

San Mateo County Veterans' Commission

Annual Work Plan 2019-20

Goal I: Develop an increased understanding of the current needs of San Mateo County veterans and their families

Objective A: Actively participate in the development of the 2020 needs assessment of San Mateo County veterans and their families			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Obtain information about the process and timeline planned for the 2020 assessment of veterans needs			
2. Determine how the Veterans' Commission can support/contribute to the Needs Assessment			
3. To the degree possible, contribute to and support the 2020 Needs Assessment			

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Objective B: Schedule regular reports to the Commission from key veterans services providers describing what services are well-utilized or under-utilized by veterans and their families			
Action Steps	Responsibilities	Timeline	Indicators of Progress
1. Obtain from VSMO/HSA a list of veteran-related services/activities provided by San Mateo County			
2. Supplement list of County-provided services with information about other service providers serving veterans and their families in San Mateo County			
3. Identify largest/most impactful service providers and invite presentations and/or obtain from them information about what they provide and where service gaps may exist			

Goal II: Develop and maintain a current, comprehensive and accessible online catalog of all relevant services available to San Mateo County veterans and their families

Objective A: Identify existing lists/inventories of services available to veterans and their families at the federal, state and local level			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Identify existing data base(s) / lists of veteran-related services in San Mateo County			
2. Review Commission minutes to ensure that service providers that have made presentations are included in the mapping effort			

San Mateo County Veterans' Commission

3. Reach out to neighboring jurisdictions and ask for any service provider information that that would be relevant to San Mateo County			
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Objective B: Compile listings from various services into one comprehensive catalog for San Mateo County			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. When actions under Objective A are completed, begin process of compiling the San Mateo County catalog			

Objective C: Ensure that the catalog of services is maintained and updated annually			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. When Objectives A and B have been accomplished, address the issue of maintaining and updating the compiled catalog			

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Goal III: Ensure that all San Mateo County veterans and their families are aware of the services that are available to them and understand how they can access those services

Objective A: Continue and enhance current efforts to raise awareness of needs and services available to meet those needed			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Use information about the current CVSO outreach activities to establish a baseline for expanding efforts			
2. Add to baseline any additional outreach efforts known by Commission members			

Objective B: Utilize best practices employed by other Commissions/veterans' resources to raise awareness of available services			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Review external scan data to gather information about practices used elsewhere			

Objective C: In conjunction with the work on the services catalog, consider the development of a San Mateo County Veterans' Resources website to provide easy access for those seeking information about services available to veterans and their families			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Action step(s) to be determined as list of available services is being completed			

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Goal IV: Continue to advocate to the Board of Supervisors and other leaders about policies and projects that serve the needs of veterans and their families

Objective A: Identify opportunities for the Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors to advocate on behalf of veterans and their families			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Continue to sponsor the Veteran of the Year luncheon and asking the Board of Supervisors to honor organizations and leaders who serve veterans and their families			

Objective B: Document the Commission's advocacy efforts and their impact on an annual basis			
Action Steps	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Progress
1. Continue to monitor projects and policies that impact veterans and their families and endorse/support policies that are veteran-friendly			
2. Work with SMC legislative liaison (Connie Driscoll-Juarez) to develop a framework for tracking policy initiatives that might impact veterans and their families			
3. Review progress on annual work plan prior to developing the Commission's Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors and report on advocacy efforts			

San Mateo County
Veterans'
Commission

STRATEGIC
PLAN
FY 2019-2022



San Mateo County Veterans' Commission Strategic Plan

FY 2019-2022

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- A. Environmental Scan (Summary of Internal and External sources)
- B. Workplan for 2019-20

San Mateo County Veterans Commission

Membership as of February 2019

Hank Scherf - Chair

Kai Martin – Vice Chair

Alfred Banfield

Brandon Jones

Frank Oliva

Fred Baer

Jacob Pletcher

Ron Dickson

Mark Leach

George Smith

Ben Renda

Linda Meyer

Donna Vaillancourt

Introduction

In 2014, the County Manager's Office and the Human Services Agency spearheaded a study to help identify and address the needs of approximately 32,000 veterans residing in San Mateo County. Many other County departments, as well as veterans working for the County, participated in the process. Drawing from primary data such as interviews and focus groups and secondary data like statistical information, the goal of the study was to learn more about the needs of veterans in the County, the services currently available to them, and the areas of unmet need.

The San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment 2014 found that while many veterans residing in the County have stable employment, housing and social support networks, some veterans require additional support, including access to benefits and safety net services, mental and behavioral health services and affordable housing.

Key findings included:

- More than half of the veterans in the County are age 65 years or older. This group of veterans reported the need for assistance in accessing civilian and veterans' benefits. ☐
- While 95% of veterans are male, a higher percentage of younger veterans are female - close to 20% of veterans ages 18-34 and close to 10% of veterans ages 35-54 in the County. Women veterans reported the need for additional services targeted to them, and increased awareness by all veteran-serving agencies of the issues specifically confronting women veterans. ☐
- Veterans are overrepresented in the County's homeless population, comprising approximately 12% of its homeless population, while comprising only 6% of its overall adult population. ☐
- With San Mateo County being one of the least affordable housing markets in the state, access to affordable housing was identified as a need by veterans consulted for the study. ☐

Potential areas of focus included:

- Expanding education and outreach efforts to veterans who are seniors so they have better access to critical benefits and services; ☐
- Bringing greater recognition and visibility to issues that disproportionately impact women veterans, such as military sexual trauma and the deficit of services targeted to

women veterans' needs; ☐

- Developing policy recommendations which would help increase access to affordable housing for veterans and their families; and ☐
- Recommending initiatives that facilitate the provision of emergency or transitional shelter and ancillary services and assistance to homeless veterans. ☐

As the result of this needs assessment, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, on June 2, 2015, took action to appoint a nine member Veterans' Commission and defined the purpose of the Commission as follows:

The purposes of the Commission include:

- To promote programs that foster the well-being of veterans in San Mateo County; ☐
- To increase the understanding and visibility of issues that disproportionately impact underserved segments of the veterans' population, including, but not limited to, seniors, women, LGBTQ members, and the homeless; ☐
- To provide outreach and support to underserved segments of the veterans' community in San Mateo County; ☐
- To develop initiatives to support San Mateo County veterans and their families; and ☐
- To report and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as needed, but not less frequently than once every twelve (12) months.

Duties, Functions and Powers of the Commission

The duties, functions and powers of the Commission were defined in the founding resolution (#073812)

- To advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors; ☐
- To develop and implement an annual workplan; ☐
- To provide a public forum for input from the veterans' community to identify unmet needs; ☐
- To work with existing veterans' advocacy and service organizations to help coordinate systems of care and benefits; ☐

- To act as an advocate for veterans, taking positions pertaining to federal, state and local policies, programs, procedures and any legislation affecting veterans and their families; and ☐
- To fulfill other duties and engage in other activities as directed by the Board of

Accomplishments of the San Mateo County Veterans' Commission

(from the 2017 Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors, April 10, 2018)

2017 Priorities and Accomplishments

1. Veteran Access to Benefits and Services
 - Hosted Second Annual Veteran of the Year Luncheon
 - Supported County Veterans Stand Down in May
 - Partnered with PenTV to produce *Thank You for Your Service, Now What*
 - Promoted County's Veteran ID Card
 - Provided a public forum at Commission meetings for government and non-government partners providing veterans services
2. Housing and Homelessness
 - Actively worked with the Human Services Agency and other agencies to find homes and shelter for homeless vets and those in need
 - At year end counted 63 homeless veterans with only 17 unsheltered
 - Actively monitored and supported several apartment development projects: Willow Commons, Menlo Park☐• Bay Meadows Bridge Apartments, San Mateo☐• Gateway Project, Millbrae☐• Colma Veterans Village, Colma☐• Republic Properties Corp. Project, Redwood City
 - Actively worked with the Central Peninsula Church on a tenant-based voucher program to expand number of participating landlords
 - Actively supported a program to use donated RV vehicles to house homeless veterans
 - Assisted a Boy Scout working on his Eagle Scout Project in providing 168 backpacks for homeless veterans and veterans in need
3. New Commissioners
 - To fill three vacated positions, the Commission recommended and the Board of Supervisors appointed three new alternates and promoted the two original alternates to full voting membership. One of the new alternates was also promoted to full voting member status. We have 11 voting members and two alternates. ☐

2018 Priorities and Programs

1. Host Third Annual Veteran of the Year Luncheon (11/8)
2. Develop a marketing and communications plan using social media to increase veteran awareness of benefits and services
3. Actively support the Human Services Agency's Women Veterans Summit (5/16)
4. Continue Housing and Homelessness efforts

Recommendations

1. Provide financial support for the marketing and PR social media plan – specific amount to be determined by planning committee
2. Consider funding a program to provide mentoring services to veterans transitioning from active service, unemployed veterans seeing employment, veterans seeking career advice or other life issues.
 - Full-time person to run program
 - Volunteers to serve as mentors
 - Mentoring Committee to define program and budget

Veterans' Commission Strategic Planning Process

During its January 2019 meeting, the Commission met with Patricia Brown, a planning consultant, who suggested an ambitious timeline for strategic plan development. The Commission added one special meeting to its calendar and set a timeline for completing the Strategic Plan.

The following table documents the Veterans' Commission meeting times and topics.

Date	Planning Focus
February 2019 – Special Meeting	Confirm mission Explore values External and Internal environmental scanning Review Accomplishments to date
March 2019 – Extend Regular Meeting	Complete environmental scanning Discuss possible areas for focus in the strategic plan

April 2019 – Planning Sub-committee	Sub-committee works on draft goal statements
May 2019 – Extend Regular Meeting	Full Commission reviews and provides input to draft strategic goals and objectives
June 2019 - Planning Sub-committee	Sub-committee reviews draft strategic plan and develops a one year work plan for Commission consideration
July 2019	Full Commission reviews/adopts Strategic Plan and Work Plan for 2019-20

The Strategic Plan sets the direction for the Veteran’s Commission to address the trends and challenges it is encountering now and in the years to come. It is intended for a variety of audiences, including the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, the veterans community in San Mateo County (veterans and their families), County employees, and members of the public.

The plan can be used as follows:

- **The Veterans’ Commission** will use the Strategic Plan as the basis for developing an annual work plan for implementing goals and objectives designed to achieve its strategic vision and assessing progress toward those goals.
- **The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors** can view the plan to identify Commission priorities and monitor alignment with the Shared Vision 2025.
- **County Employees** can use the Strategic Plan to obtain information about the Commission’s vision, mission and goals.
- **Members of the Public** can use this document to obtain information about the Commission’s work.

Aligning with the County’s Strategic Direction

The Veterans’ Commission Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the direction of the County’s Shared Vision 2025, specifically contributing to the following community outcomes:

- * **Healthy Community** - Our neighborhoods are safe and provide residents with access to quality health care and seamless services.

- * **Prosperous Community** - Our economic strategy fosters innovation in all sectors, creates jobs, builds community and educational opportunities for all residents.
- * **Livable Community** - Our growth occurs near transit, promotes affordable, livable connected communities.
- * **Collaborative Community** - Our leaders forge partnerships, promote regional solutions, with informed and engaged residents, and approach issues with fiscal accountability and concern for future impacts.

Vision Statement

This vision is a description of the Commission's hopes for its target community or constituency. It answers the question, "What changes do we hope to see as the result of our work?"

To be confirmed by Commission in July 2019

The Veterans' Commission envisions San Mateo County as a place where veterans and their families thrive

or

The Veterans' Commission envisions San Mateo County as a model of veteran Support and success

**Mission
Values
Goals**

Mission of the Veterans' Commission

A mission statement is a brief expression of the Commission's purpose. It should answer the questions "Why do we exist?" and "What, at the most basic level, do we do?"

The mission of the Veterans Commission is to promote public awareness, advocacy, programs and policies that enhance the well-being of veterans and their families in San Mateo County.

Values

The values statement defines the principles on which the Commission is built, and that guide its planning, operations and programs. It answers the question "What do we believe in?"

The San Mateo County Veterans' Commission pursues its work based on the following values:

- Implement ongoing communication with community leaders and providers to gather and share information.
- Develop collaborative relationships with community nonprofits and other veteran organizations to assure the best possible outcome for veterans and their families.
- Obtain data and information from multiple sources to understand current needs of veterans and their families.
- Work diligently to serve veterans, their families, stakeholders and those who provide resources to benefit veterans.
- Advance the interests of veterans and their families with purpose and passion.

Goals and Objectives

Together, goals and objectives define desired outcomes resulting from the Commission's work. They may be focused on the organization's programming or internal operations. Progress toward achieving goals and objectives should be measurable. While the terms are often used interchangeably, goals are generally more comprehensive or far-reaching than objectives. Framed clearly, they answer the question "What do we want to accomplish?"

Goal I: Develop an increased understanding of the current needs of San Mateo County veterans and their families

Objective A: Actively participate in the development of the 2020 needs assessment conducted by San Mateo County

Objective B: Schedule regular reports to the Commission from key veterans services providers describing what services are well utilized or under-utilized by veterans and their families

Goal II: Develop and maintain a current, comprehensive and accessible online catalog of all relevant services available to SMC veterans and their families

Objective A: Identify existing lists/inventories of services available to veterans and their families at the federal, state and local level

Objective B: Compile listings from various sources into one comprehensive catalog for San Mateo County

Objective C: Ensure that the catalog of services is maintained and updated annually

Goal III: Ensure that all San Mateo County veterans and their families are aware of the services available to them and understand how they can access those services

Objective A: Continue and enhance current efforts to raise awareness of needs and services available to address those needs

Objective B: Utilize best practices employed by other Commissions/veterans resources to raise awareness of available services

Objective C: Consider the development of a San Mateo County Veterans' Resources Website to provide easy access for those seeking information about services available to veterans and their families

Goal IV: Continue to advocate to the Board of Supervisors and other leaders about policies and projects that serve the needs of veterans and their families

Objective A: Identify opportunities for the Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors to advocate on behalf of veterans and their families

Objective B: Document the Commission's advocacy efforts and their impact on an annual basis

Implementation of Strategic Goals and Objectives

*Each year, the Commission will develop an **annual work plan** that specifies specific action steps related to its strategic goals and objectives. This work plan will include the defined action steps in each goal area, the person/persons responsible for the actions, a timeline and indicators of progress that will enable the Commission to monitor progress during the year and at year's end, when the work plan is reviewed and updated.*

Attachments

- A. Environmental Scanning Summaries Assessing External Opportunities and Threats and Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

- B. Veterans' Commission Work Plan for 2019-20

SMC Veterans' Commission
Summary of External Scanning Information
2/11/19

Santa Clara County Veterans Commission

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Veterans Commission of Santa Clara County (the Commission) is to enhance communication, cooperation, and collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community groups that are working on honoring military service and veterans' community issues and programs.

- The Commission will continue to advise the Board of Supervisors through the Board Finance and Operations Committee in all of these areas.
- The Commission will Continue to work Closely with the Veterans Service Office (VSO)
- Promoting, aiding, and encouraging public support to and recruitment for Reserve units, the National Guard, and State Military Reserve.
- Promoting, aiding, and encouraging public support for veterans affairs.
- Reviewing policies and programs affecting veterans.

Goals – 2019 Work Plan

1. Use revised Commission name and Mission Statement to promote and market Commission's "brand" and purpose.
2. Continue to Expand the network of veteran's organizations, service providers, government entities and private businesses into a highly functioning team to benefit veterans.
3. Continue to support National Guard, Reserve, and Veterans Services Officers in efforts to benefit veterans.
4. Continue efforts to educate potential partners, elected officials and the general public regarding the desirability of creating a veterans museum. Continue involvement and support of memorials to be constructed in Santa Clara County.
5. Develop recognition opportunities and awards for support those efforts of other organizations.

Interview with Chair, Santa Clara County Veterans Commission

Notes from Phone Call Interview with Chairman Fran McVey

Fran was on the Board of Supers and Former Executive Manager of San Jose Fran is also the UVC - President <http://www.uvcscc.org/>

The Santa Clara Supers are mostly former City Managers

For 40 years the focus of the Santa Clara County Vets Commission was - National Guard

Mission statement was recruiting National guard members Good Local Non Profits that they interface with around housing

Know a Vet - Local Non Profit - Virtual company connected veterans needs to veterans services - Neil Lichtman / Vietnam Vet

Veterans Voices - Many Service Providers come to these meetings.

All the Way Home Project

City and County got together, even though they are usually suing each other. 3 years ago they started on Veterans Day Parade to end homelessness. Fran Helped design the program

Incentives

San Jose guarantees double the damage deposit for VASH vouchers - Housing Authority and UVC together to educate landlords. - San Jose put up 1 time bonus \$1500 for first time they rent to section 8 or VASH tenant - Started - with 700, based on county records - 1273 housed in 3 years

Looking for a new VSO officer, I connected them with Norman to see if he can refer anyone - VSO - they recently had a resigned in December 15

Marian - got up to 93% rate of increasing benefits on appeal. They are asking for suggestions at the State Commander level Seeking criteria for hiring with Veterans community

Strategies for working in the framework of a county commission

Brown Act — Need another group that can react more quickly, UVC, 501c19 they can just start a project and bring it to the commission.

Getting Marketing at VSO office hours at the local colleges - Were only allowed to have a presence at County Sponsored Events Need to have categorical approval by type - With any veteran focused event, to have an information table

Stanislaus County

Source: Stanislaus County, Annual Report to the Board which included updates to their strategic plan

Commission Priorities:

1. Develop a Veterans Center Facility “One Stop Shop” concept and plan
2. Host Commission meetings in different Supervisorial Districts every other month to provide outreach to veterans throughout the county
3. Identify and inform veterans of services available to them by publishing information about local veterans’ affairs, news, services and social functions through an outreach program.
4. Provide access to transportation to/from veterans’ services.
5. Provide job education and job placement opportunities for veterans.

Standing Committees:

Education and Job Placement, Outreach, Facilities & Transportation

Clark County Washington

Source: Clark County Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) 2015 Strategic Plan

Report details demographics from the Census American Community Survey (ACS) 3-year estimates and unmet needs identified by homeless veterans from the Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) published by the Veterans Administration.

Values and Guiding Principles of VAB: (shared with Pat)

Goals for VAB

1. Advance the development and implementation of practices that have been demonstrated to increase veteran’s access to services, benefits and providers;
2. Identify potential community partners and promote collaborations to maximize or secure new resources benefiting Clark County’s veterans; and
3. Increase the CCVAB and community’s knowledge of returning veteran’s issues as well as the supporting services, benefits and programs.

Member Priorities

VAB Member Priorities	Critical Success Factor
Maximize existing resources and funding.	Programs that show a high benefit for cost per veteran served.
Ensure that public funds are spent wisely and with positive impacts.	Increase referrals to services/treatment at VA and other community providers
Promote actions that are a “hand up, not a hand out” to advance veterans recovery, stability, self-reliance and dignity.	Increase benefit and/or treatment access to improve veteran self-sufficiency. Increase case management services to provide stability
Advance demonstrated best practices and promising approaches.	Remain open to new ideas and research other community’s veteran program successes.
Increase the committee’s formal communications, influence and collaborations with community leaders and providers as well as other funders.	Enhance board and community knowledge of veterans’ issues and resources through presentations.

San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission

Source: 2017 Annual Report, San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission

Goals for 2017:

1. Commission attendance and meeting efficiency
2. Aging veterans • Veterans housing homelessness
3. Opioid use
4. Veterans Day Parade and Memorial Day Ceremony
5. POW and Filipino American veterans
6. Veterans mental and physical health services

7. Gender issues affecting veterans
8. Improvements to SFVAC social network

Napa County Veterans Commission

Source: Phone conversation with Frank Lucier, Chair of the Veterans Commission.

Frank stated that they were just finishing up their goals for the year and plan to have one goal for each of three areas (also have standing committees for the 3 areas). Will share as soon as I receive!

Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission

Veteran's Advisory Commission (VAC) Priorities:

Vision Statement: Support the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (MVA), and Board of Supervisors for the County of Los Angeles, through actively engaging and interacting with community to provide sound recommendations concerning Veterans and their families.

Mission Statement: The VAC values the dedication and sacrifice of our military, our veterans and their families by promoting awareness of their contributions through programs that advance veterans' services and benefits. We advocate on behalf of veterans for legislation and changes in laws that enrich the quality of life for veterans and their families.

2017-2018 Strategic Goals Overview

Create Awareness, Community Involvement, Participation and Recognition within and from the VAC, VSOs and the LA County community Promote health and wellbeing with a special concentration on suicide prevention and underserved populations for all Veterans and their families Educate and make recommendations on legislative issues concerning veterans in CA, LA County and local communities Commissioner professional growth and succession planning

GOAL I Create Awareness, Community Involvement, Participation and Recognition within and from the VAC, VSOs and the LA County community

GOAL II Promote health and wellbeing with a special concentration on suicide prevention and underserved populations for all Veterans and their families

GOAL III Educate and make recommendations on legislative issues concerning veterans in CA, LA County and local communities

GOAL IV Commissioner professional growth and succession planning

Positive Practices from LA County VAC

For each person that has a public comment with a request, a commissioner who lives closest to where that person lives is assigned to connect with that person to help them with their issue if possible.

They also focused on moving the meetings around the county to engage more of the county veterans. At least 5 locations (districts)

They also worked with the Mental Health Clay Hunt Summit to help spread awareness and solutions to prevent Veteran Suicide.

They are also starting to focus on women veteran programs.

They have community partners and county and city staff organizations come to their commission meetings and present information on what they are doing for veterans. There is a regular schedule for each of those to present throughout the year.

A big project this last year was supporting the “Community Veteran Justice Project” which will be training veterans at Community Colleges to do triage and referrals for legal assistance and Veterans Treatment Court.

They are also connecting with the Department of Mental Health which is poised to creating a Veterans Peer Mentor/Network program to assist veterans access to services in mental health as well as, family and housing services, benefits, employment etc.

San Mateo County Veterans' Commission
Special Strategic Planning Meeting
February 11, 2019

Compiled Results of Small Group Discussions: Internal Scan

- 1. Is there agreement about current strengths? Is anything missing?**
 - a. Group diversity, expertise – military and civilian backgrounds and experiences
 - b. All veterans
 - c. Dedicated
 - d. Represent the County
 - e. Housing (and providing things to make a house a home)
 - f. Commissioners – diverse and committed
 - g. Advocate veteran friendly issues
 - h. Connection each Commissioner has to other organization could provide more leverage
 - i. Diversity in group to promote our goal to strengthen connections

- 2. Is there agreement about areas that need improvement? Is anything missing?**
 - a. Be more proactive with veterans initiatives and issues – bring to Commission instead of waiting
 - b. Be more proactive with government, community, outreach: increase publicity, face to face, at Veterans Commission
 - c. More structure
 - d. Better distribution of outreach amongst Commissioners
 - e. Housing – not following up with those we've housed
 - f. Don't utilize our resources
 - g. Commission not visible enough in community
 - h. No budget-advisory position only
 - i. Not diverse enough
 - j. Find groups that are doing good and use them to involve us. Use as an area to improve/expand
 - k. Understanding and accepting our role as Commissioners

- 3. What suggestions from members about priorities resonate with the group?**
 - a. Commission being the hub to collaborate with other veteran-centric organizations
 - b. Increasing awareness and access to Veterans services
 - c. Develop progress/impact metrics
 - d. Increase awareness and access to veteran services
 - e. Collaborative with veteran organizations
 - f. Veteran suicide
 - g. Promote education and employment
 - h. Implement professional training for development of Commissioners
 - i. Coordinate with other departments to accomplish our goals
 - j. Sustain the Veteran of the Year program

- 4. Do you have other priorities to suggest?**
 - a. Proactive outreach by individual Commissioners (City Council meetings)
 - b. Create/script a slide show for other organizations about this Commission and its work
 - c. More Commissioner involvement in the community
 - d. Transportation for veterans and families through our own service
 - e. Career enhancement

San Mateo County Veterans' Commission
Strategic Planning Process 2019

Internal Scanning Summary

Possible Strategic Plan Priorities (grouped by categories)

Bullets in each category are Commission member suggestions

Increase Awareness & Access to Veterans' Services

- Promote more ways to come to the County Veterans office for help
- Public outreach and education on veteran's issues
- Expanding to Underserved communities - Widowed, Dependents/Survivors, Women
- Could possibly include families of currently deployed veterans (George thoughts?)
- Confirm target families and loved ones

- Development of a strategic marketing plan which identifies various categories of vets that are not currently in the system to target them with category specific advertising campaign that is designed to entice them to come into the CVSO to register for benefits

- Sustain Veteran of the Year event - Continue the Veteran of the Year luncheon to raise awareness and recognize those who do so much for the veterans community

- Create a program to reach out to all County communities to create an awareness of our veterans
 - what are the needs of veterans
 - what is the county doing for them
 - what needs are not being addressed or met
 - how our veterans are serving the community

Collaborate with and Support other Veteran Serving Agencies

- Develop standing linkage to County Vet support groups (HA, HSA, Libraries, etc.)

- Linkage to all County Services for Vets (Data Mining, Resources)

- Rolodex/Resource Mapping of Vet Services available to CVSO/County customers
- Increase awareness and utilization of veterans benefits and services
- Identifying and understanding any gaps in services and making recommendations to fill those gaps
- Networking/Communication btw Veteran's groups
- Support and actively participate in county sponsored events targeted at helping/supporting our veteran population (Stand downs, symposiums, etc.)
- Actively represent the Commission and county on behalf of veterans
- Participate as speakers at veteran community events (Memorial Day, Veterans Day)
- Actively work with nonprofits whose mission is to help veterans find housing, employment and other services

Promote Education and Employment for Veterans

- Many veterans in SMC are underemployed while fast growing local companies recruit nationally and globally for workers.
- Mentoring for a new career—Opportunities for Veterans to serve in their community (find a purpose that feels meaningful and connects to the civilian population and other veterans.)
- Continuing to help veterans successfully transition back to the civilian job market
- Employment

Implement Professional Development/Training for Commissioners

- Training for Commissioners: Human Resources style trainings on harassment, discrimination and equality so that commissioners can keep up with the important positive changes taking place in the active service and in the American workplace.

- Commission Strategic Plan Development - and standing Meeting/Connectivity/Duties to create sustainable plan
- Public meeting training (rules of order and Brown Act rules)

Update Needs Assessment Data

- Confirm # of veterans not yet in VSO database
- Build plan (with metrics) to contact all veterans not in database

Measure Progress and Impact

- Develop measures of success / performance for Commission or Commission priorities
- Build plan (with metrics) to contact all families and loved ones
- Mature relationship with HSA to see if we can make impact in numbers
- Progress assessment against Needs Assessment - County Departments report on various needs identified.

Promote Housing for Veterans

- Support local efforts to increase housing for veterans
- Housing

Advise Board of Supervisors on the following:

- Homelessness
- Veterans housing
- Benefits

Mental Health / Suicide²

- Ensure adequate resources for veterans and their families struggling with mental health issues and/or homelessness
- Mental Health

The following issues were mentioned only once:

Increasing involvement of veterans in the veterans community

Development of a Veterans specific location that would be dedicated to servicing veteran-only needs

General Healthcare

Discounts at local merchants and events

Identify CVSO Best Practices and review what has been previously tried by HSA/CVSO to increase engagement and outreach

Summary of Commission Strengths
Taken from Internal Survey Responses

- Connection to All the local Veteran Organizations so we can communicate with a large number of veterans.
- We have many veterans who have successfully transitioned into good careers that can tie other veterans into different industries.
- We are a fairly diverse group, from different branches of the military, officers and enlisted, and different time periods of conflicts, who followed different paths to get here. Lots of good intentions in the group.
- Current commission is experienced - most commissioners are in their second term.
- There has been a small amount of turnover and very little absenteeism.
- All of the members are passionate about the needs of veterans and compassionate to the struggles that some veterans have.
- Most commissioners are ready and willing to lead committees or openly discuss issues.
- Most of the commissioners relatively on the same page making it easier to make forward progress
- People from many different walks, expertise, etc.
- Commissioners as a whole are committed to improving the Veteran's situations.
- Commitment to look for answers and areas where commission can make positive impact for veterans and be their voice to the County Supervisors.
- Collaboration relative to technical, business and political arenas.

- Diversity of commissioners with respect to experience and representation in our community.
- Great leaders on commission.
- Dedication to tasks and goals.
- Diversity of commissioners with respect to experience and representation in our community.
- Great leaders on commission.
- Dedication to tasks and goals
 - Ron's housing work is great
 - George's rolodex of veterans orgs/groups is great
 - Hank's ability to network across senior officials is great
- All members are veterans.
- Most members display a passion for doing something to help veterans.
- Lots of varied experience – life experience, professional and military experience.
- Commissioners are very dedicated and want to make a difference.
- I'm new to the Commission (and an alternate) so I'm still in learning mode. I think the Commission will benefit from the Strategic Planning process and having measurable goals.

Summary of Commission Weaknesses
Taken from Internal Survey Responses

- We basically have no authority to delve into items that concern veterans for fear of stepping on toes. Just a recommending body to Supervisors.
- We need to promote more through our staff to get veterans into the office for help.
- I also think that most of our job as to the office is competing with so many other facilities that offer the same
- It feels as if we can go from one meeting to the next with few action items. When a subcommittee does rally around an idea, it can take a long time to figure out what exactly we are trying to accomplish.
- The path to executing an idea can be confusing as it usually is restricted in that it needs to follow procedures within the county, and adhere to Commission guidelines. So often several calls go by and we have little to show for it, as we try to settle on the exact wording of our request, or recommendation. Some of this is just County Commissions in general, I suppose.
- The commission struggles to reflect the diversity found in the community and in military service.

- Occasional inability to avoid the appearance that the commission approves of or is in agreement with a speaker or presentation.
- Same 5 commissioners are on all of the Sub Committees...for the last 3 years pretty much – need better participation or expect less of commissioners
- Need to term out some commissioners who don't want to do much beyond attend commission meetings. Since the commission can't task any county staff, how is it supposed to accomplish anything unless the Commissioners themselves do some of the heavy lifting.
- CVSO office seems to have a limited responsibility or charter and resources are focused internally.
- Commission does not have ability to directly task CVSO or any other group so relatively challenging to get some things done.
- Do not have regular/built linkage between County groups that support Veteran's and Commission. We don't know what good they are doing or what gaps exist.
- We don't really know enough to make any recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to take action.
- Lack of direction – what should happen each meeting? Who should we or CVSO be reaching out to, why, and should we have standing engagements set up to bring that information in and potentially act on
- Need to stay focused on a very specific set of priorities and not be distracted by *one off* issues
- Length btw meetings
- Communication gaps limiting effectiveness as group

Summary of Commission Areas for Growth
Taken from Internal Survey Responses

- Agenda building
- Community engagement
- Having a strategic plan in place for how to effectively and efficiently operate would help
- Aligning forces with other commissions, government orgs, et al. could be a force multiplier
- Getting everyone actively involved beyond just attending Commission meetings

Summary of Perceived Biggest Impact to Date
Taken from Internal Survey Responses

- Veteran of the Year Luncheon is a complete success and promotes the Commission. It puts the Commission out in the open and recognizes special people and businesses.
- Annual Veteran of the Year awards lunch is by far the biggest success. The event has given the community a venue to highlight the good work being done for veterans and honor individuals who do the work. There have always been many small events around Veterans Day each year, but in just three years this event has quickly become the main event in the County and because of its growth it is actually bringing the greater community together.
- Created the Veteran of the Year Luncheon. This is a central event where military veterans and their supporters can meet and honor each other's service. Although this doesn't directly help the lives of say, a homeless veteran, it makes the issues of veterans front and center and is a great networking event where people connect over their passion for helping veterans in various capacities. Awarding those who do so much for our community, and never expected to be recognized, makes for a touching ceremony, and I believe it may encourage more people to think about what service they may put themselves toward.
- Annual lunch to celebrate veterans is great.
- Veteran of the Year luncheon for ability to gain a wider awareness of our county's veterans and giving the Commission credibility
- Veteran of the Year event
- Veteran of the Year gala – Helping to unify veteran's-centric groups while honoring them
- Awareness – The Veteran of the Year Lunch and general community engagement have made many aware of the Commission and the CVSO office and efforts by the County.
- Endorsing the Gateway at Millbrae housing development, to bring below-market housing units to 80 Veterans. This is still in the works, but we spoke at events, wrote letters and pushed as much as we could to support and I believe this helped.
- Supporting various housing projects to provide veteran-allocated units
- Materially helping with veteran homelessness and housing
- Advocacy at housing hearings to advocate for veterans housing is great
- Recommendation to Make all county Parks free of charge for Veterans. This sprung out of the County ID program, where we were trying to get private businesses to offer discounts to

veterans, in exchange for getting highlighted in the County websites, and to drive more traffic to their businesses. We tried to do it with our own knocking on doors and cold calling but had almost no success. Eventually, we decided let's offer something to our veterans which is under the county's control. This incentivizes Veterans to learn about the County Veteran ID card, which can only be obtained through our VSO, which drives more bodies through the door.

- Commissioner Ron Dickson has personally placed several veterans in housing, with the members of his mid- peninsula church. I don't see this as a Commission effort, however, as proud as I am of the work he is doing. It is really his own effort, nevertheless, it is a great accomplishment, and his being on the commission is a major asset. He led the Subcommittee on housing and did great work at that point, and has continued to work solo as I believe it is faster and he has time since he is retired.
- Homelessness – While the Commission has been more a participant and supporter of various efforts and 1 member in particular through his church has directly made some impacts, the County services as a whole have done a terrific job to get it to functional zero.
- Ron's work on getting housing for local homeless vets is amazing
- The biggest impact has been the research and action taken on the issue of veteran homelessness
- Another positive win was the Commission's support for the Women Veterans Forum
- Women Veterans Summit
- I think the number one accomplishment is the establishment of credibility of the commission as an entity which has the ability to effect change in a positive way. We are tightly integrated with the Board of Supervisors who supports the efforts of the commission. Our 4 year tenure has allowed us to gain the knowledge and experience that will allow us to deliver a more robust set of priorities going forward.
- George's advocacy around the Bay area is great
- Involving other members of the community in helping veterans, e.g. Boy Scouts
- Veterans Stand Down participation
- Raising awareness of veterans, patriots and organizations involved in promoting veteran well being