

# WHAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN DO TO END HOMELESSNESS: SARASOTA CASE STUDY



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## OUR COMMUNITY – WHO WE ARE



- 412,569 residents w/ median income at \$56,286, approximately \$7000 above state average.
- #6 region in the US with the highest number of millionaires (3 census tracks in Top100 in US).
- Median Age is 53.3 years (12 years older than state average), 35.4% are over 65 .
- 92% white, 5% black, 3% other.
- Average family size is 2.8 members (compared to state average of 3.27).
- 49.6% of population is in the workforce.
- 43% of County Voters Republican/31% Democrats - Voted for Republican Presidential candidate every election since 1944. (Note: City Demographics)

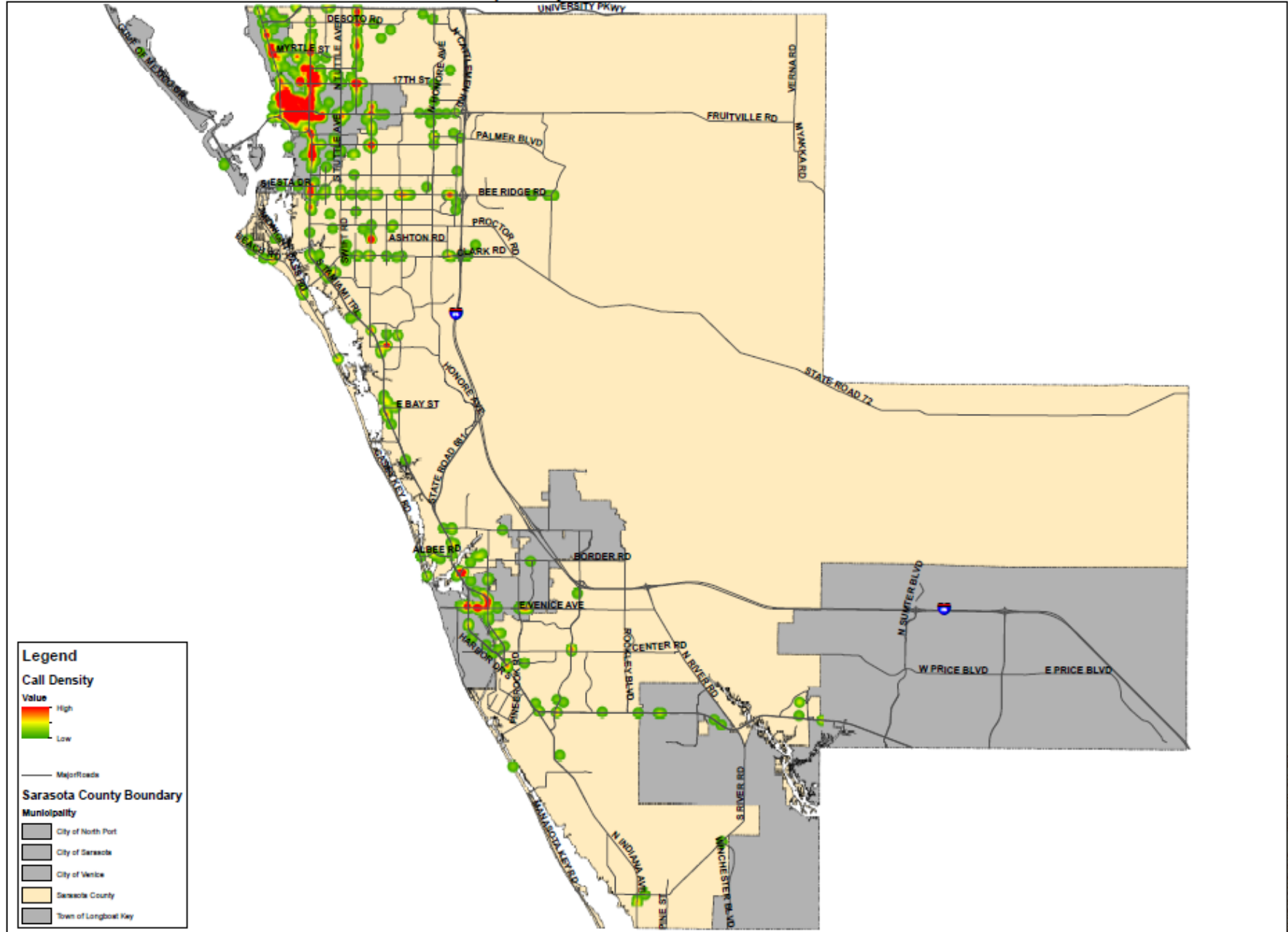


# WHO WE ARE – TALE OF TWO CITIES

- 59,332 households below ALICE threshold (33%)
- 52% of children in school on free or reduced lunch
- Approximately 3,000 unique adults entered into HMIS each year
- Approximately 1,000 homeless school children identified each year
- Top 4 occupations are retail sales, cashier, waiter, food preparation
- ALICE household Survival Budget 5% higher than state average



# Hot Spot Analysis Homeless Calls 3rd Quarter 2017



**Legend**

**Call Density**

Value

High

Low

Major roads

**Sarasota County Boundary**

**Municipality**

- City of North Port
- City of Sarasota
- City of Venice
- Sarasota County
- Town of Longboat Key

## OUR BRIEF HISTORY

- Circuit Court Judge sides with the ACLU finding that the City of Sarasota's solicitation ordinance interferes with the exercise of First Amendment Rights. (February 2013)
- Ruling sets aside an ordinance which allowed police officers from telling individuals to move elsewhere.



## OUR BRIEF HISTORY CONT.

- Visibility of panhandling increases dramatically and places a new spotlight on homelessness. (Spring/Summer 2013)
- Local Foundations / Herald Tribune identify a national consultant. (July 2013)
- City and County of Sarasota hired Dr. Robert Marbut to identify homeless recommendations. (August – November 2013)



# THE FIRST REPORT

- 12 Recommendations split in 3 categories – Family, Adult & System Improvements
- Family recommendations implement quickly.
  - Small Intake Portals, Master Case Management, HMIS Utilization, Summer Hunger (2014)
- Adult/System recommendations faultier due to lack of support. (2014-2016)
  - Large Come-As-You-Are Shelter, Street Feeding relocation, ordinance, CoC leadership improvements and increased housing options



# A COMMUNITY DIVIDED

- City and County Government divided over philosophy, shelter location and funding for adult shelter. (2014-2016)
- City and County trying “going on their own”
  - City hires their first Homeless Director (2015-2016)
  - County develops a 20-bed housing program with referrals by Sheriff’s Office only. (2015)
- Adult Homelessness lacks any significant improvement - (2014-2016)
  - County takes low profile approach allowing City to further explore their philosophies (2016)





# HOPE ON THE HORIZON

- City of Sarasota hires the Florida Housing Coalition (FHC) to provide recommendations on housing our homeless adults. (December 2016)
- County and Foundation staff quietly participate in the research and input into FHC recommendations. (January – April 2017)
- FHC releases “Creating an Effective Homeless Crisis Response System.” (April 2017)
- City, County Commissions and a local foundation board accepts the FHC recommendations. (April 2017)



# WORKING TOGETHER

- City, County, Local Foundation and CoC establish a combined leadership team to oversee FHC recommendation implementation. (January 2017)
- Improved Leadership and Responsibility of the local Continuum of Care/Lead Agency (September 2017)
  - Increased capacity at CoC Lead Agency
  - Established new Homeless Leadership Council and governance structure
  - Lead Agency enhancements –
    - Move from solely an administrative agency to leadership agency
    - Coordinated Entry/Housing Responsibilities



# FHC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARASOTA



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## ○ **Foundation of the Homeless System**

- Establish new Homeless Leadership Council and improved Continuum of Care governance structure
- Establish collaborative funders group
- Build community support to implement plan
- Establish processes for data-driven decision making and a performance based system
- Prioritize housing for: (1) homeless veterans, and (2) single adults who are long-term homeless and have disabling conditions



# FHC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARASOTA

## ○ **Outreach & Coordinated Entry**

- Fully implement a Coordinated Entry System (CES)
- CES responsibility of Lead Agency
- Outreach coordinated and integrated with CES
- Uniform/Consistent assessment tool to prioritize individuals with housing

## ○ **Prevention & Diversion**

- Redirect current funding from prevention to diversion
- Structured diversion to be integrated into the CES



# FHC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARASOTA

## ○ **Emergency Shelter**

- Establish 50 shelter beds in an existing facility (20 currently funded by the City, County to fund 30 additional beds)
- All shelters integrated with CES
- CES, other data sources to determine shelter needs in South Sarasota County

## ○ **Rapid ReHousing (RRH)**

- Add 80 non-veteran RRH openings in first year
- CoC to establish best practices and performance measures; improve capacity of RRH provider agencies for low-barrier low-demand RRH
- RRH integrated with CES




# FHC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SARASOTA

## ○ **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**

- Add 20 scattered site non-veteran PSH openings in first year
- 40 project-based PSH units must be initiated and funded
- CoC to establish best practices and performance measures with high quality providers using low-demand, low-barrier PSH with high retention rates
- PSH integrated with CES




# 6 MONTH – PROGRESS REPORT

- Completed 
  - Collaboration
  - CoC Leadership & Enhanced Responsibilities
  - New Homeless Leadership Council and governance structure
  - Agency training on the new Coordinated Entry System (CES)
  - VI-SPDAT tool for CES assessments/prioritization
  - Initial CES access points identified (Fixed & Roving)
  - Emergency Shelter Beds expanded by the County
  - 60 PSH units identified and funding secured for new construction





# 6 MONTH – PROGRESS REPORT

- In Progress 
  - CoC Funders Council
  - Coordinated Entry System full implementation
  - Funding restructuring for Diversion, RRH & PSH
  - Reporting/Data collection to identify unmet needs
  - RRH openings identified
    - Landlord Development and Mitigation Fund
  - Additional scattered PSH units



# WHAT SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

- Work together with the Continuum of Care, all other governments, and local foundations
- Focus on shared goals
- Monitor timing for maximum success and do not get ahead of elected officials
- Avoid political “land mines” and “death terms”
- Focus on the wins
- Review all funding sources to centralize decision-making, coordinate utilization for optimum ROI, uniform requirements, reporting & outcome measures
- Engage a consultant, if needed, and make sure they understand best practices (hint: not all do)



# WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

- Ensure contract requirements are aligned with the established goals set by the CoC Leaders
- Seek waivers to HUD requirements when justified
- Monitor and seek grant opportunities
- Educate your citizens on homelessness and your local system
- Develop a unified message to residents on how they can help in a way aligned with your system
- Do not “criminalize” homelessness through local ordinances



# QUESTIONS

