



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Leslye Corsiglia

SUBJECT: REPORT ON HOMELESS
ENCAMPMENTS

DATE: May 16, 2011

Approved

Date

5-15-11

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee accept this report on outreach and engagement efforts to homeless individuals residing in illegal encampments and provide staff with feedback.

BACKGROUND

In 2007, Mayor Reed and County Supervisor Don Gage jointly chaired the Blue Ribbon Commission on Ending Homelessness and Solving the Affordable Housing Crisis (BRC) with the goal of providing the leadership needed to end homelessness in Santa Clara County. In 2008, Destination: Home was formed as a public-private partnership to implement the BRC's recommendations. The City is an active participant in Destination: Home's initiatives and generally follows its lead on policies regarding funding priorities and strategies.

One of Destination: Home's priority initiatives is improving access to homeless services through outreach and engagement efforts to chronically homeless people residing on the streets and in illegal encampments. The aim of this initiative is to promote trust amongst homeless individuals and service provider staff in order to make connections to ongoing services and housing.

The City works closely with Destination: Home on homeless encampment initiatives as this population is estimated to constitute 10-15% of San José's total homeless population. The 2011 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey counted 4,141 homeless people in San José, 197 of who were living in illegal encampments along the banks of the Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek. However, staff believes that those figures understate the number of encampment residents due to the low number of volunteers counting homeless individuals for the two day point-in-time census. The 2009 Homeless Census and Survey counted 644 homeless persons in illegal encampments, which staff believes provides a more realistic representation of the problem. Given the ongoing presence of illegal encampments, the Housing Department has focused on initiatives for these homeless individuals since the 1990's.

May 16, 2011

Subject: Report on Homeless Encampments

Page 2

The Housing Department's efforts have been undertaken in conjunction with the weekly and monthly cleanups of the illegal encampments along San José's waterways by City of San José staff from Environmental Services and the Police Department, and by staff from the Santa Clara Valley Water District. This interdepartmental coordination among Housing, ESD and Police has been productive. Often in accompaniment with the community-based outreach staff, the San José Police Department posted 72-hour notices to the encampment residents prior to the cleanups so as to give sufficient time for residents to relocate without penalty.

In October 2008, to create a complement to the interdepartmental coordination on encampments, the Housing Department hired an Outreach Coordinator. The Coordinator was responsible for reaching out to homeless encampment residents, providing them with alternative housing and services options, and providing the community with a resource to respond to their site-specific concerns.

In addition, for one year--August 2009 through June 2010--the Police Department redirected two staff to be Homeless Liaison Officers to complement the efforts of the Outreach Coordinator. This successful partnership had enabled the San José Police Department to provide a response to homelessness other than incarceration. From the relationships built through coordination and outreach, more than 20 chronically homeless residents became housed and received services from a variety of homeless assistance agencies.

The combined annual salaries of the three City of San José employees dedicated to homeless outreach and engagement efforts—one in Housing and two in Police—was approximately \$333,000. Unfortunately, all three positions were eliminated in July 2010 due to budget reductions.

ANALYSIS

The Department's goal is both to provide a consistent response to community inquiries about homeless encampments and to offer a coordinated strategy to eliminate homelessness in San José. The following provides information on current initiatives to end homelessness for those residing in illegal encampments.

- Downtown Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program: After the loss of the City's Outreach Coordinator and two Homeless Liaison Officer positions, complaints about homeless people rose. In response, the City partnered with EHC LifeBuilders in March 2011 to implement a Downtown Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program that provides targeted outreach to homeless individuals living in San José's Downtown core and in illegal encampments immediately adjacent to the area. Program staff builds rapport with homeless individuals and educates them about emergency shelter and services at the One Stop Homelessness Prevention Center and transports them to the Center. Available services at the One Stop Homelessness Prevention Center include reserved shelter beds; food; case management; legal assistance; public benefits enrollment; education and employment programs; medical care; and permanent housing

assistance and placement. In addition, the Program provides a Homeless Helpline (408-510-7600) through which community members can request assistance for Downtown's homeless residents.

Since it was launched, the Program has permanently housed two chronically homeless individuals and has connected 30 other individuals to individualized case management services, many of whom are close to being housed. This year, the Housing Department awarded \$80,858 through the Housing Trust Fund and the Federal Emergency Shelter Grant to EHC LifeBuilders for this Program. The City of San José Housing Trust Fund has also dedicated funds in FY 2011-12 for outreach and engagement efforts, particularly to homeless residing in illegal encampments. The City is also assessing the use of federal Emergency Shelter Grant funds to expand outreach and engagement efforts in FY 2011-12.

- 1,000 Homes Campaign: In February 2011, the Santa Clara County Collaborative on Affordable Housing and Homeless Issues and Destination: Home joined the national 100,000 Homes Campaign, which has a goal of housing 100,000 of the nation's most long-term and vulnerable homeless persons by 2013. The local goal is to house 1,000 of the most vulnerable chronically homeless persons using the Campaign's health-focused strategy to end chronic homelessness and reduce the costly public burden of "managing" homelessness. As part of the Campaign, Santa Clara County will develop a registry of persons living on the streets, in encampments, and in shelters, prioritized by mortality risk as identified through a questionnaire called the Vulnerability Index. During Registry Week, from June 27-29th, approximately 500 volunteers will go out before dawn to identify and evaluate potential participants. The results of the Registry Week will be announced at the Project Homeless Connect event on July 1, 2011 at the City of San José Rotunda. From July 2011 to July 2013, the local Campaign will work to house 1,000 chronically homeless persons using a variety of strategies, including the use of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, and then assist them to maintain their housing. This year, the Housing Department allocated part of an employee's time to serve as the local Campaign Coordinator. In addition, the City awarded \$30,000 from the Housing Trust Fund to a local nonprofit to fund Campaign start-up costs. The City of San José Housing Trust Fund has also dedicated funds in FY 2011-12 for this initiative and is assessing the use of federal Emergency Shelter Grant funds as well.

- Community-Based Creek Trash Reduction Pilot Project: The Community-Based Creek Trash Reduction Pilot Project is an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to restoring the habitat along a targeted section of Coyote Creek while improving the environment and the quality of life of persons residing in the homeless encampments. Starting in July 2011, this \$910,000 two-year pilot project will be a partnership between the City of San José, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, the San José Streets Team, and Destination: Home. This collaboration includes implementing partners, as well as funding partners. The San José Streets Team's formerly homeless staff will engage at least 50 encampment residents and employ them in exchange for food, shelter, and other

May 16, 2011

Subject: Report on Homeless Encampments

Page 4

individualized support services that will help them get off the streets and secure permanent employment and housing.

All of the described outreach and engagement initiatives operate with the goal of successfully transitioning homeless residents living in encampments and the streets to a stable living environment. However, in order for this goal to come to fruition, the City and its partners will have to identify additional affordable housing and case management resources and to increase citywide outreach and engagement efforts.

/s/

LESLYE CORSIGLIA
Director of Housing

For questions, please contact Leslye Corsiglia, Director of Housing, at 535-3851.

Homeless Encampments: Impact and Response

A Presentation to the
Neighborhood Services and Education Committee

by the Housing Department

June 9, 2011



Destination: Home
Housing Our Community

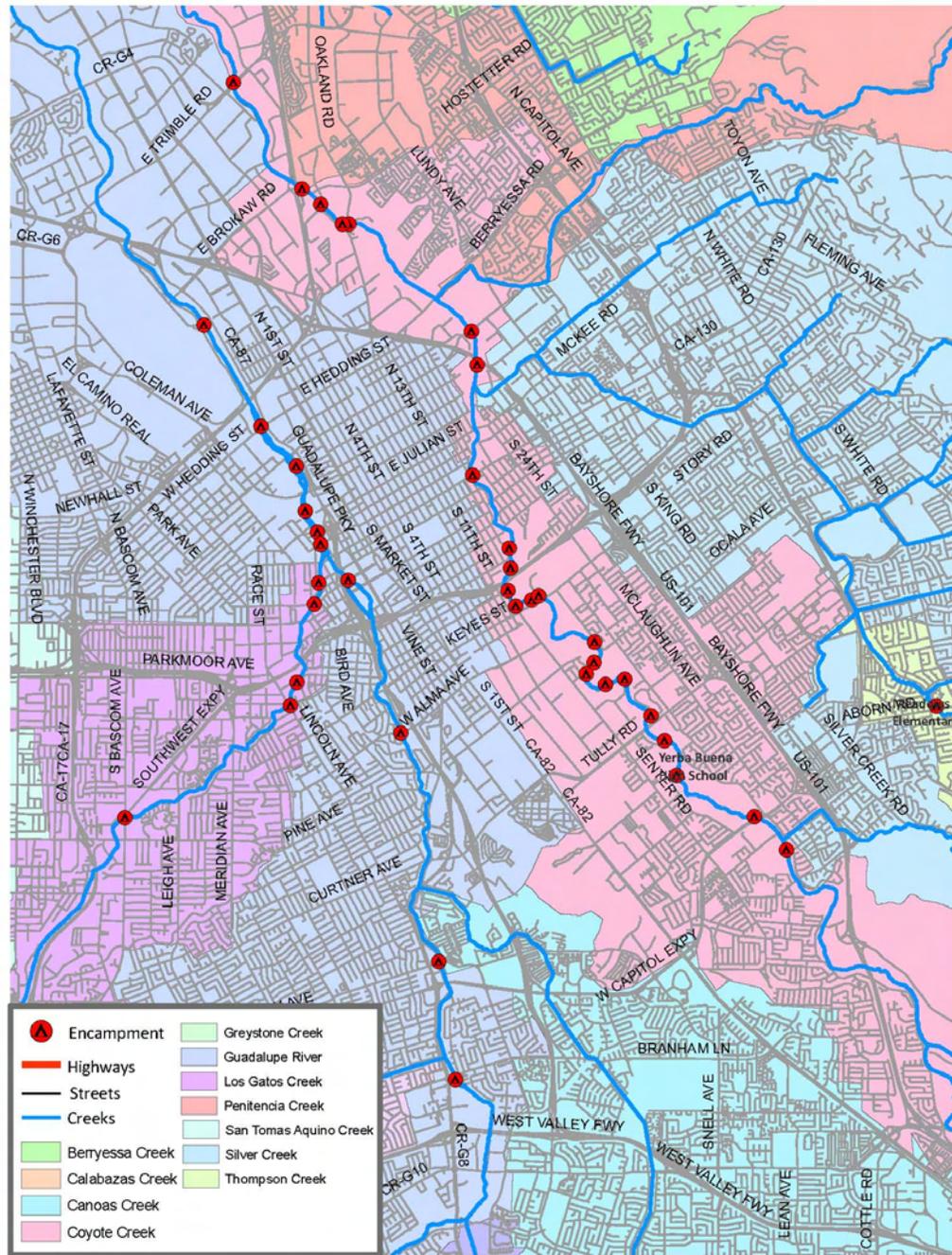


THE FACTS

2011 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey

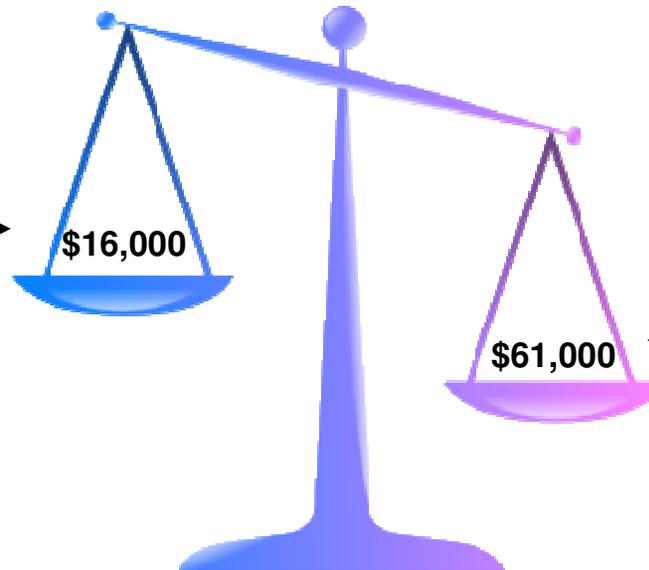
- 4,141 homeless people reside in San José
 - 74% (3,057) of them are unsheltered
 - 197 of the unsheltered people were counted in illegal encampments

Illegal Encampment Sites-San Jose



THE FISCAL IMPACT

Annual cost to permanently house a formerly homeless person, including treatment and case management



Annual cost of one chronically homeless person incarcerated and/or using Emergency Room services

Source: The 2004 San Francisco Plan to Abolish Homelessness

THE HEALTH & HUMAN IMPACT



- The average life expectancy of a chronically homeless person is 47 years of age
- Homeless people suffer illnesses at rates three to six times higher than those with homes
- 51 homeless men and women died in Santa Clara County in 2010

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



- In 2009-2010, the City of San José and the Santa Clara Valley Water District removed an estimated 131 tons of trash from the waterways in San José – 103.5 tons (79%) came from encampments



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N:037°19'40.02"





ENCAMPMENT OUTREACH HISTORY

- Collaboration between City of San José and Santa Clara Valley Water District
 - Purpose: to clean waterways and outreach to homeless
 - Challenge: lacked consistency and resources
- Collaboration between the Housing Department's Outreach Coordinator and the Police Department's Homeless Liaison Officers
 - Benefit: provided consistent messaging and appropriate housing placement



DOWNTOWN HOMELESS OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Provides consistent outreach, transportation, services and housing to Downtown's homeless persons
- Created in response to complaints from Downtown businesses and residents
- Launch date: March 2011
- Funding: City's Housing Trust Fund and federal Emergency Shelter Grant (FY 2011-12, total TBD)



HOUSING 1,000 CAMPAIGN

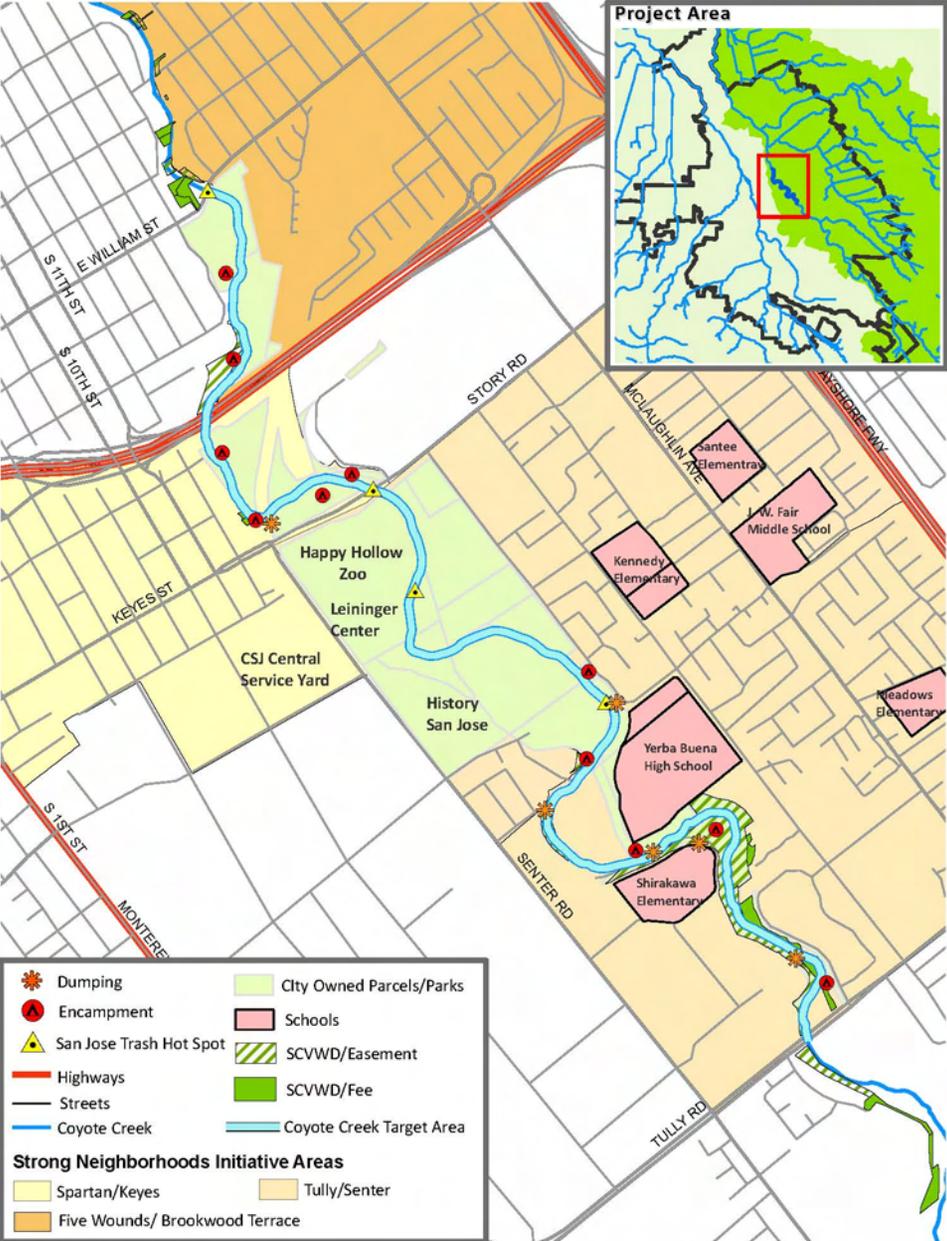
- “Housing 1,000”: Our local goal to house 1,000 of Santa Clara County’s most vulnerable chronically homeless persons
 - Part of National 100,000 Homes Campaign
 - 500 volunteers needed for Registry Week June 27 – July 1
- Launch date: July 2011 (two-year campaign)
- Funding: City’s Housing Trust Fund and federal Emergency Shelter Grant (FY 2011-12, total TBD)



CLEAN CREEKS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Restore the habitat along a targeted section of Coyote Creek and provide employment and housing for 50 homeless encampment residents
- Launch date: July 2011 (four-year pilot)
- Funding:
 - \$680K from U.S. EPA
 - \$130K from SCC Water District
 - \$20K from Destination: Home
 - \$113K matching funds from City of San José

Map 2: Community Based Creek Trash Reduction Project Area





OVERARCHING GOALS

- Provide a consistent response to community complaints about homeless encampments
- Offer a coordinated strategy to end chronic homelessness in San José
- Increase citywide outreach and engagement efforts
- Identify additional affordable housing and case management resources



COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Feedback?

Questions?

Comments?

