

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Sonja Berndt
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2026 8:59 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse; Gordo, Victor; Cole, Rick; Hampton, Tyron; Lyon, Jason; Jones, Justin; Madison, Steve; Masuda, Gene; Rivas, Jessica
Cc: Wong, Jim
Subject: Council Meeting 9/29/2026 Agenda #11: PY25 CAPER
Attachments: CC Mtg. 9.29.2026 Agenda Item No. 11. PY25 CAPER.pdf

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Dear All:

Please see the attached correspondence on agenda #11 for the Council's September 29, 2026 meeting and please ensure it is made a part of the official record of the public hearing and the meeting.

Sonja Berndt
Pasadena

09/29/2026
Item 11

SONJA K. BERNDT
Pasadena, CA 91107

September 29, 2026

Mayor Victor Gordo
Members of the Pasadena City Council
By Email
Correspondence@cityofpasadena.net

Re: City Council Meeting 9/29/2026 Agenda #11: Approval of the Submission of the Program Year 2025 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for Projects Funded from Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grant, and HOME Investment Partnership Act Programs

Dear City Council Members:

A. Introduction

I am a longtime Pasadena resident and advocate for our unhoused residents, especially those who are unsheltered and languish on our streets every day. The Housing Department's ("Department's") Program Year 2025-2026 (PY25) CAPER, the first program year of the 2025-2029 Five-Year Consolidated Plan, contains performance assessments for projects and programs supported with federal CDBG, ESG and HOME grant funding. Goals and accomplishments are summarized in Attachment A. The actual PY25 CAPER is included as Attachment B.

Consistent with the PY24 CAPER and previously approved Annual Action Plans, the PY25 CAPER demonstrates that our unhoused residents continue to be at the bottom of our City's priorities when it comes to allocating federal grant funding. Only a very small portion of that funding is expended on housing our unhoused residents even though our unsheltered residents experience trauma living on our unsafe streets every day.¹ No HOME funding is listed for programs assisting our unhoused residents and only a small portion of the CDBG funding is listed as assisting them. (PY25 CAPER, p. 5.) The vast majority of the substantial CDBG funding will not be used for any program providing housing and services to our unhoused. (*Ibid.*) There can be no meaningful progress in ending our homelessness crisis unless the City treats it like a crisis, provides the funding necessary to end it, and ensures transparency and accountability throughout the process.

¹ Significantly, the City expended **NONE** of the millions of dollars it received in federal CDBG and HOME grant funds in PY24 for our unsheltered residents, either.

B. Goals/Accomplishments

The PY25 CAPER includes accomplishments for projects that have been completed during the first-year reporting period of July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. According to Table 2: Accomplishments -- Program Year and Strategic Plan to Date, total homeless persons assisted with shelter in PY25 was only 31, not even 50% of the PY25's meager goal. Sadly, the five-year goal is only 195 even though, currently, we have 322 unsheltered neighbors. Additionally, the PY25 CAPER notes only 52 persons assisted with rapid re-housing. Contrast these numbers with the 16,400 persons who were vaguely assisted by infrastructure improvements (non-housing community development) in PY25. (PY25 CAPER, p. 5.)

The PY25 CAPER notes "Public service activities exceeded the City's annual projection by assisting 1,938 people compared to the annual goal of 250 people. This significant increase reflects strong utilization of CDBG-funded food distribution services during the program year." (PY25 CAPER, p. 4.) It is unclear to what extent this activity assisted our unhoused population since "Public service activities funded with CDBG provided essential services to 1,938 low-and moderate-income people, including youth, seniors, individuals experiencing homelessness, and households at risk of homelessness." (PY25 CAPER, p. 6.) Further, "food distribution services" is vague. How are results measured?

C. Homeless and Other Special Needs

1. Outreach, Shelter and Transitional Housing

The discussion of the Coordinated Entry System, outreach workers and emergency shelter is opaque and omits critical information. (PY25 CAPER, p. 15.) The 2026 Point in Time Homeless count showed a total of 577 unhoused persons, 322 of which had no shelter at all. The PY25 CAPER notes "Outreach workers engage people living outside and in vehicles and work to connect them to resources such as shelter and permanent housing." (*Ibid.*) But according to local outreach workers and the Housing Department, there is no shelter or permanent housing to connect most of them to! Further, there are obstacles and long waits to services and ultimately permanent housing, if they are lucky enough to obtain it. Pasadena's street outreach approach is anything BUT "robust." PORT provides excellent outreach but does not work overnight or on weekends and my understanding is that there are only two teams of a few members each. Further, what outreach workers employed by our local nonprofit service providers are available during night hours and on weekends?

2. Permanent Supportive Housing

Page 16 of the PY25 CAPER has a section noted as "Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. . . ." There is no discussion in this section about creating

more permanent supportive housing units in our City, perhaps because we are actually going backwards on that front. The City decided to repurpose Centennial Place for seniors only, thus eliminating 142 units of permanent supportive housing previously reserved for our unhoused neighbors.

The only (not-so-new) development in our City cited in the PY25 CAPER as receiving project-based vouchers (actually obtained in PY24) is the Ramona housing project across from City Hall. Way back **in December 2020**, the city entered into exclusive negotiations with National CORE for a Development and Lease Agreement -- the key terms of which were approved **in November 2022**. At that time, the estimated total cost of the project was just under 63 million. **Today, the estimated total cost is \$83.1 MILLION, WITH A PER UNIT COST OF \$831,000!!** Only 48 of the 100 units will be set aside for seniors experiencing homelessness. **Completion is not expected until the 2029 program year!** (PY25 CAPER, p. 12.) A detailed audit of this project is long overdue. If the City commits to any more affordable housing projects like this one, we will never make even a dent in our homelessness crisis. The City must pursue cheaper housing models like modular housing.²

D. Conclusion

Our City leaders must prioritize the homelessness crisis in our City and ensure that federal, state and county grant funding as well as City-generated funding reflect that priority. The PY25 CAPER certainly fails to reflect that. However, members of the Housing, Homelessness and Planning Committee have instructed staff to ensure, in the future, that recommended federal grant funding allocations reflect the priorities of the Council and are not simply a repetition of past recommendations. Please ensure that the Council's commitment to funding a year-round shelter and more transitional housing is reflected in future allocations of federal and other grant and City-generated funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sonja K. Berndt
Pasadena

Cc: James Wong
Housing Director

² Also, I was informed recently that converting existing motels/hotels to housing would cost less than \$300,000 per unit.