



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo

**SUBJECT: ITEM 8.1 SANCTIONED
ENCAMPMENTS**

DATE: May 18, 2021

Approved:

Date: May 18, 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue with Council's March 2021 direction, as articulated through its unanimous approval of my March Budget Message, to expand the number of SOAR sites, maintaining such existing services provided at SOAR sites as street outreach and support, hygiene, portable latrines, movable showers, trash disposal, health services, and rapid rehousing.
2. To provide unhoused residents in those SOAR encampments a greater measure of stability, deploy a policy that ensures that encampments served by SOAR services may not be abated without extended notice—such two to three months—to the residents. Limited exceptions may be made for such reasons as:
 - a. Public safety concerns regarding fires at encampments or criminal activity,
 - b. Instances where residents have encamped in the public right of way; or
 - c. Planned construction activity.
3. Fully describe to Council and the public several pieces of information that Staff has previously learned in its prior exploration of sanctioned encampments which may not be explicitly described or explained in Staff's May 14, 2021 Memorandum, specifically:
 - a. The rationale for Housing Staff advising against the deployment of sanctioned encampments after extensive public discussion, study, and analysis of other cities' experiences with sanctioned encampments in 2015 and 2016.
 - b. Staff's experience in unsuccessfully attempting—on two occasions – to solicit bids from any qualified non-profits to manage and operate a sanctioned encampment when Council last directed Staff to do so in 2016, and the reasons offered by those organizations for their unwillingness to participate.
 - c. The reported \$61,000 per-person cost of San Francisco's efforts to maintain sanctioned encampments, based on an article cited in the footnotes on page 7 of

- the Staff memorandum. Describe why San José should or should not expect a different experience than San Francisco in managing such a site.
- d. When Council last committed to identify one “sanctioned encampment” site in every Council district, please describe the number of sites that actually emerged from that process and their locations.
 - e. Please recite comments that residents in “Hope Village” made to Housing staff at the conclusion of their tenure regarding their concerns about serious health and sanitary concerns of living in an encampment with persistent mud through the rainy season, and the difficulties in constraining efforts of other unhoused residents who sought to encamp nearby.
 - f. Please identify the capacity (in number of persons served at any one time) in the sanctioned encampment depicted in three scenarios of Attachment A.
 - g. Describe how the services offered in the first cost model, “Basic Needs”, differ from services currently provided at SOAR sites.
 - h. Describe the difficulty the City has encountered in identifying ongoing resources from local, state, or federal resources needed to operate existing emergency and transitional housing communities.
 - i. If sanctioned encampments became a sustained program of the City’s, please describe which other Housing programs—such as rapid rehousing, emergency housing communities, transitional housing communities, motel conversions, safe parking, and the like—staff would recommend to be cut to accommodate the staffing and financial demands of a sanctioned encampments program.
4. Offer Council an explicit comparison of the quantities of federal and state dollars available to address our homelessness crisis for the following purposes for the next fiscal year:
 - a. Emergency, transitional, and permanent housing (assuming that Housing staff has the bandwidth and undivided focus to appropriately seek those resources), versus
 - b. Operation of sanctioned encampments for persons living outside.
 5. Describe and explain the four cautions of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness white paper on “sanctioned encampments and safe zones” based on its review of many cities’ experiences with the concept, as referenced in the footnote on page 8 of the Staff Memorandum, namely:
 - a. “Creating [sanctioned encampments or safe zones] may it look and feel like the community is taking action to end homelessness on the surface—but by themselves, they have little impact on reducing homelessness.”
 - b. “Creating these environments can be costly in money, time, and effort.”
 - c. “These environments can prove difficult to manage and maintain.”
 - d. “Although often proposed as ‘temporary’ approaches, these programs prove difficult to close once they open.”
 6. Decline to deploy “sanctioned” encampments until data demonstrates they provide a more effective solution to addressing homelessness than other options.