



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jacky Morales-Ferrand

**SUBJECT: HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT
CLEAN-UP PROGRAM**

DATE: May 22, 2019

Approved

Date

5-22-19

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends implementing a Homeless Encampment Clean-up Pilot Program for up to four sites, funded by the Multi-Source Housing Fund, the General Fund, and the Housing Trust Fund.

BACKGROUND

This Manager's Budget Addendum (MBA) addresses the recommendations included in the memorandum from Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers Carrasco, Davis and Esparza in the deliberations on item 4.3 on February 26, 2019, "Agreement with The Santa Clara Valley Water District for Encampment Abatement." Staff was directed to return through the budget process estimating costs for an Encampment Clean-up Plan, specifically:

- Engagement strategies like providing donated items such as socks, sleeping bags or tents;
- Providing empty garbage bags and sharps containers for later pick-up;
- Providing a "cash for trash," program;
- Establishing portable toilet locations;
- Utilizing volunteers for cooperative clean-ups;
- Engagement of homeless individuals to determine how their encampment can be maintained without polluting waterways and work together to create and relocate to safer, legal alternatives, like navigation centers or bridge housing; and
- Coordinate this effort with the new transitional jobs program as well as the City's new bathroom and garbage receptacle access program.

Additionally, on November 27, 2018, in a memorandum signed by Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Davis and Jones, the Administration was directed to begin a "humane public toilet" program. The direction allocated \$200,000 of funding from the State's Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) to place portable restrooms near known encampments, keep

public restrooms in parks near known encampments open longer and add job opportunities to the City's Transitional Jobs Program.

The direction on February 26, 2019 memorandum was to coordinate the "Encampment Clean Up" program with the "Humane Public Toilet" program, therefore this MBA will cover both items.

ANALYSIS

Without access to clean water, portable restrooms, trash services and a means for proper food storage, encampments put their already vulnerable residents at risk. There have been recent outbreaks of infectious diseases in California because of these unsanitary and unhygienic conditions. Therefore, addressing the sanitation and safety needs is critical in protecting the overall health of unsheltered residents. The Housing Department recommends piloting a program in 2019-2020 that provides a temporary moratorium on encampment abatements at certain existing locations provided it remains a safe and clean environment, does not grow to an unmanageable size, and crime or safety concerns are reduced. The goal of the program is to address serious sanitation and health concerns of those living unsheltered.

Designing a Homeless Encampment Clean-up program requires coordination across multiple departments and stakeholders, including Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), Environmental Services (ESD), Housing, Transportation (DOT), Police, Fire and the City Manager's Office in addition to external stakeholders, specifically Santa Clara Valley Water (Valley Water), Downtown Streets Team and Goodwill of Silicon Valley. The Housing Department coordinated a working group of internal departments to analyze program design and costs. In addition, external partners and homeless individuals and advocates were consulted.

Feedback from Stakeholders

City Working Group: A pilot Homeless Encampment Clean-up Program, designating certain locations with a temporary moratorium on abatements in addition to certain sanitation and trash services, could provide an opportunity to engage homeless and refer them to the coordinated entry system for housing or other opportunities, while simultaneously maintaining certain health and sanitation conditions. The working group of internal city departments suggested the program should have focus and metrics to evaluate effectiveness. Metrics could include an increase in the number of homeless individuals entering coordinated entry system from the pilot site, as well as decreased calls for service about an encampment due to trash or blight. The working group also raised concerns that were considered in the design of the pilot program:

- Environmental hazards of placing portable toilets near creeks;
- Accessibility and safety for trucks to service portable toilets or garbage bins;
- Keeping portable restrooms and or park restrooms safe and clean;
- Measures to keep an encampment from growing;
- Illegal dumping;
- Nearby neighbors; and
- Lack of bandwidth in City departments to manage and coordinate a program.

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Valley Water: The organization was consulted since they are the City's partner on encampment abatements. They raised several items to consider in a pilot program, specifically:

- Implementation of deterrent measures, such as private security or fencing, to keep an encampment from growing and prevention of illegal dumping;
- Potential environmental hazard of placing portable restrooms near waterways;
- Ensuring safe access for service vehicles to reach portable toilets and trash receptacles; and
- Careful consideration of a site to ensure the safety for those living in the encampment.

Homeless and Advocates: Many homeless individuals living in encampments want to keep their area clean, but lack the means to do so. They are also willing to engage in cooperative clean-up efforts. Additionally, because some do not have access to tents, they instead use tarps or other unconventional structures for shelter from the elements, which may inadvertently cause blight. A number of advocates and community volunteers are willing to help with a pilot program, offering to coordinate and engage with homeless individuals and organize community led clean-ups when appropriate.

Program Design & Recommendations

Based on the above feedback, it is recommended the program be piloted for one year beginning with designation of two sites, with an option to expand to up to four locations during the pilot. Designated sites would have a temporary moratorium on abatements. The pilot would be jointly coordinated by Housing and PRNS. The goal of the pilot moratorium is to maintain a clean environment by providing sanitation services at identified locations. To achieve this goal, a pilot location would include any combination of the following elements:

- Portable toilets and handwashing stations or extended hours at an existing park restroom;
- Attendants to clean restrooms and pick up litter at the location as part of the transitional jobs program. The Transitional Jobs Program, employs unhoused residents to support City efforts at beautifying the City through litter/trash removal and other beautification efforts;
- Trash receptacles and service and/or "cash for trash" program. The "cash for trash" pilot program will provide participants cash for collecting trash. A "cash for trash" site will be established at the designated moratorium location to reduce litter/trash related blight. The "cash for trash" program will be administered as part of the BeautifySJ Initiative strategy;
- Volunteers working with and engaging the homeless in a variety of ways, including: access to services, meeting basic needs with donations and cleaning or maintaining the site; and
- Street outreach offering shelter and access to coordinated entry system for housing.

There are potential challenges that the Housing Department recommends be closely monitored in the pilot program. Potential hazards include unsafe structures, open fires, illegal dumping, encampment growth and crime or safety concerns. Staff would closely monitor the site conditions and track calls for service to ensure that residents (both within the encampment and the surrounding neighborhood) safety is maintained. It is critical that these conditions be

monitored and addressed in a pilot program. The moratorium could be lifted and a location would be abated if any of the following conditions occurred: rise in crime, safety concerns, significant growth in the size of the encampment, or concerns from residents. Additionally, any moratorium location will not place portable restrooms along waterways, due to potential environmental hazard. Finally, locations will not have fencing or private security which would be cost prohibitive.

The components of the program may vary depending on the location. The City working group for the pilot, composed of staff from Housing, PRNS, DOT, ESD, Police, Fire and the City Manager’s Office will evaluate the pilot and make modifications as necessary. The working group will also closely coordinate with the BeautifySJ working group, aligning resources and opportunities for collaboration. Community volunteers will be activated for each site, engaging homeless individuals and organizing clean-ups. Finally, the working group will coordinate site selection with the appropriate Council office and jointly work on community engagement.

Budget Estimates

The estimated pilot program cost is \$285,000 in 2019-2020 as shown in the table below. Currently, Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant funds in the Multi-Source Housing Fund are available in the Crisis Response Interventions budget to support \$200,000 of the identified costs. The 2019-2020 Proposed Budget also includes \$50,000 for a Trash for Cash Program, funded by the General Fund. The remaining \$35,000 would be funded by the Housing Trust Fund, with a budget action to be included in the Rebudget/Clean-Up MBA.

Item	Cost	Note
Restrooms/service	\$90,000	HEAP funds available
Restroom attendants	\$50,000	\$15,000 of HEAP funds available; \$35,000 from the Housing Trust Fund (allocation to be added as part of the rebudget/clean-up MBA)
Trash receptacles /service	\$65,000	HEAP funds available
“Trash for Cash”	\$50,000	Funded through BeautifySJ
Flexible funds (Engagement strategies, cooperative clean-ups)	\$30,000	HEAP funds available
Street Outreach		Use existing service contract
Total Pilot Costs	\$285,000	

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COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Manager's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, the City Attorney's Office and the Departments of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Transportation, Environmental Services, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, Fire, and Police.

/s/

JACKY MORALES-FERRAND
Housing Director