

Homeless Solutions - Another View

I am reprinting here excerpts from a very well written article by Katy Grimes of the California Globe - January 20th edition. This in depth article is very informative and a worthwhile read. The complete article can be seen at the following link:

[Sacramento Mayor Steinberg Spending \\$23 Million on Another Homeless Hotel - California Globe](#)

I strongly agree with her views and support the other solutions to the homeless problem that she highlights.

Enjoy the article.

Bob Bandy - January 2022



Sacramento Mayor Steinberg Spending \$23 Million on Another Homeless Hotel

California has 161,548 total homeless as of 2020

By [Katy Grimes](#), January 20, 2022 1:14 pm

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg announced this week the city has been awarded a \$23.9 million state [Homekey](#) grant to convert a downtown hotel into housing for homelessness vagrants.

\$23 million is quadruple the annual budget of many effective local programs helping homeless turn their

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lives around.

The City and the [Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency](#) announced plans to turn a Best Western hotel into a 92-unit homeless apartment complex. The apartments will have bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchenettes.

In effect, the city is in competition with known successful private programs actually changing lives. The chance for a pretty new apartment at no cost to a guy living in a tent on the sidewalk is a more attractive carrot than a program to help him get off meth and straighten his life out.

This is the third hotel being converted by the city to “permanent supportive housing” using Homekey funds. The words sound impressive, but are they?

This latest apartment complex is not going to be completed until Fall 2022 – 9 to 10 months from now.

What could possibly go wrong moving mentally-ill, drug-addicted, and former convict homeless vagrants into newly renovated apartments?

Sacramento has more than 11,000 homeless mentally-ill, drug-addicted, convicted criminals living on the streets of Sacramento as of 2020’s homeless count. It’s likely higher as of 2022.

With a population of 500,000, neighborhoods within the City of Sacramento have been ravaged by homeless vagrants allowed to live on the streets, in “safe spaces,” parking lots, in RVs, campers vans and cars, and in city parks, rather than move them into an organized large campus facility to address their needs and get treatment.

Last summer, Steinberg proposed to open homeless shelters, tiny homes and tent encampments in 20 residential neighborhoods and locations around the city. That did not go over well.

Steinberg also approved tiny apartments in a renovated old downtown hotel, which cost more than \$445,000 per unit for about 250 square feet of living space, as the Globe [reported](#).

The Mayor [says](#) 15 of the proposed apartment units in the Best Western will be funded by the Mental Health Services Act, the millionaire’s tax authored by Steinberg when he served in the State Assembly. Sacramento County will provide mental health treatment to those residents directly... i.e. Government mental health services.

“Residents in the remainder of the units will receive supportive services from LifeSTEPS, which serves more than 80,000 residents in 250 projects statewide,” the Mayor [said](#).

What is LifeSTEPS? Never heard of them?

According to the [Executive Director of LifeSTEPS](#), Beth Southorn, she “has propelled LifeSTEPS to its current status as one of the premier social services providers in affordable housing, now serving over 36,000 homes representing over 100,000 residents throughout the entire state of California.”

This number is significant if 100,000 homeless residents of the state are now housed. But LifeSTEPS does not say how many years this covers, or how hands-on they will be with the 77 remaining residents.

Calling the state’s homeless vagrant population “unhoused” has justified spending billions of taxpayer dollars on housing for the homeless in lovely new apartments, renovated hotels, and tiny homes.

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Just look at what the City of Sacramento says: “The City and the [Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency](#) will work with Danco Communities, the project developer, to turn the Best Western Sutter House at 1100 H Street into 92 units with bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchenettes,” the City says on its [website](#).

Remember, the amount of this project is \$23 million.

What could that \$23 million grant do for the city’s 11,000 homeless walking the streets at night, and sleeping on them during the day?

San Antonio’s [Haven For Hope](#) Transformational Campus and Courtyard had a \$20 million annual budget in 2018. Haven for Hope coordinates and delivers an efficient system of care for the homelessness in San Antonio, Texas. They have been a nationwide model for effectiveness. At the 22-acre campus, they serve 1,700 people daily in-residence on the campus, and another 700 in a low-barrier emergency shelter.

They bring multiple service providers to their campus to treat those in residential care with substance abuse and mental-health treatment, and partner with 140 organizations to provide 300 different services to the homeless including employment counseling, education, life-skills training, legal services, childcare, and many other necessary services and programs.

And they do this annually for what Mayor Steinberg wants to spend on remodeling one more hotel into 92 apartments.

Despite spending millions on futile “solutions” like tiny homes, FEMA trailers, and renovated hotel rooms for the city’s growing homeless population, Sacramento’s 11,000 transients are not receiving the treatments offered at Haven for Hope.

Nor are they receiving the residential care offered at 9-month program at the [Union Gospel Mission Sacramento](#), which the Globe [recently featured](#). “We feed 8,500 to 9,000 meals a month to the homeless, and even continued during COVID lockdowns,” Pastor Tim Lane told the Globe. Union Gospel Mission offers a Bible-based Twelve Step Course and Heart of Addiction program, an Anger Management Course, Weekly Counseling with their Chaplains, Assigned duties to serve the homeless community and Aftercare with attaining jobs, schooling, finances, reconciliations, transportation, and housing.

And they do this annually for about one-fifth of the cost of Mayor Steinberg’s one-time hotel renovation.

Union Gospel Mission and Haven for Hope have proven track records because at the root of their programs aren’t fancy apartments or kitsch tiny homes, but life-changing mental health and drug addiction treatment and faith-based and other programs focused on the individuals.

The governor and these big-city mayors are way out of line with these wasteful schemes spending mountains of taxpayer dollars. Do they even care about the broken people living on the streets, or is handing out money obligatory, or even too intoxicating?

Reminds me of the [line from Top Gun](#): “Son, your ego is writing checks your body can’t cash.

Katy Grimes, the Editor of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol


