



Date: 8-15-23  
Item No.: 10

# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**                      **DATE: AUGUST 15, 2023**  
**FROM: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**                                      **WARDS: ALL**  
**SUBJECT: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTRODUCING  
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN HOMELESS ACTION PLAN AND  
REDEFINING GOALS 5.2 AND 5.3 IN ENVISION RIVERSIDE 2025 STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

**ISSUE:**

Present findings from research on City of Riverside’s homelessness solutions delivery process and recommendations for amendments in City of Riverside Homeless Action Plan to include key performance indicators and redefine goals 5.2 and 5.3 in Envision Riverside 2025 (City of Riverside Strategic Plan – 2020 Edition).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council provides feedback on the:

1. Proposed amendments to the City of Riverside Homelessness Action Plan for:
  - a. adding and modifying goals and targets for homelessness prevention, homelessness relapse, awareness, public engagement, collaborations, and data stewardship
  - b. introducing a comprehensive assessment framework for regular monitoring and evaluation
2. Proposed amendments to Envision Riverside 2025 (City of Riverside Strategic Plan – 2020 Edition) Strategic Priority 5: High Performing Government, for redefining goals 5.2 and 5.3 to improve effectiveness of data-driven governance.
3. Proposal for creating a position of Chief Data Officer position within the City of Riverside; and
4. Feasibility of conducting a pilot of data-driven governance practices in the Office of Homeless Solutions and develop learnings for replicating them across all city departments.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Riverside's 2022 Quality of Life Survey revealed that homelessness was a critical challenge faced by residents, students, and business owners in Riverside, which negatively affected their quality of life. It also underscored that the majority of residents who participated in the survey were not satisfied with the City's progress towards addressing homelessness in the city.

Based on the results of the survey, the Mayor decided to conduct a study of City's homelessness solutions delivery and civic engagement efforts with a goal of finding potential areas of opportunity to enhance and increase their effectiveness. To spearhead the research, the Mayor collaborated with the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University, which deployed a Summer Fellow in the city via its Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. The Center has a successful history of association with the City since 2021 when the Mayor joined its fifth class of mayors in the yearlong program for executive education and management training.

The research, anchored in the Mayor's office and supported by the City Manager's office, involved intensive analysis of the various plans, policies, and data sources of the City pertaining to homelessness, including Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, Homelessness Action Plan, and Quality of Life Survey. Several stakeholder interviews with internal and external actors complemented the analysis and highlighted the aspects that are working and the ones that need improvement.

A comparative analysis of City's plans and processes was conducted with case studies and best practices developed by leading voices around the world including Harvard University (Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, Government Performance Lab, Data-Smart City Solutions, and Harvard Business School), MIT (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab), University of California San Francisco (Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative), McKinsey, and Deloitte (Attachment 1). The analysis revealed the gaps in City's homelessness solutions delivery process, specifically in the areas of homelessness prevention, homelessness relapse, awareness, public engagement, collaboration, and data stewardship. It highlighted the need to adopt a data-driven approach to improve efficiency, optimize delivery, and sustain the impact of City's solutions by objectively defining and measuring the progress, outputs, and outcomes at every stage.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Homelessness Action Plan**

The City of Riverside adopted its Homelessness Action Plan (Action Plan) on October 11, 2022, which was a major step in the right direction. The Action Plan focuses on reducing homelessness in the city by providing affordable housing and supportive programming while utilizing a whole-person care approach. It adopted a set of 30 actionable targets under 6 goals to be achieved by the Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS) and Housing Authority with support from various other City departments such as Community and Economic Development Department, Office of Communications, Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, etc.

A critical analysis of these goals and monitoring and evaluation processes of OHS revealed the need to make it comprehensive, measurable, and effective. The following three-pronged approach was adopted to develop the new version of the Action Plan along with a robust assessment framework-

- **Expand** the Action Plan by comparing it with similar action plans from other cities/counties, global homelessness preventions frameworks, case studies and best practices.
- **Enhance** the Action Plan by developing objective and measurable performance indicators for each of its targets. These indicators measure the progress, outputs, or outcomes of the targets to allow for holistic decision making.
- **Enable** the effective implementation of Action Plan by embedding the practices of data-driven governance within it.

This approach was derived from a close analysis of various successful examples of homelessness agencies across the country, which have used similar strategies to improve outcomes, increase community trust, build resilience, and responsibly allocate government resources. A few notable examples are:

- a. City of Long Beach - Health and Human Services Department: It developed a detailed and visually engaging data dashboard to share the progress of the city's homelessness solutions with the public. It also developed a data dictionary that objectively defines its KPIs and lists related data sources.
- b. City of San Jose - Housing Department: It developed interactive Dashboard and Community Action Plan that allows progress tracking and conveys a compelling story.
- c. City of Seattle - Human Services Department: It developed a standard set of metrics for itself and other service providers to ensure high quality data for performance measurement and monthly reporting.

The proposed set of amendments to the Homelessness Action Plan introduces an assessment framework called "Homelessness Action Plan- Assessment Framework (HAP-AF)" consisting of 63 performance indicators divided across 8 sections. It proposes new goal "Goal 7. Data Stewardship" to be included in the Action Plan. It also proposes to remove targets 1.4 and 1.6 and add 16 new targets within goals 2-7. Finally, it intends to embed a demographic baseline within the Action Plan by introducing 15 performance indicators (Attachment 2).

### Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan

Close analysis of Envision Riverside 2025 (City of Riverside Strategic Plan – 2020 Edition) and the City's organizational structure reveals the gap in its institutional capacity to drive data-driven governance practices. It points towards the need to redefine goals 5.2 (Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the city) and 5.3 (Enhance communication, and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making) of the Envision Riverside 2025 (City of Riverside Strategic Plan – 2020 Edition) Strategic Priority 5: High Performing Government

The proposed set of amendments intends to revise the description of goals 5.2 and 5.3 (Attachment 3).

Within goal 5.2, it proposes a new action item 5.2.7 for establishing a dedicated data-driven governance team, led by a Chief Data Officer (CDO) (Attachment 3). The CDO would be responsible for designing systems to derive valuable business insights from data and spearheading their usage in various aspects of the City's functions, ranging from day-to-day operations to longer-term policy making (Attachment 4).

Within goal 5.3, the set of amendments propose a new action item 5.3.6 for establishing and encouraging the usage of a dedicated digital space for collecting public feedback. Additionally, two new parameters PM 5.3.3 and PM 5.3.4 have been proposed to increase the effectiveness of the already existing action item 5.3.2 (Attachment 3).

The Mayor supports the recommendations presented today to adopt the practices of data-driven governance within the City government. As noted above, these recommendations focus on City of Riverside's homelessness solutions delivery process, where their effectiveness will be tested initially. Subsequently, they will provide the City with an opportunity to leverage such innovative practices across the City Hall in addressing other critical challenges.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being**, specifically **Goal 2.2 – Collaborate with partner agencies to improve household resiliency and reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness**, and **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government**, specifically **Goal 5.2 – Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City** and **Goal 5.3 – Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making**.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The proposed recommendations will enable the city government to measure the progress and outcomes of its activities in an accountable and transparent manner. They will improve government's efficiency and decision-making capabilities to address city's challenges timely and reliably.
2. **Equity** – The use of data for routine decision making will ensure that city government's efforts are more equitable, especially for the underserved communities who are in urgent need of care and support.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The recommendations propose to leverage the existing resources at the City Hall and do not create a financial obligation for the city.
4. **Innovation** – The recommendations lay the foundation for data-driven governance and encourage the use of data and digital technologies for strategic thinking, analysis, reporting, and communication.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The recommendations present the opportunity for city government to identify future risks and evaluate its readiness. It will become more proactive in addressing critical challenges and be able to optimize resource allocation for extreme events.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this staff report.

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Approved by: Patricia Lock Dawson, Mayor  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments (forthcoming):

1. Case Studies and Best Practices
2. Proposed Amendments to Riverside Homelessness Action Plan
3. Proposed Amendments to Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan
4. Job Description for Chief Data Officer (illustrative)