a 68 unit low income apartment project at 400 Oak Hill Road.
- Chet Dotter Senior Housing: In 2008, a forgivable loan of \$1.745 million in LMIH funds assisted development of a 40 unit low income senior apartment project at 801 – 28<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Hidden Creek Village: In 2010, a forgivable loan of \$1 million in LMIH funds was made to assist the Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo develop an 81 unit low income family apartment project at 80 S. River Road. Construction was commenced on this project in July 2010.
- Oak Park Redevelopment: In July 2010, the Redevelopment Agency reserved \$1.325 million to assist the Housing Authority of the City of Paso Robles develop Phase One of a project to replace the existing 148 units in Oak Park Public Housing with 302 new units. The existing units are 70 years old. Phase One will remove 53 units and build 100 new units. The applicants applied for federal tax credit financing in July 2010.

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#### RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

##### Recommendation # 1:

The county and all the county's incorporated cities should “adopt” and begin to implement the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.

##### Response to Recommendation #1:

*This recommendation is not practical or reasonable. With declining revenues, the City has cut spending by 25 percent and is using reserve funds to provide only a minimum level of services; millions more need to be cut in order to operate within available revenues. There is no capacity to pursue new endeavors in the next 3-5 years.*

##### Recommendation # 2:

The county and all the incorporated cities should establish and fund a line item in their budgets specifically supporting services, including more housing for homeless persons.

##### Response to Recommendation #2:

*See response to Recommendation #1.*

##### Recommendation # 3:

A full-time Homes Services Coordinator (a senior official who is more than the currently contemplated HSOC “Executive Director”) should oversee the implementation of the ten year plan. This person should be supplied with a staff, including a grant writer.

##### Response to Recommendation #3:

*See response to Recommendation #1.*

##### Recommendation # 5:

The Homeless Services Campus should be built as soon as possible. The coordinator and appropriate staff from DSS, County Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol should also be stationed there. These professionals need to meet with the homeless where they eat and sleep. Each department should have one or more staff assigned to the Prado Day Center on a regular basis until the campus is occupied.

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Appropriate arrangements should be made to address issues of client privacy and confidentiality as required by law, but such requirements should not provide a rationale for not delivering services.

#### Response to Recommendation #5:

*When the City became entitled to receive CDBG funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1994, it entered into a cooperation agreement with the County of San Luis Obispo to waive its individual entitlement so that an urban county might be formed to benefit the entire county. The formation of an urban county entitled the urban county to approximately 15% more CDBG funds than each participating jurisdiction would individually receive had it pursued CDBG funds on its own. These additional funds were allocated to a "Special Urban Projects Fund" in which funds could be awarded to any participating jurisdiction with a project that benefitted persons beyond the jurisdiction's boundaries. Since 1996, with the implicit agreement of the City of Paso Robles via its annual resolutions supporting the countywide Annual Action Plan, all moneys in the Special Urban Project Fund (approximately \$150,000 per year) have been spent to support the Maxine Lewis Shelter and Prado Day Center in San Luis Obispo. That is, the City has purposefully foregone applying to the Special Urban Projects for any CDBG funds for other projects so that county-wide homeless services might be provided.*

*Also, see response to Recommendation #1.*

#### Recommendation # 8:

Non-profit organizations, including churches, and the City of Paso Robles should establish shelter and meal serving program for people who are homeless.

#### Response to Recommendation #8:

*Since 1996, the City Council has allocated Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds to assist a variety of homeless services, which have included shelters and food. The table on the following page shows the programs and amounts of assistance.*

**EXHIBIT A**  
**City of Paso Robles' Use of CDBG Funds to Assist Homeless Services**

<b>Non-Profit Organization/Program</b>	<b>Prior to 2001</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
Transitional Food & Shelter's Motel Voucher Program		24,000	24,000	24,000	20,000	24,000	20,503	21,000	21,373	19,881	11,614	210,371
North County Women's Shelter: Paso Robles Domestic Violence Shelter	1,360 (in 1996) 15,000 (in 2000)	10,000					5,900	17,000				49,260
El Camino Homeless Organization's Shelter Operations						2,000		4,000	5,000	4,800	5,400	21,200
CAPSLO's Homeless Outreach Coordinator									11,124			11,124
Second Baptist Church's Christ Kitchen Meal program for the homeless		36,150						11,106			5,400	52,656
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry	20,000 (in 1999)				4,650	5,350					2,300	32,300
Food Bank and Harvest Bag		31,000					800				2,300	34,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,360</b>	<b>101,150</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>24,650</b>	<b>31,350</b>	<b>27,203</b>	<b>53,106</b>	<b>37,497</b>	<b>24,681</b>	<b>27,014</b>	<b>411,011</b>



**Grand Jury**  
**P.O. Box 4910**  
**San Luis Obispo, California 93403**

June 9, 2010

**Confidential**

James App City Manager  
City of Paso Robles  
1000 Spring St  
Paso Robles CA 93449

The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury has completed the attached report titled **“Homelessness In San Luis Obispo...”** This copy of the report is being provided to you two days in advance of its public release, as required by California Penal Code §933.05 (f), which states:

*A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.*

Please check the last page of text of the report for the timing of your response, if any, as required by the Penal Code. Sections 933 through 933.05 of the Penal Code are attached for your reference.

Please keep in mind that this report must be kept confidential until its public release by the Grand Jury.

Respectfully,

Steve Martinez, Foreperson  
2009/2010 Grand Jury

Enclosures

## **California Penal Code**

933. (a) Each grand jury shall submit to the presiding judge of the superior court a final report of its findings and recommendations that pertain to county government matters during the fiscal or calendar year. Final reports on any appropriate subject may be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court at any time during the term of service of a grand jury. A final report may be submitted for comment to responsible officers, agencies, or departments, including the county board of supervisors, when applicable, upon finding of the presiding judge that the report is in compliance with this title. For 45 days after the end of the term, the foreperson and his or her designees shall, upon reasonable notice, be available to clarify the recommendations of the report.

(b) One copy of each final report, together with the responses thereto, found to be in compliance with this title shall be placed on file with the clerk of the court and remain on file in the office of the clerk. The clerk shall immediately forward a true copy of the report and the responses to the State Archivist who shall retain that report and all responses in perpetuity.

(c) No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body, and every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls. In any city and county, the mayor shall also comment on the findings and recommendations. All of these comments and reports shall forthwith be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court who impaneled the grand jury. A copy of all responses to grand jury reports shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency and the office of the county clerk, or the mayor when applicable, and shall remain on file in those offices. One copy shall be placed on file with the applicable grand jury final report by, and in the control of the currently impaneled grand jury, where it shall be maintained for a minimum of five years.

(d) As used in this section "agency" includes a department.

933.05. (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The respondent agrees with the finding.



(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

(c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decisionmaking authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

(d) A grand jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the grand jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the grand jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.

(e) During an investigation, the grand jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding the investigation, unless the court, either on its own determination or upon request of the foreperson of the grand jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.

(f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.

# **HOMELESSNESS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY: ARE WE SOLVING THE PROBLEM?**

## **SUMMARY**

On any given day nearly four thousand persons in San Luis Obispo County are homeless. Some sleep under bridges or along the creeks, some live in their cars, many “couch surf,” (spending a few nights with an acquaintance and moving elsewhere). A hundred may find a bed at a shelter in Atascadero or San Luis Obispo. The Grand Jury examined how they live and what public and private agencies and individuals are doing: (1) to help them survive in the short run and (2) to assist them in finding stable housing for the long term.

## **METHOD/PROCEDURE**

To complete this inquiry, Grand Jurors:

- interviewed county officials
- interviewed staff members of non-profit corporations working with the homeless
- interviewed volunteers, who give their time and effort to try to help this population
- visited facilities that serve the homeless in Santa Maria, our south county, Atascadero and San Luis Obispo
- reviewed both national and local reports on homelessness
- talked with homeless men and women in our community

## NARRATIVE

Approximately 260,000 persons reside in San Luis Obispo County. In late January 2009 some 3,829 people in the county (nearly 1.5%) were homeless. Of those 1,372 were children or teens under the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> Interviews with 342 (14% of the adults) provided a profile of our homeless population at that time.

### **Where they slept:**

That January night 25% of the interviewees slept outdoors (in a tent, under a bush, etc.); 21% were in a car, camper or other vehicle; 18% were guests of family or friends; 12% were in a shelter, about 11% were in housing provided by a transitional housing program; and 10% spent the night in a motel.<sup>2</sup> The remaining 3% did not respond.

### **Where they resided:**

Of the 3,829 persons counted in the enumeration; 1,025 (88 under the age of 18, hereafter children) were in the City of San Luis Obispo; 572 (144 children) in Paso Robles; the unincorporated areas of the county registered 501 (64 children); Grover Beach counted 275 (38 children); Atascadero 209 (27 children); Arroyo Grande 118 (14 children); Morro Bay 66 (5 children); Pismo Beach 48 (3 children). In addition 988 homeless children were counted in public schools; their places of residence were not available to the enumerators. The home city of 27 persons was not recorded in the report.

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<sup>1</sup> Homeless Services Coordinating Council, *San Luis Obispo County HOMELESS ENUMERATION REPORT, 2009*, ([http://www.unitedwayslo.org/News/09/Enumeration\\_9-01-09.pdf](http://www.unitedwayslo.org/News/09/Enumeration_9-01-09.pdf)). Most of the statistics in this report are based on that document.

<sup>2</sup> Of the 342 interviewed, 12% (41) had spent the night in a shelter, but with just over 100 beds, county shelters can accommodate only about 3% of the 3,827 homeless people counted in January 2009. Similarly 10% (34) of the interviewed had spent the night in a motel; it seems unlikely, however, that 10% (383) of the entire homeless were in motels that night.

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**Local or Transient:**

Last year 342 homeless persons were interviewed in some detail. Of those 56% reported they had resided in the county more than five years and an additional 24% had resided here from one to five years. Eight percent had been in the county less than four months and ten percent had lived here four months to a year.

**Time homeless:**

Of 342 interviewees, 188 (55%) reported that more than a year had passed since having their own apartment or house. Of the remainder; one-third had been homeless 3 months or less; one-third 4 to 6 months; and one-third for 7 to 12 months. In addition, 144 (42%) said this was not the first time they had been without a home.

**Why homeless:**

When asked why they had no home, about 35% of the respondents said they were unable to pay rent and 20% believed unemployment to be the cause. Substance abuse, divorce and low wages were each cited by about 15% as the culprit.

**Associated challenges:**

About 30% of the interviewees reported a physical disability, 25% a mental one and 9% substance abuse. Respondents noted various health issues including dental problems, vision, joint injuries and most often depression or similar ailments.

**THOSE WHO HELP AND HOW**

Depending upon their specific needs and details of their individual circumstances, the homeless of San Luis Obispo County can and often do find support from a wide variety of public, non-profit and even individual sources. The most important of these include:

**Community Action Partnership (Formerly EOC)**

A large non-profit organization with a substantial staff, CAPSLO (as it is known) operates Head Start programs in various counties and provides numerous other direct service programs for

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disadvantaged persons. Since 1989 it has operated a shelter for the homeless, first located on Kansas Avenue north of San Luis Obispo but soon moved to the current site on Orcutt Road in the city. That facility, called the Maxine Lewis Memorial Shelter, has beds for 49 homeless persons. In addition, CAPSLO manages an “overflow” shelter for women and families, the location of which rotates monthly among a dozen churches and synagogues via the “**Interfaith Coalition for the Homeless.**” Each night of the year volunteers from those religious organizations serve as chaperones at those “overflow” facilities. To be admitted to the overnight shelter(s) individuals go through an “in-take” process and may be asked to pass a breathalyzer test. Friday through Sunday evenings, volunteers donate, prepare and serve supper to homeless persons at the shelters. Monday through Thursday evenings, CAPSLO serves meals prepared at their Head Start Kitchen in Shell Beach. Friday, Saturday and Sunday scheduled volunteers from churches and similar groups donate, bring and serve those meals.

CAPSLO also runs the Prado Day Center that provides showers, a noon meal, mail, laundry and other services for homeless persons. Both Prado and the Maxine Lewis receive financial, volunteer and moral support from volunteer organizations that were established to serve the homeless in the county. Both facilities also get financial support from the city and county. Financial records indicate that the combined average per bed night costs for the Maxine Lewis and overflow shelters is about \$17.

Finally, CAPSLO provides case-management services for homeless persons in the south and north areas of the county as well as in San Luis Obispo. The programs that CAPSLO operates are funded from multiple sources including county and city grants (much of the money coming from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development). In 2009, CAPSLO spent \$878,088 to operate the Maxine Lewis Shelter and Prado Day Center and another \$244,895 for case management.

In the course of our inquiry the Grand Jury obtained a copy of a written assessment (2008) of homeless services that CAPSLO had commissioned. The document described serious deficiencies in each of three homeless service programs: case management, the Prado Day

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Center and the Maxine Lewis Shelter. The report then outlined recommendations for improving service in those programs. It was not distributed to CAPSLO's governing board or to the county or city governments that provide CAPSLO with substantial grants for homeless services. The Grand Jury learned that many recommendations in the report have since been implemented and that consequently CAPSLO's direct services to the homeless have improved.

### **El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO)**

Located in Atascadero, ECHO is essentially an all-volunteer non-profit organization. Since opening in December 2001, ECHO has provided meals and overnight shelter for homeless clients. At first it moved month to month from one local church to another. Since 2006 it has operated all year in space provided by the First Baptist Church where they have 31 beds. They fund motel rooms for families when the shelter is filled to capacity. In over eight plus years of operation ECHO has provided 62,000 bed nights for homeless persons. They also provide supper for about 45 persons each evening. Recently, perhaps due to the recession, that number has averaged above 60 persons. The meals are prepared, delivered and served by volunteers from a wide variety of churches and other groups. In 2008, a total of 639 persons volunteered as overnight ECHO chaperones. Other citizens support the program by providing laundry services, registering clients each night, etc. ECHO gets financial support from local governments and a variety of donors. Because (1) labor is donated, (2) the First Baptist Church furnishes space at a very modest fee and (3) local organizations make other in-kind donations, ECHO's per bed night cost is about \$6.

### **South County Programs**

Since 1991 the "South County People's Kitchen" has served lunch every day in Grover Beach. It is staffed by volunteers from churches and other non-profits. The region is without an overnight shelter or a warming station where homeless people can escape the rain and the cold.

Recently the "San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation" received about \$1.5 million from a couple who directed that their gift be used to assist homeless people in the south county area. The foundation is working with public and private groups to put that gift to work. The

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“Five Cities Homeless Coalition” has organized as a non-profit that hopes to build a day center. Besides serving lunch the coalition hopes such a facility will have a health clinic and space for social service providers. It would also give clients access to showers, a laundry, computers, etc. Regrettably, as presently envisioned the facility does not include a place for the homeless to sleep, although the Five Cities Homeless Coalition claims that is a “#1 priority.” Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee is authoring legislation to allow the Cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach to forge a partnership and use housing funds to construct a local homeless facility. Last fall the County Board of Supervisors endorsed the concept as did the city councils in Grover Beach and Pismo Beach. On January 12, 2010 the Arroyo Grande City Council passed a resolution “supporting the efforts of the Five Cities Homeless Coalition in locating a homeless services center within the south county.”

### **Services for the Homeless Elsewhere**

If there are substantial programs to serve the homeless in Morro Bay, Los Osos, Nipomo or Paso Robles they have not come to the attention of the Grand Jury. The 2009 Homeless Enumeration Report found relatively few homeless persons in the first three communities, but documented 572 (including 144 children) in Paso Robles. Where they slept is not known, but the nearest shelter is ECHO in Atascadero.

### **San Luis Obispo County Government**

Homeless people are frequently assisted by one or more units of the county government, but being homeless does not automatically qualify someone for a particular service. The County Health Agency has mental health services and drug and alcohol services. The Department of Social Services (DSS) administers a variety of programs including CALWORKS, General Assistance and others. One day a week DSS sends a staff member to the Prado Day Center for program outreach. While programs in DSS and the Health Agency serve homeless persons who come to their offices, staff seldom search out the homeless where they sleep, work or gather. In the past, a staff employee in mental health “beat the bushes and the creek sides” to get to know the homeless, earn their trust and get them needed services. No more. State budget cuts ended that program. Mental health has one outreach worker. How much time he or she spends with the

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homeless population is uncertain. Today, if a homeless person wants the help of these agencies, he or she gets on a bus, drives or walks to an agency office. For our homeless population, especially the 25% or so with mental illness, it is hard enough to find a place to sleep and eat, let alone get to an appointment made days or even weeks previously. A few end up in jail.

Moreover, some homeless persons need the support of more than one public agency, but it seems that coordination and integration of services by the primary providers (drug and alcohol services, mental health, DSS) is less than ideal. In speaking with managers, we obtained varied answers, to the question, "How well do you integrate your services with those of other county agencies?" One of them said, "not as well as we should." Another told us the agencies do work together and there is no problem. One told us "There is no integration of services." Another witness indicated that egos and turf wars were obstacles to coordination.

### **San Luis Obispo City Government**

For 20 years, San Luis Obispo City has devoted almost all of its Community Development Block Grant public services funds to homeless services,<sup>3</sup> but that effort has not met the need of the homeless population.

## **THOSE WHO DREAM AND HOW**

### **The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness**

With support and input from the county and city governments and a variety of non-profit agencies, an eighty-six page document titled *Path to a Home: San Luis Obispo Countywide 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*<sup>4</sup> was published in October 2008. It was prepared by a consultant who had drafted plans for other localities with the same framework and used data collected locally. The Grand Jury understands that the cities and county have "accepted" the ten year plan. However, skeptical witnesses told us that our local governments have not "adopted"

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<sup>3</sup>SLO City Housing Element 2010, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup>Available on line at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Assets/HSCC/Documents/Ten+Year+Plan.pdf>, *Path to a Home* outlines "what needs to be done to help people who are homeless or at-risk arrive 'home' to stable housing..." and lists the "system, policy and program changes necessary for the Cities, Communities and County to arrive at their goal of ending homelessness in ten years." Quoted from page 6.

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it, because “adoption” would obligate them to actually implement the plan’s objectives. We were informed that the plan was written at least in part because it is an eligibility requirement for federal grants.

*Path to Home* includes a “housing first model” for helping the homeless. The theory is that the best way to assist the homeless population is to *first* put the people in stable housing and *then* provide supportive services to help them remain housed while addressing the problems that led to their homelessness. This approach, we were told, has worked well in large urban areas that have old or empty buildings that can be converted to low cost housing. Whether “housing first” will work as well in San Luis Obispo County is problematic, because housing here is scarce and expensive.

### **The Proposed Homeless Services Campus**

The county wants to build a “homeless campus” that will combine services now provided at the Prado Day Center and the Maxine Lewis Shelter. It would also have offices where county agency staff (e.g. from DSS and the Health Agency) would serve homeless clients, who would then no longer need to travel around the county seeking services. Plans call for it to be located on county land on lower Higuera Street adjacent to the building that houses the Department of Social Services. The County Board of Supervisors is firmly behind this plan and individual supervisors are working to see that it becomes a reality.

### **Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC)**

To move forward with the campus and the ten year plan, city and county officials as well as members of the county’s many non-profit homeless organizations have formed HSOC, a committee which meets monthly to work to implement the Ten Year Plan and end or, at least mitigate, the homeless situation in the county. HSOC is large and widely representative of constituencies serving the homeless population. While having all the players at this table is valuable, HSOC is probably too large to be an effective governing body. HSOC’s first major goal was obtaining funds to hire a part time “executive director,” a move not without controversy. As this Grand Jury report was being prepared recruitment to fill the job was

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completed. Whether the person selected will have the skill, resources and clout to really coordinate and otherwise improve local support for our homeless citizens remains to be seen.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING: A CONTINUING NEED**

In San Luis Obispo County affordable housing is hard to come by. Although housing authorities, Peoples' Self-Help Housing, and other groups have hundreds of units for low-income residents, demand outstrips supply. Obstacles to increasing the inventory of housing that low-income people can actually afford are many. They include zoning regulations on where such units can be built, restrictions on the number of units per acre that get approved, building codes that promote safety but inflate costs and political resistance from neighbors who fear for their property values.

### **Specialized Housing and Shelter**

In San Luis Obispo, the Women's Shelter has about 40 beds for women and children who are homeless, displaced or abused. There is also a Women's Shelter in the north county. Transitions Mental Health, a private non-profit agency, has housing for about 70 single adults who are dealing with mental health issues. These facilities, in various parts of the county, frequently house at risk persons who might otherwise be, or become, homeless.

HSOC's Housing Subcommittee is developing recommendations to address the need for more affordable housing. HSOC supports *permanent housing* for the long-term solution, *supportive housing* for people who need assistance and *interim housing* (a.k.a. homeless shelter facilities) for temporary housing for the homeless. All three types of housing are needed and are consistent with the ten year plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

At last count (January 2009) more than 3,800 people in San Luis Obispo County were homeless. That number included 1,300 under the age of 18. Most sleep on other people's couches, in cars or outside. About a hundred find beds in shelter in Atascadero (ECHO) or San Luis Obispo

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(CAPSLO and the Interfaith Coalition). The volunteer “peoples kitchens” provide meals in various locations. The Prado Day Center offers laundry and other services in San Luis Obispo. The county and most city governments help fund these programs. All of these efforts are commendable but insufficient. No one is in charge; no government takes more than partial responsibility.

Based on its investigation, the Grand Jury concludes that for the situation to truly improve, the responsibility and authority for coordinating and managing all the various available resources needs to reside with one person, independent of city or county control, but funded by them. Unless local governments and private organizations join together and expand available resources, the homeless adults and children of San Luis Obispo County will continue to struggle and far too many including hundreds of our children will remain *homeless*.

## **FINDINGS**

1. With public and private funding, CAPSLO (by far the largest non-profit serving the homeless) operates the Prado Day Center and the Maxine Lewis Shelter. CAPSLO provides case management for homeless clients in the north and south county and the City of San Luis Obispo.
2. The Maxine Lewis Homeless Shelter is not large enough to provide beds in San Luis Obispo for all who seek them. The facility is in poor physical condition.
3. The “overflow” shelter program that CAPSLO runs with the Interfaith Coalition provides beds for homeless women and families each night of the year at local churches and synagogues. This arrangement has logistical challenges but also provides the important advantage of engaging many volunteers to serve as chaperones, thus giving hundreds of citizens some awareness of what it means to have no home.
4. Among private non-profit groups serving the homeless, ECHO, in Atascadero, is exemplary.
5. In Paso Robles, which has a large homeless population, there is no shelter.

6. The South County People's Kitchen, in Grover Beach, serves lunch daily and the recently created Five Cities Homeless Coalition wants to have a comprehensive day center for the population they serve. As presently contemplated, the vision for that facility does not include overnight sleeping accommodations.
7. No single county official or agency is charged with overall responsibility for assisting the homeless.
8. The County Departments of Social Services, Mental Health Services and Drug and Alcohol Services assist homeless persons who are eligible for their programs, but simply being homeless does not qualify an individual for any particular service.
9. The extent to which the key county agencies (DSS, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol) integrate services to the homeless is uncertain. Agency leaders offer differing assessments.
10. Some homeless persons who are afflicted with drug and alcohol problems or mentally ill are not well served.
11. The widely endorsed *Path to a Home: San Luis Obispo Countywide 10- Year Plan to End Homelessness* has been accepted, but not "adopted," by cities and the county.
12. The county, with support from cities and private groups, wants to build a homeless service campus in San Luis Obispo.
13. The need for low cost housing in the county substantially exceeds supply.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The county and all the county's incorporated cities should "adopt" and begin to implement the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.
2. The county and all the incorporated cities should establish and fund a line item in their budgets specifically supporting services, including more housing for homeless persons.
3. A full-time Homes Services Coordinator (a senior official who is more than the currently contemplated HSOC "Executive Director") should oversee the implementation of the ten year plan. This person should be supplied with a staff, including a grant writer.

4. The Homeless Services Coordinator should monitor funds directed towards helping the homeless and make recommendations and offer guidance to all involved agencies and groups throughout the County.
5. The Homeless Services Campus should be built as soon as possible. The coordinator and appropriate staff from DSS, County Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol should also be stationed there. These professionals need to meet with the homeless where they eat and sleep. Each department should have one or more staff assigned to the Prado Day Center on a regular basis until the campus is occupied. Appropriate arrangements should be made to address issues of client privacy and confidentiality as required by law, but such requirements should not provide a rationale for not delivering services.
6. The county, south county incorporated cities and appropriate non-profit groups should vigorously pursue joint efforts to build and operate a facility that provides both day services and night time shelter for homeless persons in the five cities region.
7. Cities in south county, the county itself and The Five Cities Homeless Coalition should begin to work with local churches and service groups to provide temporary shelter until the facility is operative. ECHO in Atascadero provides an excellent model.
8. Non-profit organizations, including churches, and the City of Paso Robles should establish shelter and meal serving program for people who are homeless.
9. Because ECHO has a system that works, their ideas and methods should be expanded to other areas within the county. CAPSLO, Five Cities Homeless Coalition and other groups now working with the homeless should meet with the staff of ECHO and be mentored in the areas of recruiting, training and effectively utilizing volunteers.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

**The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors** is required to respond to Findings 2, 3, 6 through 13 and Recommendations 1 through 8. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services** is required to respond to Findings 7 through 10 and Recommendations 1 and 3 through 7. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **August 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The San Luis Obispo County Health Agency** is required to respond to Findings 7 through 10 and Recommendations 1 and 3 through 7. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **August 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO)** is required to respond to Findings 1, 2, 3, 10 & 12 and Recommendations 3 through 9. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO)** is required to respond to Findings 4 & 10 and Recommendations 3, 4, 7, 8 & 9. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The Five Cities Homeless Coalition** is required to respond to Findings 6 & 10 and Recommendations 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the

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San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of San Luis Obispo** is required to respond to Findings 2, 3, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3 & 5. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of Atascadero** is required to respond to Findings 4, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3 & 5. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of Paso Robles** is required to respond to Findings 5, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of Arroyo Grande** is required to respond to Findings 6, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of Pismo Beach** is required to respond to Findings 6, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

**The City of Grover Beach** is required to respond to Findings 6, 11, 12 & 13 and Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7. The responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of

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the San Luis Obispo Superior Court by **September 13, 2010**. Please provide a copy of all responses to the Grand Jury as well.

The mailing addresses for delivery are:

<b>Presiding Judge</b>	<b>Grand Jury</b>
Presiding Judge Charles S. Crandall Superior Court of California 1050 Monterey Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury P.O. Box 4910 San Luis Obispo, CA 93402



RESOLUTION NO. 10-XXX  
RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES  
APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT ON  
“HOMELESSNESS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY”

WHEREAS, pursuant to Penal Code section 933, a public agency which receives a Grand Jury Report addressing aspects of the public agency's operations, must comment on the Report's findings and recommendations contained in the Report in writing within ninety days to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with a copy to the Foreperson of the Grand Jury; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Paso Robles has received and reviewed the 2009-2010 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report, dated April 27, 2010, entitled “Homelessness in San Luis Obispo County: Are We Solving the Problem?” and prepared a response to the report.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS

Section 1. The City Council of Paso Robles approves and authorizes the City Council’s response to the 2009-2010 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report entitled “Homelessness in San Luis Obispo County: Are We Solving the Problem?” a copy of which is attached hereto and Exhibit A and incorporated herein.

Section 2. The City Council of Paso Robles directs the City Clerk to forward the City Council's Grand Jury Report response to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court and to the foreperson of the San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 20<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2010, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

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Duane Picanco, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Caryn Jackson, Deputy City Clerk