CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: SASHA COHEN, PROGRAM SPECIALIST
              HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL HOMELESS
              EMERGENCY

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Housing and Community Services Department that the Council, by resolution, approve an extension of Resolution No. 28839 which formally proclaimed a local homeless emergency within Santa Rosa.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 9, 2016, pursuant to the authority set forth in California Government Code Sections 8630 thru 8634, Council, by Resolution No. 28839, formally proclaimed a local homeless emergency within Santa Rosa. Section 8630, as amended, requires that the Council review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 60 days until such local emergency is terminated. (Section 8630 previously required review every 30 days.) Council has approved an extension of the proclamation of local homeless emergency on a regular basis since the original proclamation in August 2016. In light of the continuing conditions of homelessness within the city, staff is recommending that the Council maintain the proclamation in full force and effect at this time. If approved, this will be the sixty-third extension.

BACKGROUND

1.   On August 9, 2016, the Council formally recognized a homelessness emergency within Santa Rosa through the following: 1) adopted Resolution No. 28838 declaring a homeless shelter crisis; 2) adopted Resolution No. 28839 proclaiming a local homeless emergency; and 3) by motion, directed the Mayor to submit a letter requesting for a gubernatorial state of emergency proclamation.

2.   Government Code Section 8630, as amended, requires that the Council review the need for continuing the local homeless emergency (Item No.2), at least every 60 days until such local emergency is terminated.

3.   Council has approved an extension of the proclamation of local homeless emergency on a regular basis since the original proclamation in August 2016:

Council Meeting	Resolution No.
August 30, 2016	28851
September 27, 2016	28863
October 25, 2016	28876
November 15, 2016	28884
December 13, 2016	28894
January 10, 2017	RES-2017-002
February 7, 2017	RES-2017-018
March 7, 2017	RES-2017-032
April 4, 2017	RES-2017-052
May 2, 2017	RES-2017-062
May 23, 2017	RES-2017-075
June 20, 2017	RES-2017-117
July 18, 2017	RES-2017-140
August 15, 2017	RES-2017-160
September 5, 2017	RES-2017-174
September 26, 2017	RES-2017-193
October 24, 2017	RES-2017-209
November 14, 2017	RES-2017-219
December 12, 2017	RES-2017-245
January 9, 2018	RES-2018-009
February 6, 2018	RES-2018-018
March 6, 2018	RES-2018-038
April 3, 2018	RES-2018-051
May 1, 2018	RES-2018-063
May 22, 2018	RES-2018-076
June 19, 2018	RES-2018-091
July 10,2018	RES-2018-116
August 7,2018	RES-2018-134
September 4, 2018	RES-2018-155
October 2, 2018	RES-2018-173
October 30, 2018	RES-2018-196
November 27, 2018	RES-2018-207
December 18, 2018	RES-2018-225
January 15, 2019	RES-2019-007
February 12, 2019	RES-2019-013
March 12, 2019	RES-2019-024
April 2, 2019	RES-2019-034
May 28, 2019	RES-2019-057
July 23, 2019	RES-2019-115
September 10, 2019	RES-2019-138
November 5, 2019	RES-2019-162
December 17, 2019	RES-2019-188
February 11, 2020	RES-2020-019
April 7, 2020	RES-2020-057
June 2, 2020	RES-2020-086

July 21, 2020	RES-2020-121
September 15, 2020	RES-2020-153
November 10, 2020	RES-2020-186
January 5, 2021	RES-2021-013
March 2, 2021	RES-2021-036
April 27, 2021	RES-2021-070
June 22, 2021	RES-2021-105
August 17, 2021	RES-2021-144
October 12, 2021	RES-2021-171
December 7, 2021	RES-2021-216
February 8, 2022	RES-2022-021
March 29, 2022	RES-2022-059
May 24, 2022	RES-2022-099
July 12, 2022	RES-2022-152
August 23, 2022	RES-2022-189
October 11, 2022	RES-2022-202
December 6, 2022	RES-2022-232

4. In light of the continuing conditions of homelessness within the city, which were exacerbated by the 2017 fire emergency and substantial loss of residential units, and further exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency, staff is recommending that the Council maintain the proclamation in full force and effect at this time. If approved, this will be the sixty-third extension.

5. The City is engaged in a range of efforts to address homelessness as part of Council's Housing First Strategy. These include investing in evidenced-based solutions such as housing-focused shelter at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter and Family Support Center, street outreach through the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), expanded services at the Homeless Services Center, and resources for housing assistance, tenant assistance, and landlord incentives and risk mitigation through the creation of a Housing First Fund. The City implemented the Homeless Encampment Assistance Program, a multi-disciplinary team focused on a compassionate approach to addressing the health, safety and shelter needs of persons living in encampments, as well as to mitigate the impacts to surrounding communities. The City also instituted several programs to protect individuals experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hotel accommodations for the most vulnerable and a Safe Social Distancing Site for those otherwise in unhealthy crowded encampments. The City has also launched a Safe Parking Pilot Program on City property to provide a safe space and support services for those living in their vehicles. With a Housing First focus, Safe Parking is designed to help individuals find and transition into permanent housing.

6. The declarations provide the City with greater flexibility to address the homeless crisis by waiving certain health, safety, and zoning restrictions for the use of public property (declaration of shelter crisis) or private property (declaration of local homeless emergency) to create additional shelter for persons experiencing homelessness. For example, the City has increased shelter bed capacity at the Samuel L. Jones Hall Homeless Shelter and expanded services at the Homeless

Services Center without going through a formal process to modify the conditional use permits for these facilities as well as allowed for the provision of services on private property through the Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP). The additional flexibility provided by the declaration proved to be critical to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness during the public health emergency.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On July 19, 2016, staff presented to Council three options for emergency declarations concerning homelessness, including declaration of shelter crisis, declaration of local emergency, and request for a gubernatorial state of emergency proclamation, and sought direction regarding Council's interest in pursuing these options. Council directed that staff return with documentation for all three options.

On August 9, 2016, the Council formally recognized a homelessness emergency within Santa Rosa through the following 1) adopted Resolution No. 28838 declaring a homeless shelter crisis; 2) adopted Resolution No. 28839 proclaiming a local homeless emergency; and 3) by motion, directed the Mayor to submit a letter requesting for a gubernatorial state of emergency proclamation.

Council has approved an extension of the proclamation of local homeless emergency on a monthly basis, and now every 60 days (Section 8630 previously required review every 30 days), since the original proclamation in August 2016.

ANALYSIS

1. A local homeless emergency continues to exist in Santa Rosa as described in Resolution No. 28839, adopted by Council on August 9, 2016, including as follows: (Note: the statistical information has been updated with current data.)

   a. Sonoma County's 2022 point-in-time count identified 2,893 homeless persons on a given night, 2,088 (72%) of whom were unsheltered; and
   b. The point-in-time count identified 1,658 homeless persons in Santa Rosa which represents 57% of the total County-wide count, 1,089 (66%) of whom were unsheltered; and
   c. The community's homeless population includes veterans, women, children, persons with disabilities, seniors and other vulnerable populations; and
   d. There is a shortage of available and affordable housing units in Santa Rosa due to the very low rental vacancy rate; and
   e. Although current programs offered by the City and local non-profit service providers are providing assistance to many persons living without permanent housing, a significant number of persons within the city still remain without the ability to obtain shelter; and
   f. Many of those unable to obtain shelter continue to reside on the streets, along creeks and pathways, in alleys and doorways, and in unauthorized encampments throughout the city; and

g. Persons without shelter are also often without adequate cooking or sanitary facilities, are at risk from theft, crime and extreme weather conditions, and are without security; and

h. Such conditions result in a critical threat to the physical and mental health and safety of those experiencing homelessness; and

i. Such conditions also result in a threat to the natural environment and the public health and well-being of the surrounding community; and

j. To address these conditions, significant additional public and private resources must be brought to bear, with efforts focused on both short-term immediate health and safety measures and long-term solutions to homelessness; and

k. The scope of the local homeless crisis is beyond the resources of the City standing alone and will require the combined forces of adjacent jurisdictions and state agencies; and

l. The causes and effects of homelessness are complex and can be addressed only with dedication, coordination and flexibility.

2. These conditions continue to pose extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of the city, thus necessitating the continuation of the proclamation of local homeless emergency at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT

Extending the proclamation of local homeless emergency does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund, however, staff does not know for certain at this time the potential impacts of continuing the proclamation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

• Resolution – Extending a Proclamation of Local Homeless Emergency

<u>CONTACT</u>

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