



Study Session on Homeless Encampments and Vehicle Dwelling facilitated by the Police Department

Item 2

RTC 21-942

August 24, 2021



Study Session Topics

- Overview of Study Session
- Homelessness in Santa Clara
- Legal Context
- Homelessness during Covid
- Homeless Encampments in Santa Clara
- Vehicle Dwelling in Santa Clara
- City's Current Response
- Council Priorities and Next Steps



City of Santa Clara Homeless Statistics

City of Santa Clara Homeless Population	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
2013	203	275	478
2015	150	227	377
2017	199	73	272
2019	264	62	326



City of Santa Clara Homeless Statistics

- The majority (81%) of respondents reported living in Santa Clara County at the most recent time they became homeless.
- The unemployment rate among homeless survey respondents was 82%
- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were the affordability of rent (66%), a lack of a job/income (56%), and a lack of housing (40%).
- Homeless survey respondents also reported having these health conditions: a psychiatric or emotional condition (42%); drug/alcohol abuse (35%), and PTSD (33%).



Citizen Complaints Connected with Our Unhoused Population

- Blight and corresponding property value decline and/or business viability
- Concern for safety, particularly in City parks
- Noise
- Fire
- Vandalism
- Solid waste
- Unhealthy conditions and impact on the environment, particularly in our creeks
- Costs to society
- Potential for an increase in crime





Laws, Court Rulings and City Code Restrictions

- Martin v Boise Federal Appeals Court Ruling
- Panhandling / Solicitation
(City Code Section 5.05.210)
- Vehicle Dwelling
(City Code Section 12.50.010)
- Parking Regulations
(City Code Section 10.05.470)
- Coronavirus Pandemic Early Inmate Release
- Santa Clara County Superior Court Zero Bail





Coordination of Services

- Coordinating a successful intervention is a lengthy process:
 - Multiple visits may be required to gain acceptance of assistance
 - Jurisdictional issues
 - Identification of Needs
 - Availability of Staff Resources
 - Availability of Partner Resources
 - Coordination of Services
 - Timeframe restrictions
 - Costs associated with clean up or clear out
 - Unique situations specific to the person(s) in need (e.g. pet, children, vehicle, etc.)





Temporary Impacts as a Result of the Coronavirus Pandemic

- Center for Disease Control guidelines
- Individual agency responses
- Early inmate release
- Zero Bail





Location of Unhoused Individual

- **Private Property**
 - A landowner is required to initiate enforcement action for trespassing. The decision of the landowner and subsequent process in collaboration with law enforcement to address trespassing of unhoused individuals is time consuming and labor intensive. Law enforcement then works with the agency of jurisdiction
- **Public Property**
 - On public property, a person can be asked to leave however they are not required to do so based on the Martin v City of Boise Federal appeals court ruling



Location and Agency of Jurisdiction

Location	Agency of Jurisdiction
In and around creeks	Valley Water
Along the freeways	CalTrans
Under the expressways	County Road
Along the railroad tracks	Cal Train
In City parks	City of Santa Clara
Private property	Private property owner (varies)
In adjacent municipalities	City of Jurisdiction
Public street	City of Santa Clara



Homeless Encampments in Our City

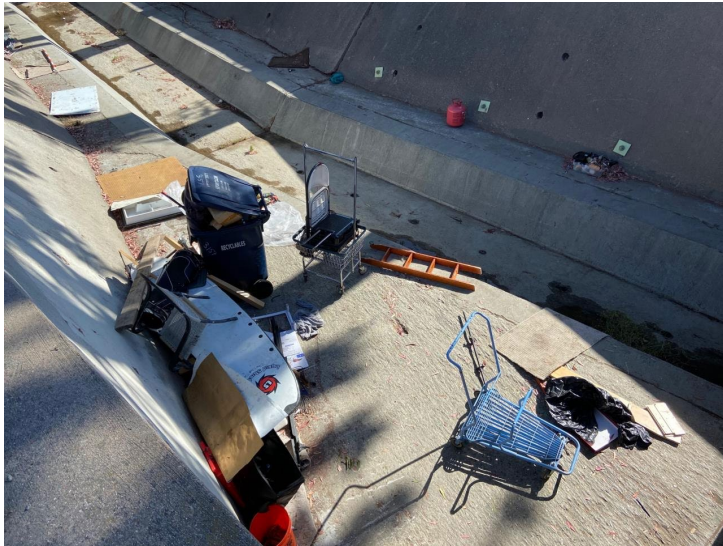
Encampment Location	Agency of Jurisdiction
Lafayette Street at Laurelwood Road	City of Santa Clara
San Tomas Aquino / Saratoga Creek Trail at Homestead Road	Valley Water
San Tomas Aquino / Saratoga Creek Trail at Mauricia Avenue and Tracy Drive	Valley Water
Calabazas Creek north of El Camino Real	Valley Water







Clean-up vs Clear Out





Clean-up vs Clear out





Procedures for Each Case

- Outreach to individuals advising of community resources (e.g. emergency shelter, showers, laundry service, meals, medical services, case management, employment training, etc.) and determine next steps to resolve the reported concern
- Notification advising of intent to conduct the clear out at least 72-hours in advance, encouraging individual(s) to remove their personal property and provide free bags to do
- Document pertinent information to third-party vendor regarding the location, making note of potential jobsite hazards and conducting employee safety training as necessary
- Coordination with an experienced third-party vendor to conduct clear out
- Staff a police officer to be present for the clear out
- Clear and dispose of debris
- Sort and tag personal property, prepare the items for storage and ensure the items can be claimed up to 90-days following the clear out
- Return of personal property as requested



Photos Taken 8/16/21





Department Oversight for Vehicles

Matter of Concern	Department Oversight
Storage on private property	Code Enforcement Division
Illegal parking on public property	Police Department
Potential issues associated with RV, personal vehicle or commercial vehicle dwelling	Police Department



Vehicle Dwelling in Santa Clara





Vehicle Dwelling Locations in Our City

- As of 5/5/21, there were 107 vehicles counted with evidence of people living in them
- 97 of these were recreation vehicles *
- 73 of which were in one of the following locations:
 - Hope Drive from Lafayette Street to Lick Mill Boulevard
 - Bassett Street from Laurelwood Road to Agnew Road
 - Agnew Road from Lafayette Street to Mission College Boulevard
 - Memorex Drive from Lafayette Street to Richard Avenue
 - Richard Avenue from Lafayette Street to Martin Avenue
 - Space Park Drive, Kenneth Street and Raymond Street area
 - Grant Street and Reed Street area



Citizen Complaints Specific to Vehicle Dwellers

- Blight and corresponding property value decline
- Excessive litter and garbage
- Discharging sewage on the public right of way
- Line of sight safety issues for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers
- Encroachment of items outside, on top of, or attached to the RV
- Reduced parking availability
- Noise from generators
- Unleashed pets
- Concern for personal safety
- Potential for increase in crime



City's Current Homeless Response

- Multiple City Department's have initiatives, programs and services intended to serve those at risk of being unhoused and our homeless population, including:
- Housing and Community Services Division
 - The City of Santa Clara endorsed the Community Plan to End Homelessness on Tuesday, March 17
 - In August 2021, the City Council will consider an item to formalize the Housing Commission
 - Congregate Shelter: Bill Wilson operates 20 shelter beds in Santa Clara for homeless youth
 - Non-congregate Shelter: Bill Wilson Center manages roughly 15 transitional living group homes (5-6 bedrooms each) where they place homeless youth
 - Motels/Hotels: The County has secured beds at two sites, the Western Motel (2250 El Camino Real) and Hotel E Real (3580 El Camino Real), to shelter clients in emergency situations



City's Current Homeless Response

- Housing and Community Services Division
 - Covenant House California opened a full-service Transitional Housing program for 30 youth, ages 18-24. In collaboration with Santa Clara County and CISCO as primary partners, the site at the 'Western Motel' was renovated to meet the needs of young people transitioning from homelessness
 - Emergency Financial Assistance: COVID Emergency Rental Assistance Program — \$2.8 million to provide three consecutive months of rent for eligible households based on income levels
 - Tenant Based Rental Assistance: Abode Services and Bill Wilson Center provide tenant based rental assistance of up to 24 months with case management services to support families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Currently, up to 50 households receive rental assistance through TBRA
 - April 2021: Approved a \$4,000,000 loan agreement with Allied Housing to Support the Construction of 80 Affordable Housing Units, 39 of these units set aside for chronically homeless residents
 - May 2021: Calabazas Community Affordable Apartments completed construction and began accepting applications May 24-June 7. The Calabazas Apartments provides 144 units of affordable and supportive housing at 3311 Kifer Road
 - June 2021: Closed financing on Agrihood by Core companies, a \$250 million mixed-use development on city-owned land, which includes 108 units at 30% AMI or lower



Potential Short-term Strategies

- Approve establishing a Housing Commission / Task Force
- Through the Housing Commission, Study and advance the needs of Santa Clara's unhoused populations, including providing recommendations to Council regarding implementation of Community Plan to End Homelessness
- Leverage existing County and State funding, programs and resources
- Provide trash pick-up services / Clean-up
- Offer more frequent street sweeping following movement of RV's
- Coordinate delivery of fresh water to homeless encampments
- Submit a Project HomeKey application for upcoming State funding opportunity to establish transitional housing site for homeless people



Possible Mid-term Solutions

- Fund additional Code Enforcement Division, Community Development Department and/or Police Department (Community Response Team) employees dedicated to homelessness
- Fund a mental health clinician to work from the Police Department's Crisis Intervention Specialists to serve as a mobile outreach worker among our chronic homeless population Enhance or establish local partnerships with County services, regional non-profits and faith-based communities
- Contemplate an ordinance to limit RV, boat vehicle overnight parking in industrial areas
- Consider an ordinance to limit RV parking on private property to be occupied as a long-term residence
- Consider a ballot measure to restrict large vehicle parking on residential streets and/or streets with a certain width or less
- Mobile ADA compliant portable toilets and sinks
- Portable shower facilities and laundry facilities



Potential Longer-term Strategies

- Work with County to establish a temporary cold/hot weather shelter (requires land and operator)
- Implement a Safe Parking Program (requires land, operator and services)
- Build more affordable housing (extremely low-income units)
- Increase affordable housing percent in developments (15%+)
- Expand City services to provide higher-touch services based on supplementing programs provided by the County and service providers



How Residents Can Support Our Efforts

- On August 24, 2021, the City Council will consider adopting an Ordinance formalizing the City's Housing Commission. The City's Housing Commission will study and advance the needs of Santa Clara's unhoused populations
- Housing Commission membership shall consist of five council appointed members who shall not hold any paid office or employment in the City government
- We encourage residents to fully engage in Housing Commission meetings



Next Steps

- **Council Feedback and Discussion**
- **Input or Direction on Next Steps, including Short, Mid and Long-Term Options**
 - **Status quo**
 - **Ordinance amendment(s)**
 - **New programs and/or services**
 - **Pilot program(s)**
 - **Ballot measures**
 - **Designation of personnel and financial resources**





Various Forms of Homelessness

Form of Homelessness	Brief definition / examples
Chronic	<p>Sleeping in parks, undeveloped properties, vacant buildings, transit stations</p> <p>Frequently suffer from long-term health conditions, such as mental illness, substance abuse, disabilities or other medical conditions, and lack access to healthcare</p>
Transitional	Shelter system, boarding house, emergency shelter
Hidden	Hotel living, couch surfing, doubling up or reliance on friends/family
Vehicle dwelling	Personal vehicle, recreation vehicle
Encampments	Multiple people living in an unsheltered area
Imminent risk of homelessness	Domestic violence, runaway, sex trafficking, etc.



Intersecting Issues Among Departments

- City Attorney's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Community Development Department (Housing and Community Services Division)
- Fire Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Planning Department (Code Enforcement Division and Planning Division)
- Police Department



City's Current Homeless Response

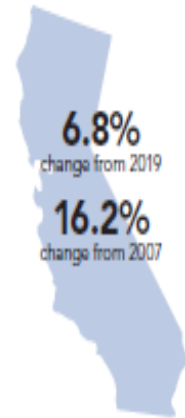
- Parks and Recreation Department
 - Water fountains, accessible restrooms and public facilities (indoor and outdoor)
 - Senior Nutrition Program and Meals to Go (age 60+)
 - Case management services for seniors and individuals with special needs
 - Senior adult legal assistance (age 60+)
 - Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program
 - Health and wellness classes
- Police Department
 - Community Response Team to respond to matters related with all quality of life issues in the City
 - Crisis Intervention Specialists to coordinate and support beneficial outcomes for persons with mental illness, including a website and educational flyer for residents with concerns about our unhoused population
 - Law enforcement self-initiated activity and calls for service (e.g. warrants, code violations)



National, State and County Statistics

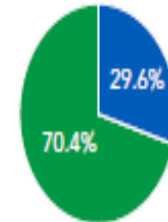
- 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress
 - Point in time estimates:
 - 580,466 homeless in the United States
 - **161,548 homeless in California**
 - 9,706 in Santa Clara County
 - 1,724 sheltered
 - 7,922 unsheltered

CALIFORNIA



Total Homeless, 2020
161,548

40.9 in every **10,000**
people were experiencing
homelessness



■ Unsheltered (113,660)
■ Sheltered (47,888)

Estimates of Homelessness

135,771 Individuals

25,777 people in families
with children

12,172 unaccompanied
homeless youth

11,401 veterans

48,812 chronically homeless
Individuals



Notable Case





Mountain View Homeless Statistics

City of Mountain View's Homeless Population	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
2013	136	3	139
2015	271	5	276
2017	411	5	416
2019	574	32	606

NOTE: Short-term strategies were authorized by City Council on October 4, 2016, with a balanced solution to follow. As the outreach and regional cooperation has expanded so has the number of people seeking services.



City of Mountain View

- Following a two-year study on ways to address the rise in homelessness and residents living in vehicles, Mountain View initially committed more than \$1 million dollars to implementing a three-pronged approach:
 - Fund basic human services (e.g. mobile showers, laundry, ADA compliant portable toilet, hand washing stations, etc.)
 - Link individuals to comprehensive health and social services. This included a new mobile social worker outreach at CSA jointly funded by the City and County, and case manager program with Peninsula Healthcare Connections. A Community Outreach Police Officer was also dedicated to further enhance and coordinate community outreach and law enforcement operations
 - Provide assistance to locate housing



Safe Parking Lots

- Private Lots
 - St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (**temporarily closed**) - hosts up to 4 passenger vehicles
 - Lord's Grace Christian Church (open) - hosts up to **4 passenger vehicles**
- County-operated lots (City-controlled through lease or ownership)
 - Pioneer Way and Evelyn Avenue - former VTA transit lot (open) - hosts up to **30 oversized vehicles** and up to **21 passenger vehicles** spaces that are flexibly used to meet needs of living or commute (**plus another 15 adjacent commuter passenger vehicle spots on the same lot**)
 - Shoreline Amphitheatre Parking Lot B (open) - hosts up to **29 oversized vehicles including two ADA spots and 4 passenger vehicles**
 - 1020 Terra Bella Ave. - Alta Housing Lot (open) - hosts up to **9 oversized vehicles** spaces



Oversized Vehicle Parking in Mountain View

- Measure C ballot measure
 - Passed by 56.6% of Mountain View voters in November 2020
- The oversized vehicle parking ordinance includes boats, large trucks and recreation vehicles on narrow streets to address traffic safety concerns
 - An oversized vehicle exceeded 22 feet in length, or 7 feet in width, or 7 feet in height
- The City plans to install signs on 444 streets, or 1,035 blocks, which qualify as narrow by being 40 feet wide or less
 - Of the City's 525 public streets, 83% qualify as narrow
 - The Public Works Department estimates 2,600 signs will be required
 - The cost to produce and install the signs is estimated at \$980,000
- Mountain View Police Department to address complaint-driver enforcement of parking-related concerns, beginning with education and seeking voluntary compliance



Fremont Homeless Statistics

City of Fremont Homeless Population	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
2017	197	282	479
2019	123	485	608



City of Fremont

- In October, 2020, the City of Fremont opened the Housing Navigation Center
 - Ability to help transition vulnerable community members by providing a clean, safe and flexible environment to rebuild their lives and focus on stable, permanent housing
 - 44 individuals were served in the first 6 months; COVID-19 reduced the capacity to serve additional residents
- The Human Services Department opened a warm Winter shelter for 117 consecutive days and served 101 people
- In April, 2021, the City of Fremont implemented the CleanStart Mobile Hygiene Unit
 - 10 opportunities per week, at 7 locations throughout the City, to shower
 - This resource also includes the distribution of clothing and supplies (e.g. sleeping bag, bike lock, etc.)
- On June 15, 2021, the City of Fremont voted to adopt an ordinance to allow safe parking at community-based host sites, such as religious facilities and non-profits. The Safe Parking Program is a collaborative effort between the City and community partners. The City's Human Services Department is seeking organizations interested in becoming a Safe Parking Host Site
- The City of Fremont also utilizes an app, similar to MySantaClara, to report encampment-related concerns, persons living in abandoned buildings and report vehicle habitation



Potential Partners

- Abode Services
- Alta Housing
- Bill Wilson Center
- Community Services Agency (CSA)
- COVID-19 Community-Based Organization (CBO) Team
- Destination: Home
- Dignity on Wheels (DOW)
- Fight the Hate Ministry food distribution program
- HomeFirst Services
- Homeless/Safe Parking Teams
- Housing Choices
- Housing Trust Silicon Valley
- Life Moves
- Human Relations Commission (HRC)
- LifeMoves
- Live Nation
- MOVE Mountain View
- New Directions – a Program of Peninsula Healthcare Connections
- Reach Potential Movement (RPM)
- Sacred Heart
- Salvation Army
- Santa Clara County
 - Valley Homeless Healthcare (VHHCP)
 - County Housing Authority
 - Office of Supportive Housing
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- St. Athanasius food distribution program
- United Way
- West Valley Community Services



Tracy Drive footbridge as of 8/24/21





Lafayette and Laurelwood as of 8/24/21

