



# CITY OF COSTA MESA

P.O. BOX 1200, COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA 92628-1200

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

November 3, 2022

John Siragusa, Foreperson  
2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Mr. Siragusa,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the findings of the 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report, published on June 23, 2022, titled, "How is Orange County Addressing Homelessness." Over the past decade, the City of Costa Mesa has been committed to developing solutions to assist those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness.

Please see the **City's responses** directly below each of the *Findings*:

*F3. The County of Orange and cities within Orange County have been inconsistent in collaboration for support of shelters and services, which has resulted in missed opportunities to end homelessness.*

**City Response:** Over the past decade, the City of Costa Mesa has been developing a comprehensive system of care to serve those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The foundation of this system are the partnerships we've forged with the community, non-profits, business, and faith leaders, as well as extensive collaboration with fellow municipalities, the County of Orange, the State of California, and the Federal Government. A result is a three-pronged approach comprised of Outreach and Engagement, Emergency Shelter, and Housing and Employment services with an annual budget of over \$3.6M.

Outreach and Engagement: The City of Costa Mesa currently employs a team of five (5) full-time and four (4) part-time staff (8 FTE) to conduct community outreach and engagement. Further, the City contracts with City Net, a local non-profit outreach provider, to deploy two (2) additional outreach workers to expand coverage during after-hours. Since April 2019, City Outreach has facilitated successful housing placements for 135 formerly homeless clients. The City's annual budget for Outreach and Engagement is just over \$1.2M.

Emergency Shelter: In April 2019, the City of Costa Mesa partnered with a local church to deploy a 50-bed temporary shelter for residents experiencing homelessness. Over a two-year period, the temporary shelter assisted a total of 253 individuals, served a total of 133,000 meals, and facilitated successful housing placements for 77 shelter guests.

Through our collaborative efforts and strong partnerships, the City of Costa Mesa, County of Orange and City of Newport Beach opened the 70-Bed permanent Bridge Shelter in April 2021. In the first year of operation, the Bridge Shelter assisted a total of 204 individuals with shelter and associated services, as well as facilitating exits to permanent housing for 33 shelter guests. The City's annual budget to operate the Bridge Shelter is approximately \$2.4M.

Housing and Employment: The overarching goal of the City of Costa Mesa's response to homelessness is to increase income and secure housing for those we serve. The City currently partners with Chrysalis and Trellis to provide an array of employment services to both sheltered and unsheltered residents.

Currently, the City of Costa Mesa is partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and the County of Orange to convert a Motel 6 located at 2274 Newport Blvd., into 88 units of permanent affordable housing, of which, 10 units are designated for individuals receiving services as part of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), 30 units are designated for veterans, and 47 units are designated for very-low-income Costa Mesa seniors. The City's total contribution to the Motel 6 Housing Project is \$5.75M.

*F4. There are an insufficient number of rental units available to those existing Emergency Shelters, resulting in the majority returning to homelessness when leaving the shelters.*

**City Response:** The City of Costa Mesa disagrees with this finding. While we agree that the lack of housing units and extremely-low vacancy rates in Orange County have increased the amount of time one must wait to secure housing, there is no data from the Bridge Shelter to support the claim that the majority of shelter guests exit to homelessness. In fact, since April 2019, the City of Costa Mesa has successfully housed a total of 252 homeless individuals, with 117 of those exiting directly from the City's emergency shelter. The City's robust case management and supportive services model has been extremely successful in identifying and securing housing options for both sheltered and unsheltered individuals.

Please see the **City's responses** directly below each of the Recommendations:

*R4. By July 1, 2024, the County of Orange and cities should collaborate to open facilities that can house people with severe and persistent mental illness and addiction issues in a secure setting.*

**City Response:** The City of Costa Mesa partners with the local non-profit organization, Share Our Selves (SOS), which is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) offering both mental health and substance abuse services. Further, the City partners with College Hospital, which houses twelve (12) of the County's Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) beds. Lastly, the City is currently partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the California Department of Housing and Community Development

(HCD), and the County of Orange to convert the Motel 6 located at 2274 Newport Blvd. into 88 units of permanent affordable housing, of which, 10 beds are designated for individuals receiving services as part of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

- R5. *By July 1, 2023, the County of Orange, Cities and Continuum of Care should collaborate to encourage the development of housing affordable to individuals exiting the emergency shelters in Orange County.*

**City Response:** The City of Costa Mesa is currently partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and the County of Orange to convert the Motel 6 located at 2274 Newport Blvd into 88 units of permanent affordable housing, of which, 10 units are designated for individuals receiving services as part of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), 30 units are designated for veterans, and 47 units are designated for very-low income Costa Mesa seniors.

In addition, on August 2, 2022, the Costa Mesa City Council overwhelmingly supported the placement of the ballot initiative known as "Measure K", which would amend the City's Municipal Code to allow the City Council to approve/adopt and amend the City's General Plan, zoning, specific plans or overlay plans located in designated areas. If passed by voters, Measure K will help the City to plan and zone for the 11,760 housing units allocated to the City by State HCD as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

- R6. *By December 1, 2022 the County of Orange, cities and Continuum of Care should collaborate to increase the number of housing opportunities for Transitional Aged Youth.*

**City Response:** The City of Costa Mesa partners with Project Hope Alliance and StandUp For Kids to serve both households with minor children and Transitional Aged Youth (TAY). These providers connect clients to all available resources (including housing options) and provide intensive case management to facilitate self-sufficiency. The City will continue to collaborate with local partners, and explore opportunities to partner with the County of Orange and Continuum of Care (COC) to increase the number of housing opportunities for TAY.

The City of Costa Mesa's efforts to address homelessness continue to be a success. The City stands firm in its commitment to providing the highest level of service to our community, especially for our most vulnerable population, and will continue to explore opportunities for collaboration with fellow cities, the County, and the COC. Thank you for your work and study regarding this challenging and complex issue.

Sincerely,



Lori Ann Farrell Harrison  
City Manager