

Memorandum



Human Resources

Date: February 2, 2017
To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: Kim Van Nimwegen, Homeless and Fair Housing Coordinator
Through: Steven Methvin, Deputy City Manager; Naomi Farrell, Human Services Director
Cc: Paul Bentley, Deputy Human Services Director
Subject: Ending Homelessness Update

Human Services presented on interdepartmental strategies to end homelessness in Tempe during the October 13, 2016, Work Study Session (WSS). This included special consideration for steps to end unsheltered homelessness and encampments in Papago and other desert parks. At that meeting, Council directed staff to develop a plan of action built upon coordinated Human Services interventions, continued Public Works park clean-ups and Police Department enforcement of the urban camping law, along with continued assistance with notifications. Since then, an interdepartmental team has been working collectively to develop and implement proactive strategies to address this facet of the homeless problem in Tempe. Considerable progress has been made which will be presented for further council consideration.

New Performance Measure

As part of the City's Strategic Management Process, a new performance measure was finalized:

“To end homelessness in Tempe as measured by Tempe's point in time count.”

We understand that people may always fall into homelessness for many reasons. We define ending homelessness as *functional zero*, where the availability of resources exceeds the size of the population needing those resources. As a result of achieving this, any individual's experience of homelessness should be rare, brief and only occur one time.

Creation of Operations Team

An interdepartmental group was created in response to Council's request at the October 13, 2016 WSS to explore options for addressing issues related to homelessness in Papago and other desert parks. The group has since been formalized as the Operations Team. This team works collaboratively to address encampment issues that pose a security, health or public safety risk and/or interferes with community use of public space. The operations team consists of Tempe Fire Medical Rescue, Public Works, Police Department, Human Services Department, Tempe Municipal Courts, Community Services and the City Attorney's Office. The team has developed a consistent communication system across all levels of each department to strengthen the City's response to these issues.

As part of the City's strategic management process, \$250,000 was made available through a competitive one-time mid-year supplemental process. The Operations Team was successful in receiving \$170,000 to resolve issues related to homelessness in Papago and other desert parks. These funds will be specifically used to:

- Determine the Size, Scope and Scale of the chronic unsheltered homeless population
- Continue park clean-up and maintenance
- Purchase one all-terrain vehicle to support PD in accessing hard to reach homeless encampments and people (see attachment A).

Encampment Response Framework

The Operations Team has developed a framework to guide the collaborative response to encampments:

- Encampments are identified and referred to the Operations Team
- Public Works schedules cleanup date
- Homeless individuals are contacted by PD
 - Educated on urban camping ordinance
 - Provided information on available services
 - Advised of upcoming cleanup date
- PD contacts Human Services
 - Human Services offers resources and services such as vital document assistance, housing locator, crisis intervention, case management, etc.
- Cleanup of abandoned encampment debris occurs
- Persistent urban camping violations activates PD enforcement process

Department Specific Components

Human Services Update –

- Point in Time Count (PIT) – The PIT was conducted January 24th using a revised methodology to more accurately count the number of unsheltered homeless in Tempe. The PIT is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Preliminary results reveal that on January 24th, 266 people were counted on Tempe streets, 34 people were homeless and sheltered by I-Help, and 54 unduplicated people, who reported they were homeless, received food boxes from Tempe Community Action Agency, for a total of 354 homeless people.
- Enhanced Collaboration – HOPE and CARE 7 have implemented the Human Management Information System (HMIS) and VI-SPDAT as collective databases. This enhances collaboration and integration of services between HOPE and CARE 7.
 - The HOPE team (Homeless Outreach Prevention Effort) provides one-on-one case management and connection to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. In addition HOPE provides traditional street outreach and engagement, housing locator services and assistance with helping section-8 housing clients (and others) to remain housed.
 - CARE 7 is the City's crisis intervention team that responds to emergency calls for services alongside Tempe Police and Tempe Fire Medical Rescue personnel. Over 4,000 individuals are assisted by CARE 7 staff each year for a variety of reasons including domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and other traumatic events. Of those encountered by the CARE 7 team, approximately 20% of calls for services (800 individuals) are people experiencing homelessness.
- Access Regional Funding – Maricopa County has released a funding application process for approximately \$637,000 to provide funding for rapid rehousing and shelter services. This will be explored in conjunction with the Committee of the Whole and the East Valley Cities Work Group.

Public Works

- Encampment Clean-ups - Originally, encampment clean-ups were addressed geographically, starting with Hayden Butte, moving north through the LoPiano Mesquite Bosque and the rest of the desert portions of Papago and Evelyn Hallman Parks. Encampment clean-ups are now prioritized based on park user impacts. To date, 630 labor hours have been redirected from other areas to address encampment clean-ups. For on-going support, Public Works staff has submitted a supplemental funding request. To date \$35,000 of operational funds have been spent on encampment cleanups, which have resulted in 40 tons of debris removed.

- Vegetative Management - Phase 3 of the Greenline riparian area restoration is underway, as is work in the LoPiano Mesquite Bosque. To date, \$140,000 of operational and capital improvement funds have been spent removing non-native and invasive vegetation, removing palms and raising palm skirts, and replanting native species.
- Roll-off Container - Piloted the use of a 15-yard roll-off container in LoPiano Mesquite Bosque.

Police Department

- Officer Reassignment - One existing Patrol Officer was reassigned to a newly created Park Officer position. To date, approximately 90% of this officer's time has been dedicated to Papago and other desert parks.
- Increased Arrests – In 2016 the Police Department arrested 9 individuals for urban camping compared to 3 in 2015. To date, 4 individuals have been arrested for urban camping in 2017.
- Increased Contacts - The Police Department increased its contacts in Papago and other desert parks. From October 2016 through January 2017 the PD made 36 documented contacts, as compared to October 2015 through January 2016, in which the Police Department made 12 documented contacts.
- Greater Collaboration – The PD has formed a partnership with Human Services and Tempe City Courts staff to explore opportunities to effectively manage individuals arrested for urban camping violations. In addition, the PD is communicating with other local law enforcement agencies to discuss regional approaches to addressing homelessness.

Next Steps

The Operations Team will...

- Research and develop a formalized comprehensive encampment response pilot program based on input from various departments and stakeholders.
- Implement the elements outlined in the mid-year supplemental award.
 - Measure the size, scope, and scale of chronic unsheltered people.
 - Enhance cleanup and maintenance efforts.
 - Provide PD with greater access to reach encampments and unsheltered people.
- Report on outcomes from the utilization of funding from the mid-year supplemental request through an upcoming Friday packet memorandum.
- Identify and implement opportunities to activate Papago and other desert parks.
- Conduct intensive and persistent outreach and engagement of our homeless population through CARE7, HOPE, and other service providers.
- Identify and request supplemental resources for a sustained effort through the City's annual budget process and grants.
- Provide low-barrier pathways to permanent housing.