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September 8, 2016

The Honorable John K. Stewart  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco  
400 McAllister Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Judge Stewart:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the following is in reply to the 2015-16 Civil Grand Jury report, *San Francisco Homeless Health and Housing: A Crisis Unfolding on Our Streets*. As noted in the report, the City recently created the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (DHS) that consolidates services formerly provided by the Human Services Agency and Department of Public Health and singly focuses on getting homeless individuals housed. Led by DHS, the City is calling for the development of six Navigation Centers in the next two years, with the second 93-bed Navigation Center at the Civic Center Hotel at 20 12th street opened in June 2016, as noted in the report. This site replicates the successful service model of the first Navigation Center at 1950 Mission Street. The third Navigation Center is expected to be located on Port property on 25th street and open in January 2017. The City continues to evaluate sites for additional Navigation Centers.

In addition, the City provides Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), an evidence based practice for resolving chronic homelessness. Between January 2004 and December 2015, the City placed 12,708 individuals into permanent housing and reduced chronic homelessness. The City has 6,278 units in its supportive housing portfolio; added 1,301 units and placed over 3,000 individuals in a supportive unit between Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-12 and FY 2015-16. The City is in the planning phases for three additional PSH sites to be opened within the next year and continues to look for new units and resources to expand supportive housing to meet the City's goal of ending chronic homelessness.

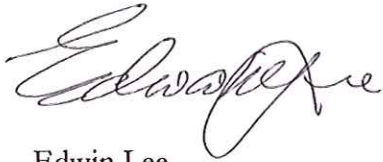
Short-term rental assistance is another opportunity to house people with fewer barriers to long term stability and is a critical tool for assisting individuals that are non-chronically homeless. Local and state resources have allowed the City to develop a robust rapid rehousing program for families and to pilot similar programs for transitional aged youth (TAY), seniors and persons with disabilities, and single adults.

On the November 2016 election, San Franciscans will consider Proposition J, a Charter amendment creating a homeless housing and services fund and transportation improvement fund. If approved by voters, the Homeless Housing and Services Fund (Fund) would provide additional funding for services to homeless individuals, including homelessness prevention, exits from homelessness, and stabilizing lives of homeless individuals. Proceeds of the Fund can be used to support operations, including implementation of a coordinated entry system and capital investments required to maintain or expand the system infrastructure. These positive outcomes address many of the recommendations of the Civil Grand Jury.

A detailed response from the Mayor's Office, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Police Department, and City Administrator to the Civil Grand Jury's findings and recommendations follows.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this Civil Grand Jury report.

Sincerely,



Edwin Lee  
Mayor



Jeff Kositsky  
Director,  
Homelessness and Supportive Housing



Toney D. Chaplin  
Interim Chief of Police



Naomi M. Kelly  
City Administrator

**Findings:**

**Finding F.A.1. DISPATCH HOT:** San Francisco HOT is the most informed first responder for non-violent events, as they are part of DPH and have access to the database CCMS, but health providers are neither dispatched with police nor linked as responders to 311 calls.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

The City's current first responders – the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD), including the Emergency Medical System (EMS), are the most prepared, resourced, and equipped agencies to respond to emergency calls for service. These emergency responders operate 24/7 and have the staffing capacity to respond to emergencies at any time of day or night. They are also trained to assess a wide range of critical public safety and medical situations.

SFHOT does not share that level of staffing, capacity, training or enforcement authority. DSHS is currently partnering with the SFFD to embed SFHOT staff with first responders through the EMS-6 pilot program. The pilot will be evaluated and the decision to expand this model will be based on that evaluation. We will also be working with the Department of Public Health (DPH) on a plan to address first responder needs related to individuals with mental health or related issues.

**Finding F.A.2: POLICE ACCESS:** There is no coordinated plan to support police first responders in a role that is not dealing with criminal behavior. When the police are called out for homeless or encampment issues they have no access to health or substance abuse providers or information regarding the client's mental health.

**Agree with finding.**

City workers (HOT or DPH) who have access to health or substance abuse providers or a client's mental health information are prohibited by law (HIPAA) from sharing it with law enforcement officers. The SFPD may not be the proper respondent for this finding due to the fact the department has no control over changing the law or the practices or procedures of another agency.

**Finding F.A.3: POLICE TRAINING:** Police say they have limited training, or limited access to data to deal successfully with the mentally ill. With the high numbers of mentally ill on our streets, even the most compassionate of police when threatened could find themselves in a position where they must follow their procedures and shoot.

**Disagree with finding, wholly.**

Over 500 first-responder members have received Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training in the past 2 years (see SFPD Department Bulletin 16-097, Response by Crisis Intervention Trained Officers). In addition, there has been a specific policy (Department Bulletins 11-113, 13-120, and 15-155, Response to Mental Health Calls with Armed Suspects) since 2011 outlining how officers are to respond to persons in crisis which involves a weapon other than a firearm. This policy establishes the guidelines officers are to follow, including promptly requesting a supervisor to respond, with an emphasis on creating time and distance when a person in crisis is armed with a weapon other than a firearm and poses a danger only to him/herself.

Officers are trained in this approach beginning in the basic academy, through CIT training, and as part of continued professional training (CPT).

Finding F.A.4. POLICE TICKET: Faced with multiple requests for their service, police use judgment regarding enforcement considering the best chance to have a successful outcome. When called to help, they generally do not ticket because it is not productive.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

Police officers are trained to use judgment when enforcing lower-level crimes, including infractions pertaining to local City ordinances and codes. Officers issue thousands of tickets every year for quality-of-life violations. While some may argue that ticketing may not be the most effective method, the SFPD does enforce laws and write incident reports, especially when responding to complaint-generated calls for service from a member of the public

Finding F.B.1. DISPARATE SOURCES: Many agencies are providing services and gathering information without a common data source.

**Agree with finding.**

Finding F.B.2. INTAKE SYSTEM: Local agencies providing services are not required to use the same intake database. There is no coordinated Data Entry System. This results in duplication of entries with homeless clients having to enter the same information in multiple places.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

A coordinated entry process is in place for DSHS's federally funded housing programs for chronically homeless adults and veterans. There is also a coordinated in-take process in place for the family shelter system. These efforts are informing the process of building the system-wide Coordinated Entry System for all populations and housing programs.

Finding F.B.3. INITIAL CONTACTS: First responders do not have access to a coordinated access/entry system.

**Agree with finding.**

Finding F.B.4. HOUSING SERVICES: Multiple agencies are looking for housing resources – shelters, apartments, etc. for their clients. Each maintains their own databases of resources and compete with each other. There is no single coordinated resource for government sponsored housing.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

While the system is insufficient, the City does have some coordinated processes in place. The CHANGES system is the coordinated shelter database and is accessible by the four shelter reservation sites and through 311. The City also has the newly created affordable housing portal which serves as a centralized database and application process for affordable housing (excluding permanent supportive housing) in San Francisco.

DHSH agrees that more centralized and consistent information about shelter and housing resources would be beneficial.

Finding F.C.1. OUTCOME PERFORMANCE: Contracts are awarded through HSA and DPH with few requirements to include Client Outcome in performance reports used to evaluate the success of a contract or program. Number of Clients Served is more often used.

**Agree with finding.**

Finding F.C.2. MONITORING: The non-profit agencies that perform services for the homeless monitor their own Outcome Performance. The Controller's Office only performs fiscal and compliance monitoring, except for the Navigation Center.

**Disagree with finding, wholly.**

DHSH program staff who were formerly a part of the Human Services Agency and the Department of Public Health regularly monitor performance outcomes by service providers. The contracts are not currently structured for performance based funding.

Finding F.D.1. SHELTERS: The "old style" short-term shelters are used by some of the homeless population but are disliked and perceived as unsafe. They are not designed for positive outcomes; they are merely a means to get people out of the weather. They do not address the need to accommodate partners, possessions and pets. Chronic homeless avoid non-supportive shelters because they fear being robbed and/or victimized.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

While imperfect, short-term shelters are a necessary and critical component of the City's system of care for homeless individuals. Short-term shelters provide an essential alternative for individuals that are not housed and can provide connections to service providers. San Francisco's City sponsored shelters are on average approximately 95% full at all times. Based on Point-in-Time Count data, it was estimated there were 1,745 chronically homeless individuals families living in San Francisco on January 29, 2015. 32% of this population is sheltered.

Finding F.D.2. CENTERS: Reports on the pilot Navigation Center show success in welcoming clients, gathering intake data, tracking the human outcomes, connecting people to services and monitoring exits for recidivism. One key to the success of the Navigation Center has been the innovative partnership with the Controller's Office to track and report on human outcomes.

**Agree with finding.**

Finding F.D.3. HOUSING: The Navigation Center currently serves only 75 clients at a time and moves them out by way of Homeward Bound or to supportive housing - temporary or permanent. The Center keeps beds open specifically for Homeward Bound (a short turnaround). Exits to local housing have been difficult since properties are unavailable, making the Navigation Center seem more like permanent housing instead of transitional housing.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

The Navigation Center model is in no way implemented like or perceived to be permanent housing. The average length of stay at the 1950 Mission Navigation Center is currently 49 days for all clients and 93 days for those who are placed into Permanent Supportive Housing (as of July 2016). New permanent housing is difficult to acquire because of limited availability and costs. Despite these challenges, adding new supportive housing continues to be a priority for the City. In the past 5 fiscal years the City has added 1,301 units to its supportive housing portfolio.

Finding F.D.4. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: Research on other city and state homeless practices confirm that providing supportive housing is the most successful way to end homelessness. This is especially true for the chronically homeless population, a group that has health and addiction issues. San Francisco has not provided sufficient supportive housing to this homeless population.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an evidence based practice for resolving chronic homelessness. There has been a reduction in chronic homelessness in San Francisco due to the City's significant investments in PSH. Between January 2004 and December 2015, the City has placed 12,708 individuals into permanent housing. The City has 6,278 units in its supportive housing portfolio; 1,301 added between FY 2011-12 and FY 2015-16. Due to new units and turnover, over 3,000 individuals have been placed in a supportive unit in this time period. DSHS is in the planning phases for three additional PSH sites to be opened within the next year. DSHS continues to look for new units and resources to expand supportive housing to meet the City's goal of ending chronic homelessness.

PSH, however, is not the only answer to homelessness. Short-term rental assistance is another opportunity to house people with fewer barriers to long term stability and is an appropriate response for non-chronic homelessness. Local and state resources have allowed the City to develop a robust rapid rehousing program for families and to pilot similar programs for transitional aged youth (TAY), seniors and persons with disabilities, and single adults.

Finding F.D.5. ENCAMPMENTS: DPH does not act to condemn encampments as unsafe and reduce the health problem associated with them unless there are shelter and housing options available to the people in the encampments. Currently there are few options.

**Disagree with finding, partially.**

DPH considers multiple factors when evaluating the conditions of encampments, including the conditions, the ability for those conditions to be improved, and the availability of community-based services and supports. San Francisco has an array of community-based services that are available to care for this vulnerable population.

On the November 2016 election, San Franciscans will consider Proposition Q, an ordinance prohibiting the placement of tent encampments on public sidewalks. If approved by the voters, Proposition Q would prohibit tent encampments and require the City to offer housing or shelter. The City would also be required to offer homeless services, defined as a program (Homeward Bound) that pays for transportation to reunite individuals with family or friends outside of San Francisco. It also requires the City to provide written notice

24 hours in advance to individuals and also to post the notices in the area of the encampment. The affected individuals' personal property, with certain exceptions, would be stored by the City for at least 90 days.

Finding F.E.1 311 HOMELESS HELP ORGANIZATION: mySF311.org's Homeless --- Person Seeking Help page presents an alphabetical, uncategorized list of links and lacks detail. Homeless --- Person Seeking Help page found at <http://sf311.org/homeless%E2%80%93person-seeking-help> as of May, 2016. Also available in Figure 13.

**Agree with finding.**

**Recommendations:**

**Recommendation R.A.1.** If safe to do so, SF HOT should be the first responders, and the SFPD should accompany when necessary.

**Recommendation will not be implemented.**

The City's existing first responders – SFPD, SFFD, and Department Emergency Management (DEM) – are the most prepared, resources and equipped agencies to respond to emergency calls. DSHH's Homeless Outreach Team is not staff or trained to be first responders.

**Recommendation R.A.1.1.** The number of SF HOT personnel should be increased so that they will be available to respond.

**Requires further analysis.**

The mission of SFHOT is to serve people in need of non-urgent medical care and service connection. DSHH will continue to support the pilot EMS-6 partnership and is developing a strategic plan that considers the size and scope of the role of the SFHOT team.

**Recommendation R.A.2:** Police should have access to mental health and substance abuse data as well as historical interaction with city services when they are called to respond to a homeless issue.

**Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.**

City workers (HOT or DPH) who have access to health or substance abuse providers or a client's mental health information are prohibited by law (HIPAA) from sharing it with law enforcement officers.

**Recommendation R.A.3:** Police training should include methods to deal with mentally unstable individuals.

**Recommendation has been implemented.**

Over 500 first-responder members have received Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training in the past 2 years (see SFPD Department Bulletin 16-097, Response by Crisis Intervention Trained Officers). In addition, there has been a specific policy (Department Bulletins 11-113, 13-120, and 15-155, Response to Mental Health Calls with Armed Suspects) since 2011 outlining how officers are to respond to persons in crisis which involves a weapon other than a firearm. This policy establishes the guidelines officers are to follow, including promptly requesting a supervisor to respond, with an emphasis on creating time and distance when a person in crisis is armed with a weapon other than a firearm and poses a danger only to him/herself. Officers are trained in this approach beginning in the basic academy, through CIT training, and as part of continued professional training (CPT).

**Recommendation R.A.4.** Police policies and legal consequences need to be better coordinated so that police are not put in a position where citations have no effect.

**Requires further analysis.**



The SFPD is but one part of the larger "Law Enforcement" model. Police Officers enforce laws that are passed by lawmakers. The District Attorney's office, courts, and legislators have a much stronger role to play when it comes to legal consequences.

Recommendation R.B.1. Take advantage of the coordination opportunities provided by the formation of the new Department on Homelessness and Supportive Housing to fund and implement a coordinated entry system.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

DHSH is in the process of moving its system to a coordinated entry process to better coordinate services and prioritize people for housing, shelter, and services based on system-wide priorities. DHSH has begun this process by piloting coordinated entry for federally funded housing programs for chronically homeless adults and veterans. DHSH is in the planning process for the family system and plans to expand coordinated entry to all subpopulations by October 2018.

On the November 2016 election, San Franciscans will consider Proposition J, a Charter amendment creating a homeless housing and services fund and transportation improvement fund. If approved by voters, the Homeless Housing and Services Fund would be used to provide services to the homeless, including programs to prevent homelessness, create exits from homelessness, and move homeless individuals into more stable situations. Proceeds of the fund can be used to support operations, including implementation of a coordinated entry system.

Recommendation R.B.2. Develop a consistent intake system for information sharing across all departments servicing the homeless.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

DHSH is working on developing data and information sharing protocols and processes. This protocols will be consistent with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

Recommendation R.B.3. Take advantage of the coordination opportunities provided by the formation of the Department on Homelessness and Supportive Housing to require all agencies using city/state/federal funding to use the same database to find housing opportunities.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

DHSH plans to require all DHSH contracted service providers to utilize this common database for homeless services. DHSH plans to offer technical assistance to providers to train staff and make the transition. Exceptions may need to be made for programs where anonymity is key to safety.

Recommendation R.B.4. First Responders need access to a coordinated entry system.

**Requires further analysis.**

DHSH is prioritizing setting up a coordinated entry system and ensuring access and full utilization by DHSH funded service providers. Further analysis is required to determine what components of the system are most appropriate and useful for first responders to be able to access.

Recommendation R.C.1. Contracts with organizations receiving City funding should require comprehensive Outcome Performance Measures which include client outcomes.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

As contracts are renewed, DHSH will look to add in comprehensive client outcome measurements. It is important that outcome expectations are consistent across like programs for like subpopulations and that DHSH takes guidance from HUD on the minimum client level outcomes to track. All current DHSH contracts will come up for renewal between now and 2021.

Recommendation R.C.2. The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing should arrange for homeless service agencies to follow the Navigation Center model and have ongoing monitoring of their Outcome Performance objectives overseen by a new program in the Controller's Office, rather than at the department or service agency level when new programs are initiated.

**Recommendation will not be implemented.**

The Controller's Office will continue to play its role as chief accounting officer and auditor for City services but will not establish a new program to oversee DHSH outcomes. DHSH has established a Data and Performance Unit within the department to evaluate the impact of programs and will continue to partner with the Controller's Office, as appropriate.

Recommendation R.C.3. The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing should generate a public annual report showing the outcome scores of all homeless services agencies and the funding they received.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

Once the DHSH coordinated database is fully implemented, DHSH plans to have live dashboards available on the department's website to show system level outcomes and funding information.

Recommendation R.D.1. The Mayor should direct the newly organized Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to move from the restrictive shelter system to the Navigation Center style system which triages clients to the appropriate services.

**Recommendation will be implemented in the future.**

There were many lessons learned from the Navigation Centers, including how to operate low-threshold environment and the importance of co-locating services at shelters. There are plans to implement some of the lessons learned at traditional shelters. The timeframe for these reforms are budget dependent.

Recommendation R.D.1.1. The Mayor should direct the newly organized Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to provide emergency shelters when there is a natural disaster. These shelters should not be permanent housing.

**Recommendation will not be implemented.**

In previous years the Human Services Agency has operated emergency shelter in the case of extreme rain or weather. DSHS, Human Services Agency and Department of Emergency Management are working together to determine which department or team of departments should be responsible for opening and managing emergency shelters in the event of a natural disaster. DSHS recommends that the responsibility for opening and managing emergency shelters in the event of a natural disaster to the Human Services Agency and Department of Emergency Management. These agencies have the capacity and experience to manage these types of emergency shelters.

Recommendation R.D.2. The Mayor should explore and acquire new sites where additional Navigation Centers can be opened. The Board of Supervisors should urge the Mayor to fund these additional sites.

**Recommendation has been implemented.**

The Board of Supervisors recently passed and the Mayor signed legislation calling for the development of six Navigation Centers in the next two years. On June 28, 2016 the City opened the second Navigation Center at the Civic Center Hotel at 20 12th street. This second site will replicate the successful service model at 1950 Mission Street and will add 93 beds of capacity to the Navigation Center System. DSHS is in process of opening a third Navigation Center on Port property in the Central Waterfront area on 25th street. This site is likely to be opened in January 2017. DSHS continues to evaluate sites for additional Navigation Centers. Staffing is a key component of the success of the Navigation Centers. As DSHS works to open additional sites, funding for staff and operations is essential for success.

Recommendation R.D.2.1. The Mayor should ensure that the new coordinated Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing provide sufficient staff at each Navigation Center location to deal with the mental, physical and emotional issues the homeless bring to the sites. The Board of Supervisors should approve funding.

**Recommendation has been implemented.**

Staffing is a key component of the success of the Navigation Centers. As DSHS works to open additional sites, funding for staff and operations is essential for success.

Recommendation R.D.5. The city must increase the stock very low income housing to meet the current need.

**Requires further analysis.**

Between January 2004 and December 2015, the City placed 12,708 individuals into permanent housing. The City has 6,278 units in its supportive housing portfolio; 1,301 added between FY 2011-12 and FY 2015-16. Due to new units and turnover, over 3,000 individuals have been placed in a supportive unit in this time period. DSHS is in the planning phases for three additional PSH sites to be opened within the next year.

Recommendation R.E.1.1. mySF311.org's Homeless -- Person Seeking Help page should not be alphabetical, but instead be categorized, and include detail about each link as demonstrated on HSA's Housing & Homeless Services page captured in Figure E-4.

Homeless -- Person Seeking Help page found at <http://sf311.org/homeless%E2%80%93person-seeking-help> as of May, 2016. Also available in Figure 13.

Housing & Homeless Services page found at <http://www.sfhsa.org/76.htm> in May, 2016. Also in Figure 14

**Recommendation will be implemented.**

311 agrees with this recommendation and has made the changes to the website as reflected in the following link: <https://sf311.org/homeless-person-seeking-help>.

DHSH is prepared and eager to collaborate with 311 to ensure that information about services is accessible and available to those seeking assistance. DHSH will proactively work with 311 to ensure DHSH's website has all up-to-date information that can be linked from the SF311.org site.

Recommendation R.E.1.2. mySF311.org's Homeless -- Person Seeking Help page should include the detailed shelter information found on 311's Shelters page

Person Seeking Help page found at <http://sf311.org/homeless%E2%80%93person-seeking-help>, as of May, 2016. Also available in Figure 13.

SF311.org's Shelters page found at <http://sf311.org/homeless-reservation-centers>, in May, 2016.

**Requires further analysis.**

311 redesigned its website and in the process removed pages that repeated information gathered from other agencies. 311 does not have staffing resources to ensure the accuracy of the information provided on those pages and many of the pages contained information no longer accurate due to changes made by the service provider. One of these pages included the Shelter Page referenced in the recommendations (<http://sf311.org/homeless-reservation-centers>) so this page is no longer in existence. However, 311 agrees that in the Homeless -- Person Seeking Help page there should be a section containing shelter information. Our page: <https://sf311.org/homeless-person-seeking-help> contains a "Shelter" category, with hyperlinks to each of the included sub-categories. One of these sub-categories, "Reservation Centers for Shelters" (shown in highlight below), links directly to the HSA Homeless and Housing web (<http://sfhsa.org/76.htm>) page to ensure information is relevant and accurate since it is maintained by HSA staff.

DHSH is prepared and eager to collaborate with 311 to ensure that information about services is accessible and available to those seeking assistance. DHSH will proactively work with 311 to get them the information needed for the sf311.org.

Recommendation R.E.1.3. mySF311.org's Homeless -- Person Seeking Help page should remove the "Human Services" link and replace it with clearly named links and attendant details similar to HSA's Housing & Homeless Services page, copied here:

**Requires further analysis.**

311 has limited staffing available to create separate web pages and ensure their accuracy when the responsible agency already has this information available on their respective website; therefore, 311 aims at

linking to pages from the responsible agencies. This ensures, as information changes (i.e. shelter address, hours, phone number), 311's staff does not need to update a duplicative page, and 311 staff can be assured to always have up-to-date and accurate information to provide to its customers. There are only a few instances when an exception is made, and 311 will create its own page, such as in the case of the category of "Homeless Concerns and Resources" (previously named "Homeless"). Since this category expands through many different agencies, 311 has created its own web page, allowing users to more easily navigate and obtain information rather than having to visit different department's website. Since the redesign of the website, we have removed the "Human Services" link as was recommended but did not replace with similar information to HSA's Housing and Homeless page as recommended. Instead, a newly created page <https://sf311.org/homeless-person-seeking-help> has been created, which provides a more organized set of links along with a brief explanation to each, including a link to HSA's Housing & Homeless Services page when clicking on the "Resource Centers for Homeless Assistance" link found in the "Shelter" subsection.

DHSH is prepared and eager to collaborate with 311 to ensure that information about services is accessible and available to those seeking assistance. DHSH will proactively work with 311 to get them the information needed for the sf311.org.