Board Oks Homeless Task Force, Action Plan at January 28 Meeting

The Measure A Affordable Housing Bond that voters approved in 2016 is doing its job.

In just three years, 21 housing projects are making their way to completion or have opened. Of the new construction projects, three have opened and two more are scheduled to open in 2020. By December 2022, the bond revenue will have provided 2,000 more apartments to help reach the final 10-year goal of 4,800.

Thank you, voters, for funding this tool that will fill a significant gap in our affordable housing shortage.

But we must now focus our attention on sheltering those who are still living outside while permanent housing is being built. According to the 2019 Homeless Count, nearly 8,000 in Santa Clara County are unsheltered. Their needs are urgent and have been for a long time. Look at it this way: If you’re hungry now, you can’t wait two years until a grocery store is built or even three months while your garden is ready to harvest.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, January 28, I proposed, and the Board approved, a slate of initiatives that focus on short-term solutions for those living on the streets, starting with creating a Homeless Task Force to focus on emergency shelter and transitional housing. The Task Force was just one of the recommendations that emerged from the daylong Community Summit on Homelessness that I convened last September.

In 2015, I convened a Housing Task Force that met for nine months to focus on solutions to the County’s housing crisis. That group’s recommendations led to such initiatives as Measure A and the All the Way Home campaign that housed 1,000 veterans. I believe that this Task Force will be as successful with a sharp focus on transitional housing and temporary shelter.

On Tuesday, the Board also heard a presentation of a report on the Community Summit on Homelessness. It contains recommendations from participants at the Summit, including many from the 60 unhoused residents who joined the tabletop discussions. A summary of the recommendations is on Page 28 of the report.

Please call my office if you have questions or to offer your solutions to this crisis at 408-299-5030. You can email me at dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org.