



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2016**

**FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**

**WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS IN RIVERSIDE**

## **ISSUES:**

Participate in a workshop with City staff, community members and subject matter experts regarding concerns related to homelessness in the City of Riverside. The discussion will include information on the current conditions contributing to homelessness, the programs and services available, and an introduction to new options for policies and programs with the goal to improve the quality of life for all residents and businesses by:

1. Maintaining clean and sanitary streets, parks, and public areas;
2. Mitigating impacts to businesses and residents;
3. Educating the community about effective ways to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness through a connection to volunteer opportunities with effective service providers; and
4. Connecting residents, especially those most vulnerable and living without shelter and with a large number of barriers, to sustainable homeless services, employment and housing opportunities.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council participate in the workshop and provide policy direction to staff return to City Council at a later date with a full analysis for City Council consideration.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Homelessness in Riverside, as in most American cities, is a complex problem that requires a determined, consistent, and multifaceted menu of solutions. The menu of solutions that staff will ultimately recommend requires public and private partnerships, enforcement and social services, as well as positive community participation (instead of well-intended participation, such as giving spare change to panhandlers).

Homelessness creates three primary problems for us as a community:

1. We have human beings who are, for a variety of reasons, without home or shelter, mental health services, and sufficient employment.
2. We experience the activities and actions of homeless individuals or groups that challenge community quality of life when they:
  - a. Occupy large swaths of park space to an extent that families cannot enjoy their neighborhood parks
  - b. Disturb and sometimes threaten public spaces and facilities such as our libraries
  - c. Defecate and urinate in the entryways of small local businesses
  - d. Commit crimes, including violent crimes
  - e. Establish encampments, including in the Santa Ana River-bottom, that are unsafe, unsanitary, and routinely cause fires
3. We realize a drain on scarce City resources that are directed to conditions, circumstances, and impacts pertaining to homelessness:
  - a. Homeless outreach efforts
  - b. Police enforcement responses
  - c. Public Works clean-ups
  - d. Fire department responses to fires
  - e. Code Enforcement responses
  - f. Additional parks maintenance

On the whole, with the exception of specific, small-scale or focused initiatives (e.g. the Mayors Challenge to end Veteran Homelessness), efforts thus far to end homelessness have not been successful. There are two broad reasons for this:

1. The City and community response has been more reactive than proactive. The City has focused on police enforcement while the community has focused on mass feedings and small donations of money or tents - none of which ever helps end anyone's homelessness.
2. There is a lack of services, programs and housing accommodations - and the resources to support each of these - that are necessary in order to help end homelessness.

The workshop today serves to inform us about the homeless situation in Riverside and its impact to the entire community, to better understand the problems in order to formulate the appropriate menu of solutions. There will be speakers from the community, city staff, non-profit service providers, County of Riverside staff, and regional experts on addressing homelessness.

### **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

Several regulations were adopted in the Riverside Municipal Code (Attachment 1) to address community livability concerns, some of which are related to homelessness. City Council has also adopted several plans to assist individuals experiencing homelessness (Attachment 2).

The State Legislature, from time to time, considers bills that seek to prohibit local agencies from enforcing laws and ordinances to protect the public health, safety and welfare of our residents; there is no legislation pending currently. A summary of relevant State mandates is included in

Attachment 3.

**DISCUSSION:**

***Homelessness Context***

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Homelessness is a national problem. The Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that 26% of the nation's homeless live in California. Cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego have the nation's largest homeless populations. Inland Southern California is also impacted significantly by homelessness.

Individuals experience homelessness for a variety of reasons that can be loosely defined by levels of barriers to self-sufficiency:

1. Intensive - Individuals that have multiple untreated disabling conditions, such as mental health disorders, and are self-medicating with legal or illegal substances. These individuals typically are also known as "chronically homeless".
2. Moderate - Individuals that have less severe disabling conditions and substance abuse.
3. Low - Individuals that may find themselves homeless due to job loss or experiencing difficulty navigating assistance programs and services. These individuals often need only short term assistance.

As the County seat, the geographical impacts of homelessness in the City of Riverside are influenced by the location of the County Administrative Offices, the State and Federal Courts, the Robert Presley Detention Center and access to main transportation lines.

The City has been working on homelessness for a significant time and has participated in several national and regional efforts to address homelessness (see Attachment 4 for a brief summary).

*Community Livability Task Force (CLTF)*

Adopted by City Council on April 1, 2014, CLTF was approved to address aggressive panhandling, vagrancy, unpermitted camping, vandalism, illegal vendors, and abandoned property. Approximately \$3.5 million was allocated to the program to enforce community livability regulations. Unfortunately, the CLTF did not bring about visible and sustained change and the City is still being impacted by the aforementioned activities.

**Services and Resources available today**

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The City funds, operates or collaborates with a diverse range of agencies and organizations to provide programs and services seeking to alleviate homelessness. These agencies are identified in the City's Homeless Services & Resources Guide (Attachment 5) and summarized in Attachment 6.

Additionally, City staff continues to cultivate partnerships with the business community, residents, faith-based organizations, non-profit service providers, educational institutions, the development community and landlords (Attachment 7) to address homelessness.

Further, the County of Riverside is dedicated to and contributed in several ways to resolving homelessness (see Attachment 8 for a summary of these programs).

Lastly, in 2011, the City formed the Shelter Resistant Task Force, with staff from Public Works, Code Enforcement, Police Department, Homeless Outreach Team, the County of Riverside Department of Mental Health, and the Probation Department (Attachment 9).

***Recommended Programs and Services***

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Subject matter experts are expected to discuss a range of programs and services during the “Homelessness in Riverside” workshop that are options to more effectively address homelessness in the City, including:

1. Continuing Efforts to establish a full service campus
2. The Housing First Model of Service Delivery (Attachment 10)
3. A Community Response Team (Attachment 11)
4. Enforcement Models
5. Riverside at Work Program (Attachment 12)
6. Affordable Housing (Attachment 13)
7. Homeless Court Program (Attachment 14)
8. Overnight Shelters
9. Community Education for responsible, effective assistance
10. Park Programs

To help provide additional perspective and context on the above options, as well as a range of other topics and issues pertaining to homelessness, the following speakers are scheduled to participate in the workshop.

<b>HOMELESS WORKSHOP SPEAKERS LIST</b>	
<b>FRAMEWORK &amp; BACKGROUND - AFTERNOON SESSION</b>	
1	Alexander Nguyen, City of Riverside's Assistant City Manager
<b>COMMUNITY LIVABILITY CONCERNS</b>	
2	James Hawthorne, Arlington Business Partnership Representative
3	Janice Penner, Riverside Downtown Partnership's Executive Director
4	Tom Mangione, Business Owner
5	Adolfo Cruz, City of Riverside's Parks, Recreation & Community Services Director
6	Tonya Kennon, City of Riverside's Library Director
7	Councilmember Chris MacArthur – Community Impact of Public Feedings
8	Michael Moore, City of Riverside's Fire Chief

9	Lt. Bruce Blomdahl, City of Riverside Police Department - Loitering, public intoxication, panhandling and encampments
<b>DEFINING HOMELESSNESS AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS</b>	
10	Benjamin Henwood, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work at USC
<b>COMMUNITY CHALLENGES</b>	
11	Steve Falk, Executive Director of Community Mission of Hope, Temecula Pantry and HOPE in Lake Elsinore
<b>WHAT THE STATE IS DOING</b>	
12	Moises Lopez, City of Riverside's Intergovernmental Relations Officer
<b>WHAT THE COUNTY IS DOING</b>	
13	Susan von Zabern, County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services' Director
14	Joe Colletti, Co-Founder of the Urban Initiatives - Continuum of Care
15	County of Riverside Board of Supervisor Ken Jeffries' Office - Executive Oversight Committee on Homelessness
16	Rick Bishop, Western Riverside Council on Governments Executive Director - Technical Advisory Committee Proposed Statement of Principles
17	Steve Steinberg, Riverside Unified Health System's Behavioral Health Director
18	County of Riverside Sheriff's Office - Jail system and discharge process
<b>HOMELESSNESS IN RIVERSIDE</b>	
19	Michelle Davis, City of Riverside's Housing Authority Manager - Homeless Plans and collaboration with other entities
<b>PROGRAMS IN THE CITY</b>	
20	Monica Sapien, City of Riverside's Homeless Coordinator - Outreach responses to 311 calls and street weekly engagements
21	Michelle Davis - Other Homeless Service Providers
22	Kathy McAdara, Operation Safehouse's Executive Director
23	Damien O'Farrell, Path of Life Ministries' Executive Director
24	Belinda Marquez, Catholic Charities' Executive Director
25	Lt. Kevin Townsend, City of Riverside Police Department - Hole Lake Clean Up
<b>WRAP UP AFTERNOON SESSION</b>	
26	Alexander Nguyen
<b>FRAMEWORK &amp; BACKGROUND - EVENING SESSION</b>	
27	Alexander Nguyen
<b>PROGRAMS TO EXPLORE - EVENING SESSION</b>	
28	Rusty Bailey, City of Riverside's Mayor - Collaboration with Faith-Based Organizations including Temporary Shelters at Churches

29	Benjamin Henwood, PhD – Housing First Model
30	Larry Haynes, Mercy Housing's Executive Director - Housing First Model
31	Rebecca Louie, Wakeland Housing & Development Corporation - Affordable Housing Provider
32	Emilio Ramirez, City of Riverside's Community & Economic Development Deputy Director - Continuing Efforts, Community Response Team and Riverside at Work Program
33	John Plocher, Business Owner - Riverside at Work Program
34	Emilio Ramirez - Community Education
35	Sergio Diaz, City of Riverside's Police Chief - Enforcement Models
36	Deborah Lucky, District Attorney's Office - Homeless Court
37	Adolfo Cruz - Park Programs
<b>WRAP UP EVENING SESSION</b>	
38	Alexander Nguyen

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact with this workshop. Any policy discussions that result from this workshop will include a fiscal analysis for City Council at the time of policy approval.

Prepared by: Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager  
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Certified as to availability of funds: Scott G. Miller, PhD, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

**Attachments:**

1. List of RMC regulations
2. Adopted Plan Summary
3. State mandates
4. National and Regional Efforts
5. Homeless Services & Resources Guide
6. Summary of City Sponsored Organizations
7. Summary of City Partnerships
8. Summary of Riverside County Programs
9. Shelter Resistant Task Force
10. Housing First Model
11. Community Response Team
12. Riverside at Work Program
13. Affordable Housing
14. Homeless Court Program

15. Supplemental articles:

- a. MotherJones.com, 11/2014
- b. Washington Post, 05/06/2015
- c. Oregonlive, 06/2016
- d. Planning Report, 08/22/2016

16. Presentation

17. Comments