



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: April 1, 2019

AGENDA OF: April 9, 2019
DEPARTMENT: City Council
SUBJECT: Response to Homelessness: Update and Direction Regarding Gateway Encampment Interim Site Management (CN)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive an update on City-County Joint Action Plan for Emergency Shelter Provision and Encampment Management, including efforts to identify location and resources for a permanent year-round shelter and Navigation/day services center.
 2. Direct staff to develop and implement an interim site management plan for the Gateway Encampment consistent with the measures outlined in this report and including: cleanup; site/sleeping space layout; installation of additional hygiene and security measures; and ongoing interim operations management with the management plan to go into effect no later than the opening of the River Street campground.
 3. Express the Council's intention to close the Gateway Encampment when sufficient, campground or non-campground emergency shelter beds are available and to not pursue further homeless campgrounds in City neighborhoods or parks.
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BACKGROUND: Over the past several years, the City Council has worked to develop a strategic course for the community to prioritize homelessness responses and to address an increasing, visible unsheltered population. These efforts have included: adoption of the Homeless Coordinating Ad Hoc Committee (HCC) 20 Recommendations (May 2017); support for the winter shelter program with increased shelter bed capacity; Declaration of Shelter Crisis (Jan 2018, updated Mar 2019); approval of an Action Plan for Emergency Shelter Provision and Encampment Management; work with the County, through the City-County Homelessness 2x2 Committee.

At the same time, the City faces significant resistance to proposed measures, in particular with respect to location of sheltering and related services. Proposals to establish additional shelter capacity through transitional encampment, safe parking, and other programs have been met with significant neighborhood/community opposition. With the exception of the 1220 River Street location (which previously served as a temporary campground during 2018) none of the potential sites identified by City staff appear to be viable for operation at this time.

The City has also been working in collaboration with the County to provide basic hygiene, public health and safety, and security services related to the Gateway Encampment, an unsanctioned homeless campground established in Fall 2018 following the closure of the 1220 River Street Camp. The Encampment has grown to an estimated 100-150 nighttime residents, with up to 200 people reported during daytime hours. As it has expanded, *without adequate services, management, or operating procedures*, the Encampment has generated serious public health and safety problems for its residents, Gateway Plaza business, residents in adjacent neighborhoods (in particular Tannery and Felker Street), and the public in general. Theft and public nuisance crimes, illegal drug use, reports of communicable disease, rodent infestation, tent fires, and other hazards have been identified in the area. The City has been working to develop a plan for Camp closure, with a target date of April 17, 2019. In February 2019, the City Council agreed that the April 17 closure date was to be *contingent upon availability of shelter alternatives for current Encampment residents*, in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

DISCUSSION: Given that not enough viable shelter/location alternatives have been found, and that none are likely to be identified in the short-term, the City must make appropriate interventions at the Gateway Encampment now to ensure public health and safety and minimum quality of life standards are met for Encampment residents and the for the general public. Intervention recommendations are consistent with recommendations made by Dr. Arnold Leff on March 8, 2019, where he stated that the City Council should “make whatever arrangements are necessary for quickly decreasing the density at the encampment with the ultimate goal of closing it”. These interventions should include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Temporary relocation of Encampment residents to undertake major site clean-up, including removal of trash, rodent abatement, and other vector control measures;
- 2) Provision of temporary accommodations for residents and storage of resident belongings;
- 3) Installation of more durable fencing along San Lorenzo River levee pathway and other fencing to allow for limited points of ingress/egress; installation of additional bathroom, hygiene and waste disposal facilities; provision of standard temporary camping structures; provision of shade fencing to block the view of the camp from Highway 17;
- 4) Delineation of site plan for individual campsites and common areas; and
- 5) Establishment of interim site management plan, including staffing needs for day-to-day operations, security, rules and responsibilities for camp residents, and maintenance.

FISCAL IMPACT: Increased staff time associated with maintenance and operations to be determined; cost of materials and contract services to be determined.

Submitted by:

Justin Cummings
Vice Mayor

Submitted by:

Sandy Brown
Councilmember

ATTACHMENT:

None.