

Memorandum

To: Mayor Ristow, Vice Mayor Badame, Councilmember Hudes, and Councilmember Rennie
CC: Town Manager, Town Attorney, Town Clerk

From: Councilmember Rob Moore

Subject: Homelessness Agenda Item for April 4th Town Council Meeting

Date: 3/30/2023

Background

I am deeply grateful to the members of our faith community who have long been serving our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Members of Saint Luke's, the Los Gatos United Methodist Church, Saint Mary's and other faith groups have become experts in meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents in Los Gatos.

In recent years, members of these congregations have become increasingly interested in further addressing the lack of resources for our unhoused neighbors, as have many community members. Leaders of these faith groups took on the task of figuring out how to meet these urgent needs with limited resources. Through their research and discussions of how they could support people in Los Gatos experiencing homelessness, it became evident that additional investments would be necessary to provide additional resources.

While I am incredibly appreciative of the time and energy community leaders of Saint Luke's, the Los Gatos United Methodist Church, and Saint Mary's have put into their proposal, it is clear the budget of \$25,000 they were basing their recommendations on is not sufficient.

Proposal

The Los Gatos Town Council should allocate an additional \$75,000 of ARPA dollars on top of the already allocated \$25,000, for a total of \$100,000, to support those experiencing homelessness in Los Gatos. This additional money will be allocated to expand on the proposal from our faith leaders and deepen the capacity for Los Gatos to support the unhoused.

The funding should be allocated to the following:

- *Hotel Vouchers*.....\$70,000
 - While Los Gatos should strive to create more permanent emergency, transitional, and affordable housing options, hotel vouchers are an immediate solution to an urgent need. Administered by the above-mentioned congregations, providing this funding will allow community experts to determine the best system for distribution.
 - For example, this budget will allow for 20 unhoused residents to each have more than 23 days of hotel vouchers over a year (at a cost of \$150 per voucher). If only 15 unhoused residents access the vouchers, they will have over a month of shelter.
- *Public Restrooms + Trash Collection*.....\$20,000
 - Restrooms and trash collection are vital for the dignity of our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Though permanent public restrooms should be established throughout

Los Gatos, interim hygiene solutions are necessary. This funding will allow for trash receptacles and portable toilets to be placed in locations near our unhoused residents.

- *Shower Program*.....\$10,000
 - This funding will allow for the continuation of the existing shower program and pay for the cleaning services associated with the program. Moving forward, gym memberships and other shower access options should be considered to meet the more consistent hygiene needs of people experiencing homelessness in Los Gatos.

One key area of homelessness services left out of this proposal is case management. Case management, especially in the form of housing case management, is not only important but necessary to housing individuals that have been experiencing homelessness for any length of time. However, this item is omitted for two key reasons.

First, there are multiple proposals currently being discussed to provide Los Gatos with case management services. It is my opinion that through municipal and/ or nonprofit partnerships, Los Gatos residents experiencing homelessness will have access to some level of case management in the next year. Second, we have heard loud and clear directly from those experiencing homelessness in Los Gatos that their top priority is emergency shelter during harsh weather conditions. While it should be our goal to accommodate the myriad of concerns for our unhoused residents, prioritization is necessary. Hotel vouchers, restrooms, and showers meet the most basic and most critical health, safety, and hygiene needs of people experiencing homelessness in Los Gatos.

Additionally, with this proposal the Town Council refers Town Staff to begin conversations with the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing and nonprofit partner Destination: Home to explore tapping into private dollars and County resources. This referral will allow these partners to work with the Town to deepen our impact and best leverage the Town’s investment into our residents experiencing homelessness.

Finally, I recommend that the Town Council grant flexibility for the Town Manager to work with Los Gatos homelessness experts and faith leaders to make any minor changes for overall programmatic efficacy. This is the first time the Los Gatos Town Council is making an investment of this scale to meet the needs of our residents experiencing homelessness and adjustments to best meet these needs may be necessary.