



CITY OF FRESNO

MEDIA RELEASE

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City of Fresno Criticizes Fencing of Homeless Encampment By Union Pacific Railroad

Fresno, CA – The City of Fresno today again called on the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR) to delay construction of a fence surrounding two large homeless encampments on H Street in downtown Fresno. The City voiced concerns about potential safety risks to those living in the encampments as a result of the fencing.

While those living in the encampments are legally trespassing on UPRR property, the City and the railroad have been working together on a plan to relocate the homeless residents in an orderly manner. The City believes the decision to fence the encampments creates a more dangerous environment for the people living there and is unnecessarily disruptive to the previously agreed-upon plan.

“We’re disappointed that Union Pacific has decided to move forward with surrounding more than 200 homeless people with a fence. We think the best solution is to continue down the collaborative path we had in place up to this point,” said Bruce Rudd, Assistant City Manager.

“This is unfortunate as the move by the railroad is likely to create fear in the encampments and could drive many of the people living there out into other areas of the city or county,” Rudd said. “We don’t view that as a productive outcome.”

The City will continue to move ahead with its planned relocation strategy, which is scheduled to be presented to the City Council in April. That plan includes conducting individual and family assessments for those living in the encampments and identifying resources which could help provide them with more stable housing options. The effort is being coordinated by Gregory Barfield, the City’s Homeless Prevention and Policy Manager, in cooperation with the County of Fresno and the Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care, among other agencies.

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