

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: KELLI KUYKENDALL, PROGRAM SPECIALIST
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: EXPANDED YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY HOMELESS
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CHAP)
AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Housing and Community Services Department that the Council, by resolution, issue regulations under the City's declaration of homeless emergency to allow for immediate implementation of an expanded year-round Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP) to include safe parking, safe camping, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets and access to existing bathroom facilities, provision of temporary overnight shelter, and storage for personal belongings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 19, 2016, Council received a report from staff regarding the potential for an expanded year-round Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP). Staff sought direction as to the scope of activities to be permitted under such program, potentially to include safe parking, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets, provision of temporary overnight shelter, a safe camping program, and other measures such as increasing availability of bathroom facilities, or storage for personal belongings. Council, by motion, directed staff to work with the Homeless Policy Subcommittee to prepare appropriate ordinance amendments for an expanded CHAP. On August 9, 2016, Council declared a local homeless emergency which gives the Council additional flexibility to address local homelessness. The declaration could allow Council, by resolution, to direct the immediate implementation of CHAP on an interim basis until the City is able to complete the necessary ordinance amendments for a more permanent solution. The Subcommittee, with the assistance of a Technical Advisory Committee, has prepared interim CHAP Guidelines for Council's consideration. Staff is seeking approval of the proposed interim Guidelines and the immediate implementation of CHAP under the declaration of local emergency.

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 July 19, 2016, Council received a report from staff regarding an expanded year-round Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP). Staff sought direction as to the scope of activities to be permitted under the such program, potentially to include safe parking, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets, provision of temporary overnight shelter, a safe camping program (tents and other temporary structures), and other measures such as increasing availability of bathroom facilities, or storage for personal belongings. Council, by motion, directed staff to work with the Homeless Policy Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to prepare appropriate ordinance amendments for an expanded CHAP.
2. On August 9, 2016, the Council formally declared a local homelessness emergency in Santa Rosa. This action provides the City authority to adopt orders and regulations it deems necessary to provide for the protection of life and property and would allow the City to potentially lift zoning or public safety restrictions on private property owners seeking to serve the homeless. For example, an expanded CHAP could be implemented on a temporary basis by resolution until the City is able to complete the necessary ordinance amendments for a more permanent solution, a six (6) to nine (9) month process.
3. Following the Subcommittee's meeting on August 15, 2016, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was convened which prepared recommendations in three areas – Comprehensive Homeless Services Strategy, CHAP Guidelines, and an Emergency Declarations Work Plan. Staff presented these recommendations to the Subcommittee at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 19.
4. In light of the homeless crisis and the approaching winter months, the Subcommittee directed staff to prioritize bringing forward the CHAP Guidelines for consideration by the full Council as soon as possible, and deferred the comprehensive strategy and work plan to the TAC for further review. Councilmember Olivares, chair to the Subcommittee, conveyed the Subcommittee's request to the Council during its September 20 meeting.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On October 27, 2015, Council, by Resolution No. 28705, approved the initial Community Homeless Assistance Pilot Program (CHAPP) to allow property owners to use their properties or facilities, which meet Zoning Code requirements, for safe parking, the placement of portable toilets, and temporary shelter during the winter months (November 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016).

On March 29, 2016, Council, by Resolution No. 28757, approved a 30-day extension to CHAPP from April 1, 2016 to April 30, 2016.

On July 19, 2016, Council received a report from staff regarding an expanded year-round CHAP, potentially to include safe parking, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets, provision of temporary overnight shelter, a safe camping program, and other measures. Council, by motion, directed staff to work with the Homeless Policy Subcommittee to prepare appropriate ordinance amendments for an expanded CHAP.

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.

ANALYSIS

1. The proposed CHAP Guidelines (attached) allow property owners to use their properties or facilities, which meet the Zoning Code definition for “Meeting Facility, Public or Private”, for a range of activities, including safe parking, safe camping, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets and access to existing bathroom facilities, provision of temporary overnight shelter, and storage for personal belongings.
2. Similar to the initial pilot program (CHAPP), staff is proposing a straightforward process whereby an owner will fill out a registration form, provided by the Department of Housing and Community Services (HCS), which will require the following information: property address, contact info, proposed services, hours of service, number of occupants, and other information as required. The provision of temporary overnight shelter will require an on-site inspection by the Fire Department prior to occupancy. Participating owners will be required to commit to compliance with the CHAP guidelines and to coordinate services with the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST).
3. The CHAP Guidelines are interim operating guidelines to allow for the immediate implementation of CHAP under the declaration of local emergency, subject to Council direction. The Guidelines aim to ensure the health and safety of CHAP participants and the well-being of the surrounding neighborhood while providing participating owners with flexibility in administering their respective programs. As the interim implementation proceeds, staff will continue to analyze the program. Recognizing that the Guidelines are written broadly, staff requests that the Directors of HCS be authorized to develop supplemental program standards if necessary or appropriate for efficient implementation of the interim program. The CHAP Guidelines themselves may be further refined as part of the code amendment process. That process will include additional opportunities for public

participation and feedback from the Planning Commission and Council at public hearings.

4. Staff is seeking approval of the proposed interim CHAP Guidelines, the immediate implementation of CHAP under the declaration of local emergency, and authorization for the Director of HCS to develop supplemental program standards as needed. This action will allow interested parties to begin operations to further address the homeless crisis in Santa Rosa.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this item does not have an immediate fiscal impact on the General Fund, however, staff does not know for certain at this time the potential impacts of implementing an expanded CHAP. Staff is recommending that the Fire Inspection Fee of \$136 be waived for sites providing overnight homeless shelter.

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

- Community Homeless Assistance Program Guidelines
- Resolution

CONTACT

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