

City of Manhattan Beach
Three-Year Plan to End Homelessness

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Planning Context

The City of Manhattan Beach has a population of approximately 35,741, according to the 2016 US Census Bureau estimate. We are in County Service Planning Area 8, which is a subdivision of Los Angeles County used for managing homeless and mental health services, and the Fourth County Supervisorial District, represented by Supervisor Janice Hahn. At first glance, it is easy to assume that Manhattan Beach doesn't have a "homeless problem." In 2016, the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count¹ identified four homeless individuals in Manhattan Beach; in 2017, it was 6. While that snapshot in time provides one version of homelessness in Manhattan Beach, it misses the bigger picture of homelessness, including those who are just passing through our City, typically in warmer months. Also missed in the count are the so-called "hidden homeless" – those who are staying with friends or family on a very temporary basis, house-sitting, or staying in motels without a permanent residence. The South Bay as a whole has experienced a 55% increase in homelessness since 2015, according to the South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness. This means that even though our City doesn't always see the issue in our streets or parks, as a part of the South Bay community, it impacts us. We have the opportunity to play an important role in connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to those resources in a constructive way.

The County of Los Angeles allocated Measure H funding for cities to create plans to address homelessness in their communities. To do this, Manhattan Beach engaged residents, community organizations, businesses, staff and other stakeholders in a discussion about what the City could do. Many participants felt that the City lacked a standard response to homelessness and creating a process or expectation would be a beneficial step. While the City's current Housing Element mentions resources and the issue of homelessness, it does not set out clear steps or expectations for how to address them.

The Manhattan Beach Police Department (MBPD) has several officers with specialized training in response to mentally ill and homeless people, and provides first response to calls about incidents involving homeless people in the City. One MBPD officer is assigned to a multi-jurisdictional team of officers, in collaboration with the Cities of Hermosa Beach and El Segundo and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, that responds to calls for service and outreach related to mentally ill subjects. Through the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), Manhattan Beach is able to obtain response from People Assisting The Homeless (PATH) and Harbor Interfaith Services, the lead agency for homeless services in Service Planning

¹ The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count is conducted annually across LA in an effort to gather as much information about the region's current homeless population as possible and assist in making informed decisions and designing creative solutions (<https://www.theycountwillyou.org/>).

Area 8. The LA County Library, LA County Beaches and Harbors Department, Manhattan Beach Unified School District, and Beach Cities Health District also devote budgetary and human resources to addressing homelessness. These agencies all participated in the planning process.

Over a two-month period, in February and March, 2018, the City's consulting team conducted seven meetings with a total of 110 participants, which gave community stakeholders the opportunity to identify problems and solutions relating to homelessness in Manhattan Beach. In addition, 79 individuals responded to a survey posted on the City's website. Those participating included members of the business community, people affiliated with faith communities, Manhattan Beach residents, and City and County employees.

Rationale for Manhattan Beach Homeless Plan

In response to the passage of Measure H, which created significant new resources to address homelessness in Los Angeles County, the City of Manhattan Beach chose to participate in the County planning process in order to align its current City expenditures with the resources of other jurisdictions, including the County, the Beach Cities Health District, and neighboring cities, so that City residents will experience a visible decrease in homelessness in their community. The City recognizes that this will only be accomplished through an active constituency working together, including government, businesses, and the faith community, to tackle the causes of homelessness, and implement solutions.

Although there are relatively few homeless people in Manhattan Beach, many participants felt that solutions should be found that allow those who are homeless in the City to stabilize in permanent housing, and that the City should make an effort to prevent residents from becoming homeless. During the community outreach meetings, members of the Manhattan Beach Police Department (MBPD), along with other participants, described Manhattan Beach's homeless population as diverse, with a variety of needs.

- Chronically homeless individuals often have a disabling condition, and have been homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. These individuals are well known to MBPD, businesses, and the faith community, and are often the source of calls received by MBPD. They typically have co-occurring substance use and mental illness, and most have been unable to take advantage of services when they are offered. Several individuals are long-time, well-known local residents; others are more recent arrivals in Manhattan Beach.
- Recently homeless people have lost their housing during the past year for reasons such as losing a job, illness, marital breakdown, or a property owner's decision to go out of the rental business. They may be able to benefit from emergency rental assistance or other programs available through Harbor Interfaith or PATH. These individuals may be known to the school district if their children are enrolled in local schools, and may also be known to faith groups that offer laundry and meals to people who are homeless. Most people in this category are local residents who want to stay in the area for school, job, or community accessibility, and some live in their vehicles.

- Transients often find their way to Manhattan Beach, especially in the summer months, seeking beachside living. Some of these people are youth, and some may be willing to return to their home in another state if resources are available.
- People at imminent risk of homelessness, including families, often use services such as laundry, meals, and food pantries offered by the faith community. Intervention with these people prior to homelessness will help prevent additional people from becoming homeless.

The City of Manhattan Beach currently invests significantly in managing homelessness within its jurisdiction. The Manhattan Beach Police Department has several officers who have special training and are primarily assigned to respond to incidents involving people who are homeless. They work with City staff members in Public Works, Code Enforcement, Legal Services, and Parks and Recreation who regularly encounter people who are homeless as part of their duties. They have access to specialized mental health intervention from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, which assigns a full-time mental health clinician to the South Bay area. Outreach workers from PATH are contracted by the South Bay Cities Council of Governments to respond within 72 hours.

In alignment with the County's purpose in making planning funds available to cities, the Manhattan Beach Plan to End Homelessness will:

- Offer effective and compassionate interventions to people who are homeless in Manhattan Beach, with the goal of engaging them in services leading to permanent housing.
- Establish structures and relationships that will allow Manhattan Beach to reach "net zero" homeless people within five years.
- Reduce the impact of homelessness on City residents, employees, and businesses in significant increments annually over the next three years.
- Create a framework for collaboration with neighboring cities to meet the need for affordable housing in the South Bay region.

Goals of Manhattan Beach Plan to End Homelessness

Goal #1: To support community members, businesses, and faith groups to effectively help individuals experiencing homelessness in Manhattan Beach.

Supporting actions:

1. Establish a City Advisory Committee or task force to develop additional policies, engage community members, and plan strategies for engagement of people who are homeless in Manhattan Beach.

2. With the assistance of Harbor Interfaith and other local resource organizations, develop a Manhattan Beach-specific resource card with simple instructions and contact information for various populations. Review the resource card quarterly, and update as needed. Distribute the card widely through community groups, business organizations, and faith communities.
3. Hold a cross-training event at least twice a year for outreach workers, faith groups and other interested community members. The event will be designed to foster relationships between front-line outreach workers and faith groups interacting directly with the homeless community, so that services can be initiated quickly, personally, and effectively.

Policy changes: Include funding in 2018-2019 budget for staffing, production of resource card, and to convene advisory group monthly, and twice annual networking and cross-training events.

Timeline: Beginning in summer 2018.

Goal #2: To share responsibility for addressing homelessness with neighboring cities, in order to expand permanent solutions to homelessness.

Supporting actions:

1. Strengthen participation in the South Bay Council of Governments Homeless Task Force to design, fund, and implement dedicated bed capacity at a regional crisis shelter, secure overnight parking for vehicle dwellers, transportation to shelter, additional outreach hours, night and weekend response, bus tickets to home, and other strategies for moving people from homelessness to permanent housing.

Policy changes: Allocate City staff time and funds for collaborative solutions.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Goal #3: To support City staff, including Manhattan Beach Police and Fire Departments, in responding effectively and compassionately to homeless residents.

Supporting actions:

1. Provide comprehensive Mental Health First Aid training to all City staff members who interact with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
2. With staff input, create and disseminate protocols and resource guides for all staff who interact with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
3. Include City staff members in cross-training and mixers so that they can develop individual relationships with service providers in order to facilitate effective referrals.
4. Establish regular hours for outreach workers at the library and Joslyn Center.

Policy changes: Establish protocols and training standards. Identify appropriate staff members or positions. Dedicate space in public buildings for outreach workers or other social service professionals to provide case management and referrals.

Timeline: Establish a City working group to implement these activities, beginning in July 2018.

Goal #4: To ensure that all people who are homeless in Manhattan Beach are assessed by a mental health clinician to determine whether they meet the criteria for emergency treatment.

Supporting actions:

1. Request the Board of Supervisors to increase the availability of a mental health clinician to collaborate with MBPD on the Mental Evaluation Team (MET).

Policy changes: Explore extension of MET to nights and weekends.

Timeline: Submit request to Board of Supervisors in July 2018.

Goal #5: To prevent homelessness among Manhattan Beach residents.

Supporting actions:

1. Engage Manhattan Beach Unified School District, faith organizations, service clubs, and other local organizations in identifying local residents who are at risk of homelessness.
2. Connect residents to prevention services through Harbor Interfaith.
3. Disseminate information about how to reach services through library, City website, schools, faith communities.
4. Study extent to which City residents are at risk for homelessness, and negotiate with Harbor Interfaith to provide subsidies and services.

Policy changes: Allocate City funds based on findings from study to subsidize homelessness prevention for Manhattan Beach residents. Work with Harbor Interfaith to implement a system of fund allocation.

Timeline: Begin discussions with Harbor Interfaith in July 2018; initiate program in January 2019.

Goal #6: To remove property left in public when the owners are taken to shelter or moved by law enforcement, and to resolve storage of the property within 90 days.

Supporting actions:

1. Law enforcement, Public Works, PATH, and Harbor Interfaith will develop policies and procedures for storage of property.
2. Produce a card that will be given to the individual, stating where their property is, and the last day it will be held.

Policy changes: Establish standard City policy, and disseminate to appropriate City departments and regional resource providers.

Timeline: By October 1, 2018

Goal #7: To improve City response to homelessness by leveraging funds that are currently spent on this effort to obtain additional resources to address homelessness in Manhattan Beach.

Supporting actions:

1. Identify and track City resources that are used to address homelessness.
2. Apply for Measure H funds to supplement City funds for crisis housing, transportation, and other interventions.

Policy changes: Direct staff to develop a system for identifying City resources dedicated to solving homelessness.

Timeline: Begin tracking City resources in July 2018.

Goal #8: To increase the number of housing opportunities in Manhattan Beach for special populations at risk of homelessness, such as seniors and individuals living with disabilities.

Supporting actions:

1. Identify any properties in Manhattan Beach that would be appropriate sites for private development of supportive housing for special populations.

Policy changes: Review Housing Element and make updates as necessary.

Timeline: Assign to Planning staff in 2018 for report in June 2019.

Goal #9: To provide leadership to engage community residents in supporting solutions to homelessness.

Supporting actions:

1. Provide online resources, regular articles in city newsletter, community trainings that help our community feel prepared and up-to-date on the current challenges.
2. Utilize the Homeless Advisory Committee to develop approaches to job creation, volunteer service, and other interactions between residents and members of community who are homeless.
3. Coordinate a landlord education meeting to engage property owners.

Timeline: Appoint Advisory Committee in July and August 2018, and ask them for a work plan by January 1, 2019.

Goal #10: To acknowledge and manage the public health and hygiene impact of homelessness in our community.

Supporting actions:

1. Evaluate opportunities to provide access to hygiene facilities for individuals who are homeless in Manhattan Beach.

Policy changes: Required to permit such a facility to be open around the clock.

Timeline: Proposal to be completed by November 2018.