

TO: Thomas Frutchey, City Manager
FROM: Meg Williamson, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Homeless Shelter Crisis Status Report & Formation of Homeless Coalition
DATE: April 5, 2016

NEEDS: For the City Council to receive a status report on the homeless shelter crisis response and provide direction on the formation of a North County Homeless Coalition.

- FACTS:
1. On February 16, 2016 the City Council declared a homeless shelter crisis within Paso Robles.
 2. On March 1, 2016 the City Council adopted a multi-phased approach to addressing the homeless shelter crisis and appropriated \$69,000 in funding to implement the effort (mainly focused on the riverbed). The identified approach included:
 - a) Riverbed Pre-Evacuation
 - b) Temporary Warming Shelter Plan
 - c) MASH (Mobile Assistance & Services Addressing Homelessness) Event
 3. On March 2, 2016 the City's Project Team began to implement the crisis response plan, starting with evacuation of the riverbed. A summary status report of the response effort is attached.
 4. On March 7, 2016 the City Council held a Study Session on homelessness and other topics. The Council considered thoughtful comments from members of the community interested in finding long-term solutions for Paso Robles and northern San Luis Obispo County. The session concluded with the Council's recommendation to form an advisory group on homelessness.
 5. Since homeless issues cross geopolitical boundaries and there are limited resources within our communities, the formation of a North County coalition to advise on homeless issues would seem called for. Theoretically, the work of the coalition could help unify the focus and "voice" of the North County when working with the County's Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC).
 6. There are numerous non-profit and faith based organizations in the North County who have indicated a willingness to engage in discussions on potential homelessness solutions. The participation of individuals from these representative groups could help build better trust and understanding towards focused north county needs.
 6. Atascadero's City Management has indicated an interest in keeping in close communication with Paso Robles on homeless issue discussions. The community of Templeton (County) should be a close partner as well, to assure that efforts are reasonable and balanced.

ANALYSIS &
CONCLUSION:

The homeless shelter crisis response has been successful on several fronts. The primary goal of preventing loss of life in the riverbed under storm conditions has thus far been averted. Additionally, the immediate sheltering needs during adverse weather appeared to be met through available community resources. Next level response to homeless needs will include the organization of a MASH (service connection) event as soon as feasible, and facilitation of north county dialogue about longer term homeless solutions.

POLICY

REFERENCE:

Paso Robles Homeless Shelter Declaration, February 16, 2016.

FISCAL

IMPACT:

The estimated cost to implement the Riverbed Pre-Evacuation was approximately \$69,000. To date, the project effort has remained well under budget at approximately \$41,000. There continue to be “hot spot” needs within the riverbed that will continue to utilize time and materials from the California Conservation Corps (CCC) labor crews.

OPTIONS:

- a. For the City Council to:
 1. Receive and file the Homeless Shelter Crisis Response Status Report; and
 2. Confirm the desire to work towards a North County Homeless Coalition, and provide any desired direction on the preferred structure.
- b. Amend the above options, or take no action.

Attachment:

1. Homeless Shelter Crisis Response Status Report

Homeless Shelter Crisis Response 30-Day Status Report

Riverbed Pre-Evacuation

On March 2, 2016, the City began distributing notices among the river encampments which advised immediate evacuation and the need to remove property no later than March 10, 2016.

On March 8th, the City began a second set of comprehensive contacts, starting in the north and working south to beyond the Veteran's Memorial Bridge. Officers were compassionate yet firm; personal safety was the primary concern since storms were predicted for that weekend. These contacts represented a stepped up approach to gain compliance with evacuation orders and a combination of citations and arrests resulted.

On March 11th, Emergency Services and Police Department personnel evacuated three campers from a sandbar south of 13th Street, acting on a tip. Additionally, PD and ES responded to an additional call of stranded campers later that afternoon, but those campers were able to self-evacuate prior to intervention. The river flow steadily rose over that weekend.



Rising River – March 11, 2016

Since March 2nd the Police Department has documented approximately 40 field interviews, issued 15 citations and made 14 arrests. The primary determining factor of citation vs. arrest was the level of acknowledgement and progress in leaving the riverbed. Some contacts were arrested based on outstanding warrants.

As of March 25th, there have been no identified campers within the Riverbed in either previously established/identified camps or in new camps. However, we can't be certain that no one is still camping within the entire riverbed. Time will inform us on what type of resource commitment will be needed to maintain the no camping standard. Current the Police Department has staff scheduled to work the riverbed twice a week for 5 hours each day.

The Police Department is experiencing more transient traffic within the community, but with minimal impact currently noted.

Property Removal/Storage

A 40-foot Storage container has been placed on City property to store personal belongings for a minimum of 90 days. The container is locked, and access to the personal belongings is under the control of the Police Department. A small amount of property/personal belongings have been logged and stored. Anyone who is looking to retrieve property should contact Sergeant Terry Affana at (805) 237-6464.

Sheltering Statistics

There has not been a significant uptick of individuals accessing resources through Paso Cares or Second Baptist Church since the start of this effort. Paso Cares had resources in place to address the anticipated increased need over the weekend of March 12th, but never had to deploy an overflow plan. Emergency workers continued to alert campers of services available to them. Paso Cares has provided the following sheltering statistics for their winter operations (December 10th to March 14th):

- The 18 Bed Shelter was open a total of 43 nights.
- Housed were: 3 children; 15 females; and 290 males.
- Total number of different persons served were 47.
- No motel vouchers for any clients.

Cherie Michaelson of Paso Cares indicates they intend to keep their warming station (shelter) open with no definitive cutoff date. This is good news in the event we receive rain through April.

Riverbed Cleanup

Initial mapping of the river corridor identified approximately 40 camps throughout the 4-mile stretch within city limits. A 15 person work crew consisting of California Conservation Corps (12 persons) and Martinelli landscaping (3 persons) began debris removal on March 10th. Over the course of two weeks, this crew removed the remains of 30 camps and 15-20 trash sites. The volume of material/debris removed equated to approximately 20 tons of material (200 cubic yards) that filled six 40-yard bins.



Example riverbed camp



Cleanup work crew activity

The California Highway Patrol has taken members of the Police Department in their aircraft to get a better view of the camps. According to CHP staff, the Salinas Riverbed looks significantly better due to the City's cleanup efforts.

Clean up activities concluded on March 24th. However, the contract with the CCC remains open in the event of any returning camps and related cleanup activities.

Costs

On March 1st, the City Council appropriated \$69,000 towards the River Pre-Evacuation and Cleanup Effort. Through March 24th, expenses remained significantly under budget at approximately \$41,300. Approximately \$27,700 remains in the budget at this time.

The remaining budget is projected to be adequate for potential future “hot spot” cleanup needs, the continuing cost of storage and management of property, and the potential for overtime costs related to increased police resources in the riverbed to sustain the no camping status of the river.

MASH

In October 2015, there was a coordinated effort with County Social Services to deliver a host of personal services to the homeless at one location (the Paso Robles Event Center). The Mobile Assistive Services for the Homeless (MASH) event was deemed a success and County Social Services has been requested to organize similar events for the homeless in other parts of the County. Because of this success and demand, Social Services will likely not be able to organize a North County event in April as originally hoped. However, there is discussion underway on how an “abbreviated” MASH might be organized soon than later. News of that possibility will be shared when available.