



City of San José

Neighborhoods Commission

February 10, 2016

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Honorable Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

re: Homelessness

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

The issue of homelessness impacts all of us living in San José – the housed as well as the unhoused. Given the impact of the issue on (and by) the neighborhoods, the Neighborhoods Commission recently studied what we might be able to do to help ameliorate the situation. A number of Commissioners researched the topic (including talking with specialists and attending public meetings), after which the full Commission discussed their findings.

We have discovered that the issue of homelessness is very complex: it spans many jurisdictions and agencies, and much is beyond the scope of the Neighborhoods Commission.

Nonetheless, we want to offer what assistance that we can. This letter lists some of the means by which we may be able to help.

- The Neighborhoods Commission can help educate residents and neighborhood associations about the proactive measures being taken by the City of San José and Santa Clara County to eradicate homelessness, such as the “All the Way Home” initiative to house veterans.
- We can help educate residents about the root causes of homelessness, including the loss of one’s job, a catastrophic event in the family, adverse credit, the dissolution of a marriage, or a devastating mental or physical disability.
- Commissioners can work in their communities with their Councilmembers and others to arrange for the presentation and discussion of video documentaries such as “Exodus of the Jungle” and “Faces of Homelessness” (by the National Coalition for the Homeless).
- The Neighborhoods Commission can encourage residents and neighborhood associations to participate in events such as volunteering at shelters, assisting in food drives and coat collection drives, and the distribution of gift cards to assist the homeless communities.
- We can work with neighborhood associations to be alert to crimes committed by the homeless and crimes committed against the homeless, and provide information on how to report any such crimes.
- We can help with education and informational exchange to help offset NIMBY tendencies.

- We can discuss the merits of measures to help the homeless, and can recommend the inclusion of the appropriate funding in the City's upcoming budget proposal.
- And we can solicit ideas from residents and neighborhood associations for additional ways in which we all can try to help the homeless.

Homelessness affects us all.

We in the Neighborhoods Commission look forward to doing what we can to help alleviate the problem.

Norma Callender
Lead, Homelessness Issues

Lawrence Ames
Chair, San José Neighborhoods Commission.

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