

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: KELLI KUYKENDALL, 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, 1) by resolution, approve an extension of Resolution No. 28839 which formally proclaimed a local homeless emergency within Santa Rosa and 2) by motion, direct the Mayor to submit letters to our congressional representatives seeking support to change the Continuum of Care Funding Formula.

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 requires that the Council review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 30 days until such local emergency is terminated. On August 30, 2016, and again on September 27, Council, by Resolution Nos. 28851 and 28863, approved an extension of the declaration of local homeless emergency. 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. Staff is also recommending the submission of letters to our congressional representatives seeking support to change the Continuum of Care Funding Formula.

This item relates to Council Goal 6: Committed to making Santa Rosa a community where people feel safe to live, work, and play.

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 requires that the Council review the need for continuing the local homeless emergency (Item No.2), at least every 30 days until such local emergency is terminated.
3. On August 30, 2016, and again on September 27, Council, by Resolution Nos. 28851 and 28863, approved an extension of the declaration of local homeless emergency.
4. On October 11, 2016, pursuant to the City's authority under the declaration of local homeless emergency, the Council approved an interim Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP), establishing guidelines for use of private property for safe parking, safe camping, placement and maintenance of portable toilets and access to existing bathroom facilities, provision of temporary overnight shelter, and storage for personal belonging.
5. The City Council Homeless Policy Subcommittee, with the assistance of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), is currently preparing recommendations in two additional areas – a Comprehensive Homeless Services Strategy and an Emergency Declarations Work Plan. Staff presented the recommendations to the Subcommittee during its regularly scheduled meetings on September 19 and October 17.
6. Staff is recommending that the Council maintain the proclamation in full force and effect at this time.
7. During its October 17 meeting, the Homeless Policy Subcommittee received an update from the Sonoma County Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator which included information regarding the CoC federal funding formula and the City's recent letters to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding that formula. The Subcommittee directed staff to prepare letters to our congressional representatives seeking support to change the funding formula. Staff has prepared letters (attached) to Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Congressman Thompson. The City's September 12 letter to HUD is provided as an enclosure to the letters.

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.

On August 30, 2016, and again on September 27, Council, by Resolution Nos. 28851 and 28863, approved an extension of the declaration of local homeless emergency.

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:
 - a. Sonoma County's 2016 point-in-time count identified 2,906 homeless persons on a given night, 1906 (66%) of whom were unsheltered; and
 - b. The point-in-time count identified 1,877 homeless persons in central Santa Rosa which represents 65% of the total County-wide count, 1,216 (65%) 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 (approximately 1 percent); 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.
 3. The current CoC Funding Formula is governed by population, poverty, and age of housing, all of which work against West Coast communities in general, and especially rural-heritage communities like Sonoma County. As a result of the limits imposed by this formula, the Sonoma County CoC has one of the 10 lowest allocations per Homeless Census in the United States with an average of \$606 per homeless individual. The national average is \$2,822. Staff is recommending submission of the attached letters seeking congressional support to change the Continuum of Care Funding Formula.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this item 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 declaration of an emergency.

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 Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution – Extending a Proclamation of Local Homeless Emergency
- Attachment 1 - Letter to Senator Feinstein
- Attachment 2 - Letter to Senator Boxer

- Attachment 3 - Letter to Congressman Thompson
- Attachment 4 - Letter to HUD Re: Docket No. FR-5476-N-04: Continuum of Care Program: Solicitation of Comment on Continuum of Care Formula, dated September 12, 2016

CONTACT

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