

# Lodi Access Center Community Engagement Plan

2021



Objective: to enlighten, engage, and empower the residents of Lodi to contribute to the plan for how to best assist Lodi's unsheltered population.



# City of Lodi Community Engagement Plan

==== Enlighten, Engage & Empower

## [Overview\*]

The City of Lodi (“City”) and partner agencies recognize that effectively responding to the unsheltered population requires a combination of strategies at the local level. Since 2014, these efforts included the creation of The Lodi Committee on Homelessness (“LCOH”), development of a homeless liaison officer position in the Lodi Police Department, participation in the SJ Continuum of Care (“SJCoC”), and collaboration with community groups and service organizations.

Presently, the City is focusing on the current chronic unsheltered population. In the 2019 San Joaquin County Point in Time Count, Lodi had 139 unsheltered residents. As recommended in the 2019 Point in Time Count Report, “a successful approach to reducing rates of homelessness in San Joaquin County should expand emergency shelter capacity through the construction of new low-barrier shelter facilities...” (Include full citation.) The report went on to recommend the “Housing First” approach, which is considered the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness. Multiple studies have shown that Housing First programs yield higher housing retention rates, lower returns to homelessness, and significant reduction in the use of crisis services and institutions.

Therefore, the City is adopting the SJCoC recommendation - “the most effective strategy is to create a long-live emergency shelter that accommodates a wide population and offers robust services.” The City believes that this is the best chance to get the most people off the streets and into better living situations. This commitment was confirmed by the City Council’s adoption of the San Joaquin Community Response to Homelessness – 2020 San Joaquin Strategic Plan on November 4, 2020 per resolution 2020-257.

In order to achieve the intended results and the aid of the City’s unsheltered population, effective community outreach and engagement is paramount to success in the development of an Access Center (AKA Navigation Center).

\*Excerpts taken from the SJCoC Strategic Plan (2020) and Lodi Report on Homelessness (2015).

- <http://www.sanjoaquinccoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/San-Joaquin-Community-Response-to-Homelessness-Strategic-Plan-June-2020.pdf>
- <https://www.lodi.gov/940/Homelessness>

## [What is an Access Center?]

An Access Center is a low-barrier, service-enriched shelter that facilitates linkage to needed resources to help individuals and families exit the cycle of homelessness. Onsite services include intensive case management, hygiene facilities, 24/7 staffing including security, and janitorial services. An Access Center offers highly marginalized people the opportunity to regain safety and engage in supportive connections that allow them to move forward with rebuilding their lives, as well as develop pathways to permanent housing, income, healthcare, sobriety, and stability.

To make sheltering more accessible, partners, pets, and possessions are allowed in a low-barrier setting. However, low-barrier does not mean low-expectations. Violence, weapons, open use of substances, or disruptive behavior is prohibited within and around the facility.

## [What is an Access Center Not?]

An Access Center is not a homeless camp. Rather, it is a safe and secure option to Lodi's unsheltered community to access needed services to progress towards a path of self-sufficiency. Security is a central component of the Access Center and consists of 24/7 monitoring of the immediate neighborhood, discourages loitering by clients, and responds promptly to any neighborhood concerns. Additionally, routine patrol of the entire Access Center campus will occur to ensure safety and security of residents and that house rules are being followed. Janitorial staff will ensure shelter campus remains clean and debris free on a daily basis.

Additionally, with sufficient minimal barrier shelter beds, the City can focus its enforcement efforts on reducing the occurrence of camping in public right of ways, parks, in front of businesses, etc., because unsheltered individuals could be transported to the Access Center. Thus, the Access Center would not only provide access for the unsheltered individuals or families; it will also provide greater access for the entire community to City resources.

## [What is community engagement?]

Community engagement is a two-way communication method between local government and the public. It provides a platform for the community to voice their opinions and inform the decisions that affect their lives. This inclusive engagement approach is to create a shared vision and outcome that will reflect the City and community's values and garner support for their joint objectives.

# Engagement Strategy

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## 1. Purpose, Goals, and Objectives of Engagement

### 1. Purpose:

The overall intent of the Plan is to:

- Challenge misconceptions/stereotypes and build public awareness and support for the changes the City is advocating including an Access Center Emergency Shelter
- Make housing and homelessness a priority within the community
- Identify the potential support network and resources that exist within the community
- Garner community support to effectively house Lodi's unsheltered population

### 2. Goals:

By working with the community, the City's desired results include:

- Community Support for an Access Center in Lodi
- Development of an Access Center low-barrier shelter with navigation services to facilitate linkage to needed resources in order to help individuals and families exit the cycle of homelessness, and meet the needs of the Point in Time Count

### 3. Objectives:

The City has identified the following steps that need to occur to achieve the Plan's identified goals:

- Create a space for participants from the public, private, and non-profit sector to connect around issues relevant to assisting Lodi's unsheltered population
- Showcase how Lodi's diversity makes them unique and able to better address local issues
- Have conversations about an Access Center low barrier shelter in Lodi
- Have City and Community leaders set priorities and demonstrate support for Housing and Homelessness objectives
- Receive appropriate feedback to community surveys (online)
  - Objective: 150 respondents
- Canvas the community to determine if there are any concerns and receive feedback (Door-to-Door)
- Hold community meetings (zoom/in person) to answer questions, receive feedback, alleviate misconceptions and dispel stereotypes
- Educate the public on the need to implement evidence-based best practices (e.g. Housing First, Coordinated Entry, prevention and diversion, trauma-informed care, low-barrier programming, and voluntary services)
- Present findings of community outreach and engagement to the City Council and the Board of Supervisors

## 2. Stakeholders

City and community partners will look to engage relevant stakeholders that could influence the project and its implementation.

1. **Residents**
2. **Unsheltered Individuals**
3. **Local Leaders**
4. **Community Groups**
5. **Non-Profits**
6. **Business Owners**
7. **City Commissions/Committees**

## 3. Resources

City staff is unable to complete all of the outreach needed for the Community Engagement Plan, and will look for the assistance of volunteers within the community. Some of the resources available for the Community Engagement Plan are:

1. **Neighborhood Services Staff**
  - Director, Manager, Administrative Staff
2. **Contracted Staff**
  - Michael Baker International
3. **Lodi Committee on Homelessness**
  - Social Service Providers, Community Residents, and Volunteers
4. **Lodi Improvement Committee**
  - Appointed Committee Members and Community Residents

## 4. Messaging

City staff will prepare messaging that address particular audience's concerns and express how an Access Center would be beneficial for the community. This will focus on - what message can be used to engage a particular person or group?

1. **Appeal to community concerns and/or needs**
  - How will this help?
    - Provides needed assistance to members of the community
    - Would have capacity to house the City's entire 2019 Point in Time Count (139)
    - Would reduce the number of unsheltered individuals around businesses, residences, parks, overpasses, etc.
2. **Tailor message for each audience.**
  - Business Owners:
    - Need to demonstrate how this will reduce the number of unsheltered individuals in and around businesses
    - Assist Tourism with the reduction of unsheltered individuals near businesses

- Residents:
  - Need to demonstrate the facility will be clean, provide security, and provide resources to reduce the unsheltered population in Lodi
  - Need to demonstrate how this will reduce the number of unsheltered individuals in and around residential properties
- Caltrans
  - Need to demonstrate how this will reduce camps near and around transit facilities, freeways, and roadways
- Public/Social Service Provider:
  - What help do City staff need from service providers to accomplish goals set forth in engagement process?
  - How will the resources be brought into the community to assist the service providers?

**3. Delivering the message – Potential Responsible Party.**

- Zoom Meetings/Workshops: City Staff
  - City would be responsible for preparing presentation, responding to questions, drafting Action Item List, Develop FAQ
- Social Media: City Staff and Partner Agencies
  - City would draft message to be shared and send out to Partner Agencies for distribution
- Flyers: City Staff and Partner Agencies
  - City would develop and print flyer and provide to Partner Agencies/Committee’s for Distribution
    - Print in-house or through local vender.
- Canvassing Neighborhood: City Staff, Committee’s
- Survey: City Staff, Committee’s
  - City Staff to work in collaboration with LCOH on questions
  - City will draft message for distribution

**5. Potential Outreach Opportunities:**

City staff will work with community partners to share the message and outreach opportunities.

<b>To enlighten</b>	<b>To engage</b>	<b>To empower</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets (Flyer)</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentations</li> <li>• Email Blast</li> <li>• Social Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Meet in person, schedule a meeting (Limit amount of attendees due to COVID-19)</li> <li>• Surveys/Polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident advisory committees (Lodi Committee on Homelessness (“LCOH”), Lodi Improvement Committee (“LIC”), Asset Based Community Development (“ABCD”))</li> <li>• Participatory Input (Project Partners)</li> </ul>

**6. Implementation**

City staff will work with community partners on all outreach and engagement efforts to gather data and feedback from the community.

### 1. **Community Surveys**

- Executive summary at the beginning
- Flyer
- Animated PowerPoint Video
  - Number of Unsheltered Individuals
  - What is an Access Center?
  - Services
  - United Way Video (Our success stories and Barriers Video will not be ready yet)
- Structured Questions for community members and service providers
- Open note section at the end for additional comments/feedback
- 20 day submission period
- Marketing:
  - Post on Social Media
  - Post on Website
  - Send out to LIC, ABCD, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Alliance, Public Service Providers, and Lodi News Sentinel

### 2. **City Council Consent Item:**

- Attach Lodi Access Center Community Engagement Plan
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

### 3. **Noticing:**

- Public Notice
- Flyer
- Survey Information

### 4. **Meet with Local Law Enforcement**

- Discuss operations, field questions
- Have Downtown Streets Team Attend
- PowerPoint
  - United Way Video (Our success stories and Barriers Video will not be ready yet)
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

### 5. **Community Engagement Kick Off (Zoom): City and Partner Agencies (Social Service Providers, Committees, and Community Leaders, Business Owners)**

- PowerPoint (a sample outline is included in Appendix A)
  - United Way Video (Our success stories and Barriers Video will be forthcoming)
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

**6. Canvas the community –**

- Identify neighborhood to canvas to determine if there are any concerns with an Access Center (Door-to-Door).
- Have 5 - 7 structured questions for each individual interviewed
- Additional comments/feedback

**7. First Community Meeting (Zoom): Residents, Business Owners, Community Leaders**

- PowerPoint
- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Open for questions and/or Feedback
- Develop Action Items
- Develop FAQ
- Provide Survey Link and Closing date

**8. Meet with San Joaquin Continuum of Care (CoC):**

- PowerPoint
- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

**9. Meet with County:**

- PowerPoint
- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

**10. Final Community Meeting (Zoom or In Person if feasible): Residents, Business Owners, Community Leaders**

- PowerPoint
  - Updated to include survey and Canvassing results
- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Open for questions and/or Feedback
- Respond to Action Items
- Share FAQ
- If in person, provide survey to complete before they leave (3 questions)
  - Are they in support of an Access Center?
  - Were all of their questions addressed?

**11. Meet with Board of Supervisors (Individually):**

- PowerPoint

- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Open for questions and/or Feedback

## 7. Modification – What is working and what is not?

City staff will look at current outreach efforts to determine if any modifications to presentation or messaging need to occur.

### 1. Messaging

- Does the message need to be modified before the second community engagement meeting?
- Is City staff gaining the right attention?
- Receive input from Stakeholders and adjust based on recommendations.

### 2. Mode of Communication

- Are City staff having difficulty getting a response from the community?
- Does City staff need to change how it is communicating with them?
- Is there a large request for translation services?

### 3. Feedback Loops

- Is the City's response time to the community timely?
  - If not, does the City need to ask for assistance from other Departments (Economic Development) or Community Partners?
- Need to document questions being received and add to the FAQ if there are similar questions being received

### 4. Location of the Meetings

- Since meetings are virtual, is there difficulty in engagement?
- Will need to identify a potential outdoor location for last community meeting to increase engagement

## 8. Finalize Community Engagement

City staff will gather all relevant data from all forms of outreach and share results with the Lodi City Council and will look to be added to an agenda to present at a San Joaquin Board of Supervisors meeting.

### 1. Present to City Council

- PowerPoint
  - Survey and Canvassing results
  - FAQ
  - Video: Success Stories and Barriers
  - Update on Harmony Homes (This is relevant to demonstrate the impact to the community and success of City projects)

- Letters of support
- Open for questions

## **2. Board of Supervisor Meeting**

- PowerPoint
  - Survey/Canvassing results
- Video: Success Stories and Barriers
- Letters of support
- Open for questions

## Appendix A

### PowerPoint Presentation Plan

1. **Introduction**
2. **What is our Point in Time County number?**
  - How was it determined?
    - Explain Point in Time Count
3. **Why is Lodi talking about this?**
  - Services already end homelessness for people on a day to day basis – but there has not been a significant decrease in numbers
  - What barriers are there to good outcomes?
    - Partners, Pets, Possessions
    - Income
    - Mental Health/Substance abuse
  - Lack of access to housing
  - Lack of appropriate support (length/type)
  - Lack of funding/resources
  - Other policy/systems/process issues
4. **What is the San Joaquin Community Response to Homelessness (Strategic Plan) and how does it address the issues already discussed?**
  - Explain the specific goals of the plan
    - Establish a Coordinated and Engaged Regional System of Care
    - Increase Access and Reduce Barriers to Homeless Crisis Response Services
      - Access Centers and Emergency Shelters
    - Ensure Households Experiencing Homelessness have Access to Affordable and Sustainable Permanent Housing Solutions
5. **Statistics**
  - Current number of calls to Police annually for unsheltered population
  - How many cleanups annually of public spaces due to unsheltered population
6. **Dispel the rumors**
  - Safety/Security
  - Good Neighbor Policy
  - Downtown Streets Team
  - Explain Low-Barrier Shelter
    - Does not mean no rules
  - What services will be provided
7. **Benefits for:**
  - Business Owners
  - Residents

- Caltrans
  - Public/Social Service Provider
8. **Financial Information**
    - Grant resources
  9. **Success Stories and Barriers Video**
  10. **Feedback/Questions**

**Note: Last Community Meeting (In person or Zoom):**

- Include Survey/Canvassing Results

