



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: G. Harold Duffey
Director, Oakland Public
Works

SUBJECT: Encampment Assistance Agreements
With Caltrans

DATE: March 14, 2024

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Mar 15, 2024 13:49 PDT)

Date: Mar 15, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator, For A Period Of Two Years, To Enter Into One Or More Memorandums Of Understanding With The State Of California Department Of Transportation (CALTRANS) To Receive Assistance In Operations To Perform Encampment Resolution Activities At Various Sites Within The City Of Oakland Subject To And In Compliance With The City Of Oakland Encampment Management Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of homeless persons in the City of Oakland (City) continues to increase, as demonstrated by the latest point-in-time count from 2022, which recorded 5,055 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City. This count showed an increase of 984 individuals (+24%) from 2019, with the largest growth among people living in their RVs and cars. When official results of the 2024 point-in-time count are released, City staff expect to observe an increase in the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness since 2022. The current number of homeless residents in the City far outpaces the number of available shelter beds, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing.

The City does not have the resources to relocate all encampments that present health and safety threats, and pursuant to Section 131 of the Streets and Highways Code, the City has requested assistance from the State to perform encampment resolution activities at a site located at Leet Drive, at or near the intersection of Hegenberger Road. The State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has agreed to provide such assistance to the City, subject to entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Per the terms of the proposed MOU, the City may seek assistance from Caltrans for other encampment sites within City boundaries.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Section 604(l) of the City Charter requires City Council approval to enter into MOUs that contemplate joint governmental action; and Caltrans requires that the City and Caltrans enter into

City Council
March 19, 2024

an MOU for each such encampment site in which Caltrans may provide such assistance. The MOUs authorized under the proposed resolution will set forth each agency's respective roles and responsibilities prior to engaging in any encampment resolution activities at any site.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Receiving additional resources and partnering with other public entities is critical for the City to address the homelessness crisis and provide essential services to unhoused residents in the city. Entering into the proposed MOU with Caltrans aligns with the Citywide priorities of **housing, economic & cultural security, vibrant, sustainable infrastructure, and responsive, trustworthy government**. The City has outreach and resource alignment programs and authorizing the City Administrator to augment its programs with additional resources through agreements with the State will expedite closures of encampments within the requirements of the City's Encampment Management Policy. The first MOU will address Hegenberger and Leet Street.

City residents are affected by the increasing number of unsheltered individuals with regard to traffic and pedestrian safety, lack of sanitation and debris services, and illicit discharges into stormwater systems. City infrastructure is also being compromised and damage from the unhoused populations. Nearby encampments tap into power sources, block storm drains and sewer pipes with debris. Our sidewalks (path of travel) are obstructed, and numerous fires have been started as unhoused individuals seek warmth with makeshift campfires near city facilities. Therefore, the quicker we can close down encampments, with help from our local, regional and state partners the faster we can reduce Oakland's unhoused population.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed MOUs should have no fiscal impact and at minimum should result in expanding the effectiveness of existing dollars allocated to reduce the unhoused population in the City.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Staff did not conduct outreach for this informational report, however through the presentation of this information, staff seeks to respond to several questions that have been posed by members of the public and community organizations regarding the cities plan of action to reduce homelessness.

COORDINATION

This report and resolution have been prepared in coordination with the City Administrator's Office, City Attorney's Office and Caltrans.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The increased homeless population adversely impacts the City's economy. Visitors reduce their patronage of local businesses when the surrounding areas feel unpleasant or unsafe, and blighted neighborhoods reduce property values. The proposed agreement will allow the City to expand its encampment management and outreach services at no additional cost to Oakland residents or additional strain on existing programs.

Environmental: Reducing the number of unhoused will help provide cleaner neighborhoods, creating safe and healthy environments for the city's residents. Clearing encampments eliminates harbors for pests and physical hazards from the public right of way. Preventing and removing illegal dumping is also critical to keep solid litter, debris, and associated pollutants from entering the storm drain system and polluting waterways.

Race & Equity: Homelessness occurs disproportionately in the City's frontline communities of color. Those communities bear the brunt of these activities including impacts to residents' health, safety, and sense of well-being. Addressing the unhoused with all available resources and innovative programs will improve the quality of life for those residing in communities where encampments most frequently occur.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the City Administrator, for a period of two years, to enter into one or more memorandums of understanding with the state of California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) to receive assistance in operations to perform encampment resolution activities at various sites within the City of Oakland subject to and in compliance with the City of Oakland Encampment Management Policy.

For questions regarding this report, please contact G. Harold Duffey, Director, Oakland Public Works, at 510-238-4470.

Respectfully submitted,


G. Harold Duffey (Mar 15, 2024 13:00 PDT)

G. HAROLD DUFFEY
Director, Oakland Public Works

Prepared by:
G. Harold Duffey
Director, Oakland Public Works

City Council
March 19, 2024