



COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

City of Anaheim CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2017
FROM: OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE ANAHEIM CITY COUNCIL
DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY STATE OF
EMERGENCY RELATED TO THE HOMELESS,
HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS WITHIN
AND ADJACENT TO CITY PROPERTY AND EMPOWERING
CITY STAFF TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PROVIDE
NEEDED SHELTER AND SERVICES, IN CONJUNCTION WITH
NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS AND TO PROVIDE THE
NECESSARY ENFORCEMENT TO ADDRESS UNLAWFUL
ACTIVITY IN THE SANTA ANA RIVER TRAIL, CITY PARKS,
AND ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

ATTACHMENT (Y/N): YES

ITEM # 22

REQUESTED ACTION:

That the City Council, by Resolution, declare a public health and safety state of emergency related to the homeless, homelessness and homeless encampments and empower city staff to take immediate action to provide needed shelter and services for the homeless in our community, and to address unlawful activity within the City and along the Santa Ana River Trail (SART).

DISCUSSION

At the August 29, 2017 City Council meeting, Council Member Murray requested that staff bring back a Resolution for consideration on September 12, 2017, to authorize comprehensive services to the homeless in the city and to expand law enforcement efforts to address the rising criminal activity associated with homeless encampments expanding along the city border and in public right-of-way. As part of this new initiative, Council Member Murray will also reach out to no more than two of her council colleagues in order to closely monitor these ongoing efforts and to provide further assistance as necessary.

According to Flood Control Data (FCC) compiled by CityNet on August 23, 2017, there are approximately 422 individuals identified as living in the FCC from Chapman Avenue to Ball Road alone. The report states that less than 25% of the respondents identify Anaheim as their last permanent address, 38% of the homeless interviewed admit to drug and or alcohol addiction, moreover 50% struggle with a disability or health

issue of some kind, and 42% identify as having a mental health concern. The homeless population in the County of Orange has increased significantly since 2015, including an increase of 54% on the Santa Ana River Trail. Further, based on the 2017 Point in Time Count, 28.9% of unsheltered adults in Orange County answered yes to being released from jail or prison in the last 12 months; of that population, greater than one in four attributed their release to Proposition 47.

Living conditions at riverbed encampments include chronic disease, drug use, and lack of basic health and safety provisions that risk the lives of those living there. Once the winter storms arrive, the physical safety of everyone living in these encampments will be at-risk. These encampments are not safe, sanitary or secure for the homeless or the surrounding communities.

Residential and commercial areas nearby report daily property crimes, vandalism, public nudity, and personal safety threats to residents, employees, and customers. Most recently on September 7, there was a reported stabbing of a man near a homeless encampment in the riverbed. There have also been reported drug overdoses and other violent crime reports by those living there. The public safety threats and human health impacts have reached a crisis level that warrants a state of emergency.

In order to act immediately and to activate broad services at all levels of government, the proposed Resolution calls for a citywide state of emergency to address the health and safety impacts that are escalating in Anaheim as a result of growing encampments. As part of this effort, the Resolution proposes the creation a new comprehensive program called “Operation Home Safe”, which would be implemented by the City of Anaheim to address the homeless crisis in Anaheim and along the SART.

The proposed Resolution directs the City Manager and city staff to immediately begin working on a number of action items. This program, Operation Home Safe, will provide immediate, comprehensive services and aid to meet the needs of the homeless population. It will also provide fair warning and enforcement of city laws to restore public safety to all areas in Anaheim. Operation Home Safe will include the following:

- Designate a single point of contact to act in a leadership capacity for this comprehensive program;
- Work with representatives from county agencies and each of the SART cities to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the actions proposed by Operation Home Safe and request support and partnership;
- Address jurisdictional challenges to provide for the comprehensive enforcement of general laws, ordinances and regulations, including those of the County and the Flood Control District as currently exists or may be amended or adopted;

- Work with the county to expedite an additional 100 beds at the Bridges at Kraemer Place and direct staff to work with the county to maintain the existing armories that are used annually for cold weather shelter;
- Negotiate a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with the County of Orange and neighboring cities to conduct joint enforcement of the SART, to be approved by the City Council;
- Identify all available resources and make recommendations to implement Operation Home Safe to address public health and safety in Anaheim;
- Request the county to provide field units staffed with social workers and care providers as well as behavioral health-receiving centers strategically located throughout the county in order to provide proper mental health services to those in need;
- Supplement and assist with the administration of county efforts to create a temporary, emergency shelter to serve up to 500 people as a part of this effort;
- Reach out to all local, state and federal homeless partnership programs; non-profit, for-profit, volunteer networks to establish a Community Triage Day targeting resources that will systematically address the individuals residing along the SART and utilizing the City's Emergency Operations Center as appropriate and permitted during this collaboration;
- Educate and inform all homeless individuals currently occupying City-owned property within the City's enforcement jurisdiction, and along the SART, that i) the City's priority is to provide shelter and services to assist homeless individuals, ii) those individuals who decline to accept shelter and services and instead elect to engage in unlawful activity will have that activity addressed through the criminal justice system when and as appropriate, and iii) the city will work with the county to undertake and maintain efforts, to enforce all health and safety codes and keep these areas secure, safe and free of unlawful activity;
- Create a tactical plan to clean and repair City-owned or controlled property that has been damaged by homeless encampments and work with the county to restore damaged property and trails in the SART along the city border;
- Promote the City's existing SB2 zones, which permit by right emergency shelters, and provide expedited building permit processing and waiving fees, to those willing to take advantage of the existing zoning area.

- Compile and submit monthly performance reports to the City Council.

Finally, the Resolution commits the City to communicating its intended actions under Operation Home Safe and submit a formal request to work collaboratively with the county on expanded services and programs. The collaboration is meant to initiate a new effort to better pool resources for homeless services, with the understanding that the health and safety impacts of the homeless population is reaching a crisis situation and must be addressed with immediate action.

As discussed, the proposed Resolution was developed to build upon and supplement County and other agency efforts and programs that are already underway, bringing in additional regional, state and federal resources, and authorize the City to take a leadership role to restore the health and safety of impacted city neighborhoods. If approved, it is anticipated that there will be additional costs associated with the implementation of this new program. As part of the direction to city staff, all the additional costs associated with this effort would be identified and brought back for council consideration at the appropriate time.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

The proposed Resolution asks the City Manager to identify all available resources that can be utilized for this initiative. While some programs may be funded by county resources, a budget will be prepared for all additional city costs needed to implement new directives. Those costs and associated budgets will be brought back for council consideration as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Garcia
Deputy City Manager

Attachment:

1. Resolution
2. County Flood Control Channel Report (FCC)
3. County Office of Care Coordination Newsletter- August 2017