

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

PREPARED BY: HUMAN SERVICES & RENT STABILIZATION DEPARTMENT
(Christof Schroeder, Director)
(Corri Planck, Human Services Manager)

COMMUNITY SAFETY DEPARTMENT
(Danny Rivas, Director)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The Council Subcommittee on Homelessness will receive an update from Community Safety staff and the West Hollywood Sheriff Station (LASD) regarding homelessness response.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update from Community Safety staff and LASD regarding homelessness response and provide feedback.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

At the most recent meeting of the Council Subcommittee on Homelessness, Councilmember Heilman requested LASD attend the next subcommittee meeting to discuss LASD's response to community members experiencing homelessness. Attached for reference are relevant WHMC Sections (Attachment A) and the Homeless Initiative Guiding Principles (Attachment B).

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY DEPARTMENT / COMMUNITY SAFETY - ADMINISTRATION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: WHMC Sections

Attachment B: Homeless Initiative Guiding Principles

Attachment A

West Hollywood **Municipal Code** **Sections**

West Hollywood Municipal Code Sections

9.04.030 Sitting or Lying on Public Ways.

a. No person shall sit, lie or sleep in or upon any public highway, green belt, median island, alley, sidewalk, crosswalk or other public place or way open for pedestrian or vehicular travel or appurtenant thereto.

b. The provisions of this section do not prohibit a person from sitting upon a public highway, green belt, median island, alley, sidewalk, crosswalk or other public place if:

- c. Necessitated by the physical disability of such person; or
2. Such person is viewing a legally conducted parade; or
3. Such person is seated on a bench lawfully installed for such purpose.

(Ord. 89-226 § 1, 1989; Ord. 85-102U § 1, 1985; Ord. 85-102 § 1, 1985; prior code § 4104)

9.04.040 Obstructing Entrances.

a. No person shall stand, sit or lie in or at or otherwise physically occupy the entrance of any place of public assemblage or place open to the public as to obstruct such entrance.

b. No person shall stand, sit, lie or sleep in or at or otherwise physically occupy the entrance of any building adjacent to a public highway or sidewalk when the building is not open for business without the permission of the owner or person in lawful possession thereof.

c. Following an order to disburse by a law enforcement officer, no person shall stand, sit or lie on or otherwise physically occupy a sidewalk or walkway in a manner as to obstruct the reasonable passage of pedestrian traffic or constitute a public safety hazard.

(Ord. 08-789 § 1, 2008; Ord. 04-687 § 1, 2004; Ord. 85-102U § 1, 1985; Ord. 85-102 § 1, 1985; prior code § 4105)

9.04.050 Leaving Merchandise and Obstructing Public Ways Prohibited.

a. No person shall leave or permit to remain outside of the person's immediate possession any merchandise, goods, furniture, baggage or any other article of personal property on any public highway, alley, sidewalk, parkway, crosswalk, median or other

public way open for pedestrian travel, except trash collection receptacles placed in accordance with the provisions of this code.

b. No owner or other person in possession or control of property shall allow trees, shrubs or any other form of vegetation to encroach from private property onto or above any public highway, street, alley, crosswalk or any other way open for pedestrian or vehicular travel so as to interfere with or impede pedestrian or vehicular travel, to obstruct traffic signs or signals from view, or to reduce or obstruct traffic visibility.

c. No owner or other person in possession or control of property shall without an encroachment permit issued by the city allow any structure or portion of a structure to encroach from private property onto or above any public highway, street, alley, crosswalk or any other way open for pedestrian or vehicular travel.

(Ord. 07-751 § 3, 2007; Ord. 89-229 § 1, 1989; Ord. 85-102U § 1, 1985; Ord. 85-102 § 1, 1985; prior code § 4106)

Attachment B

West Hollywood Resolution to Establish Guiding Principles

APPROVED
YA 9/19/16

CITY COUNCIL
CONSENT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS**

INITIATED BY: **MAYOR PRO TEMPORE JOHN HEILMAN
MAYOR LAUREN MEISTER**

PREPARED BY: Andi Lovano, Project Development Administrator *AL for AL*

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider adopting a resolution to establish guiding principles in the City's response to homelessness and will consider authorizing a City Council Homelessness Subcommittee.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. _____ "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ESTABLISHING GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS."
- 2) Authorize the formation of a City Council subcommittee to work with staff to address issues related to homelessness and the City's response.
- 3) Appoint Mayor Meister and Mayor Pro Tempore Heilman to the subcommittee until the next appointments of City Councilmembers in May 2017.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The City has shown commitment and leadership in providing comprehensive assistance to our homeless community members since its incorporation in 1984. The City takes a collaborative, cooperative approach to homeless services through a partnership between the Sheriff's Department and homeless service providers.

According to the 2016 Homeless Count released by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the number of homeless people in the County streets and shelters on any given night is roughly 47,000. This was a 5.7% increase in the overall number of homeless individuals from 2015, and an 11.3% increase in the number of unsheltered homeless individuals (from 31,025 to 34,527). The data for West Hollywood indicate a specific point-in-time count of 83 homeless people in the City. This is an increase from past annual counts: the 2015 Street Count tally was 43 people; the 2013 Street Count tally was 45 people.

The tremendous scale of homelessness in Los Angeles County presents a public health and safety issue for all homeless individuals including veterans, women, children, LGBT youth, persons with disabilities, and seniors and threatens the economic stability of the region. This resolution aims to outline the City's goals and guiding principles in our response to homelessness in order to ensure the City continues to address this issue with consideration and direction.

Also included in this item is a recommendation to authorize the creation of a City Council Subcommittee to work with staff in the City's ongoing efforts to address homelessness. The subcommittee will provide additional review to programmatic and fiscal policies, remain informed on local, regional, and statewide programs, and work with staff in identifying specific populations and housing opportunities.

The City's response to homelessness should be guided by the following principles:

1. Work to ensure safety for our residents, businesses, visitors and for those who are homeless.
2. Recognize that the primary responsibility for addressing homelessness belongs to the County, but acknowledge that homelessness requires all levels of government to participate in regional efforts.
3. Accept that homelessness cannot be solved by one entity; rather, promote partnerships between different government agencies and the private sector, including non-profit organizations and volunteer service providers.
4. Approach the issue of homelessness with compassion for those who are homeless as well as those in the community who are impacted by homelessness.

With these principles in mind, the City of West Hollywood will take the following actions:

The City of West Hollywood will continue to provide sufficient funding to the Sheriff's Department to respond to public safety issues related to homelessness.

The City works with the Sheriff's Department to address criminal behavior engaged in by homeless individuals, while also recognizing that some homeless individuals are vulnerable and can be easily victimized. We need to work to ensure that criminal behavior by and against homeless individuals is addressed.

The City has a collaborative relationship with the Sheriff's Department. The City contracts for a Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) Team who spends many hours every shift with the City's homeless population in order to link them with services whenever possible and to enforce the law whenever necessary. The COPPS Team has a close working relationship with the City's Social Services Division.

While the primary responsibility for addressing homelessness belongs to the County of Los Angeles, the City of West Hollywood will partner with the County and other government entities to address homelessness.

The City of West Hollywood has a long history of dedicating substantial resources to addressing social service needs including street outreach, shelter beds, hotel vouchers, housing case management, and other services to homeless community members. However, the County of Los Angeles has the primary responsibility for addressing the needs of indigent residents, including homeless individuals.

On May 2, 2016, the City Council adopted a resolution to support the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative and to partner with Los Angeles County to combat homelessness. The County's Homeless Initiatives Strategies to Combat Homelessness, which was approved by the County Board of Supervisors, is the most comprehensive homelessness effort ever undertaken by the County. It includes 47 strategies aimed to attack the root causes of homelessness and lift thousands of families and individuals out of homelessness and into better lives.

Homelessness is not confined by jurisdictional boundaries, but is a regional issue that affects all cities in Los Angeles County. Continued collaboration among the County, cities, public agencies, and community partners is necessary to accomplish the goals set out in the County report to address homelessness.

The City of West Hollywood will remain up-to-date on best practices in homeless service delivery and contribute staff time and other resources, including funding, to regional solutions designed to end homelessness.

Unfortunately, many cities throughout the country are impacted by homelessness. Local governments are at the front lines of working to develop innovative programs and services to help alleviate the problem for their community members. The City should continue to look to programs being implemented in other jurisdictions to see if they would be appropriate solutions for the type of issues we are experiencing locally.

In addition, contributing staff time and resources to regional homelessness efforts will bring important perspectives and best practices to West Hollywood's service delivery and leverage resources to effectively combat homelessness locally.

In 2011, the City passed a resolution to support "Home for Good", the United Way's action plan to end chronic and veteran homelessness. The City participated in meetings and conferences to hear about progress on the plan and provide local updates. In 2016, the City passed a resolution in support of the County's Homeless Initiative Strategic Plan, and staff participated in several working group meetings to help develop the strategies described in the plan.

As part of the City Council's support of the County initiative, staff should participate in advocacy efforts, including attending meetings or sending letters to elected officials and partners, on behalf of the City Council when the effort falls under the umbrella of the County's Homeless Initiative.

Another example of the City's contribution of resources to regional solutions is the Rapid Re-housing Program, one of the strategies identified by the County's Homeless Initiatives Report. The purpose of the Rapid Re-housing Program is to help homeless families/individuals/youth who have barriers to obtaining low-to-moderate income housing to be quickly re-housed and stabilized in permanent housing. Rapid re-housing connects homeless individuals and families, as well as vulnerable sub-populations such as older adults, to permanent housing through the provision of time-limited financial assistance, case management and targeted supportive services, and housing identification/navigation supports.

The City approved funding in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 to partner with the County Department of Health Services Housing for Health program to take part in the Rapid Re-housing Program.

The City of West Hollywood will work to prevent homelessness among individuals currently residing in the city.

According to the American Community Survey, 15.1% of West Hollywood's population was living below the poverty line in 2014. This is compared to 18.4% in Los Angeles County. West Hollywood has a significant population of seniors who are 65 years and over, 30.8% of which are living below the poverty line, compared to only 13.4% countywide. These individuals are often renters, living on fixed incomes for many years with controlled rent increases. They can be at risk of homelessness if they lose their housing, if household expenses change, or if they are no longer able to live independently.

For community members at risk of homelessness, the City funds a rental assistance program coordinated through a social services contract with the National Council of Jewish Women. Over the course of the 2014-2015 contract year, 29 community members received rental assistance, thereby preventing eviction. In addition, the City funds a program through Jewish Free Loan that is available for rental assistance or other expenses to prevent someone from losing their housing. In addition, the City works with several agencies including Jewish Family Services, the LA LGBT Center, and Housing Works to provide case management and other services to keep at-risk households housed whenever possible. These programs often connect clients to meal and nutrition programs or mental health services, provide support to those struggling with hoarding issues, or assist those in need of reasonable accommodations.

The City of West Hollywood will continue to support and fund substance abuse programs, including residential treatment programs, and outreach and mental health services to homeless individuals in West Hollywood.

A high number of homeless people do struggle with substance abuse. This is both a cause and result of homelessness, often arising after people lose their housing. According to the 2016 Homeless Count, 23% of the homeless individuals in Los Angeles County report suffering from chronic substance abuse.

One of the City's social services' priorities is to provide substance abuse services and identify additional service resources for substance abuse prevention and treatment. The City funds 12-step groups, substance abuse counseling, residential substance abuse recovery, and prevention education and information campaigns. The Social Services Division works closely with the Public Safety Department to link West Hollywood community members who were previously homeless to residential treatment facilities. The City's homeless street outreach services include linkages to care and substance recovery services when needed.

Mental illness is another prevalent characteristic among the homeless population. According to the 2016 count, 30% of the homeless individuals in the County suffer from a mental illness. In 2015, the City Council directed the Public Safety Department and the Social Services Division to work with the Sheriff's Department and social services agencies to study the expansion of the mental health clinical support available for homeless community members in West Hollywood. The City is served by the Sheriff's Department, North County Mental Evaluation Teams (MET). MET is staff with dedicated Sheriff's Deputies who respond to West Hollywood when extra assessment and mental health resources are required. MET responded 40 times in West Hollywood in 2015.

Staff has identified new partners in providing street based services, such as Step Up on Second's Multi-Interdisciplinary Team (MIT) program that brings a team together to work with individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. The team is comprised of a psychiatrist, registered nurse, licensed clinical social worker, MSW and an alcohol and drug counselor and focuses on the "hardest to reach" homeless community members. Through the Cedars Sinai Community Giving Funding, West Hollywood and Step Up on Second were able to secure funding for a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) to join the MIT program. In addition, with contract savings from 2016, the Social Services Division worked with the LA LGBT Center to create a clinical outreach position that included street outreach and linkage to care to homeless and substance using community members. Enhancement to these mental health outreach programs are included in the Social Services contract recommendations that City Council will also consider at the September 19, 2016 meeting.

The City has also committed to doing a Homeless Needs Assessment study. The needs assessment will provide service providers, policy makers, and the general public with information about demographics, housing, healthcare, public safety, and other needs. The assessment will bring a localized perspective to the needs of the homeless population in West Hollywood and help further focus the City's response to the issue.

The City of West Hollywood will continue to support and fund permanent affordable housing, including housing for those who have been homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.

The City's inclusionary housing program requires developers of new residential buildings to provide affordable housing on-site or to pay into the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, depending on the project. The City uses the money in the fund to partner with non-profit affordable housing providers to develop and maintain lower income housing in the community.

In 2014, the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation (WHCHC) affordable housing building, called the "Courtyard at La Brea," was completed. The building contains 32 units, some of which were filled by community members who were recently homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Also in 2014, the Affordable Living for the Aging (ALA) building, the Janet L. Witkin Center, was opened. This building contains 16 units for very-low income seniors, also featuring some units reserved for seniors who were at-risk of homelessness.

In addition to the new construction of inclusionary and affordable housing units, the City participates in the Shelter Plus Care program. Shelter Plus Care is a federal program operated locally through Los Angeles County that provides rental assistance for homeless people with disabilities, primarily those with serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and people living with AIDS or other chronic diseases. While housed, the recipient also receives supportive services that are equal in value to the amount of rental assistance and appropriate to the individual's needs. The City manages supportive services for 23 Shelter Plus Care permanent, supportive housing certificate recipients who were chronically homeless prior to receiving this assistance.

Federal lawmakers and the Veterans Administration (VA) West Los Angeles have been engaged in the development of a Master Plan for the VA campus near Westwood. In January 2016, they released a Draft Master Plan to determine what programs could be located on the campus to better serve the needs of veterans. One of the goals of the Draft Master Plan is to provide housing for homeless veterans, especially those who are older adults, female, or those who are severely physically or mentally disabled, including chronically homeless veterans. In April 2016, the City Council passed a

resolution in support of ongoing advocacy efforts to develop an animal care and training facility on the VA campus that includes pairing services to provide rehabilitation and emotional support for veterans. In addition to these advocacy efforts, the City should continue to advocate for affordable housing and permanent supportive housing on the VA campus.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-5: Support People through Social Services.
- OSP-2: Institutional Integrity.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- HS-1: Maintain and pursue humane social policies and social services that address the needs of the community.
- G-2: Maintain transparency and integrity in West Hollywood's decision-making process.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

N/A.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

N/A.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

N/A.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

HUMAN SERVICES & RENT STABILIZATION DEPARTMENT / SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

ATTACHMENT:

Resolution No. _____ "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ESTABLISHING GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS."

RESOLUTION NO. 16-____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ESTABLISHING
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITY'S
RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

WHEREAS, the City of West Hollywood has shown commitment and leadership in providing comprehensive assistance to our homeless community members since its incorporation in 1984; and

WHEREAS, the tremendous scale of homelessness in Los Angeles County presents a public health and safety issue for all homeless individuals including veterans, women, children, LGBT youth, persons with disabilities, and seniors and threatens the economic stability of the region; and

WHEREAS, the City works to ensure safety for our residents, businesses, visitors and for those who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that the primary responsibility for addressing homelessness belongs to the County, but acknowledges that homelessness requires all levels of government to participate in regional efforts; and

WHEREAS, the City accepts that homelessness cannot be solved by one entity; rather, promote partnerships between different government agencies and the private sector, including non-profit organizations and volunteer service providers; and

WHEREAS, the City approaches the issue of homelessness with compassion for those who are homeless as well as those in the community impacted by homelessness.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD DOES
HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City of West Hollywood will continue to provide sufficient funding to the Sheriff's Department to respond to public safety issues related to homelessness.

SECTION 2. While the primary responsibility for addressing homelessness belongs to the County of Los Angeles, the City of West Hollywood will partner with the County and other government entities to address homelessness.

SECTION 3. The City of West Hollywood will remain up-to-date on best practices in homeless service delivery and contribute staff time and other resources, including funding, to regional solutions designed to end homelessness.

SECTION 4. The City of West Hollywood will work to prevent homelessness among individuals currently residing in the city.

SECTION 5. The City of West Hollywood will continue to support and fund substance abuse programs, including residential treatment programs, and outreach and mental health services to homeless individuals in West Hollywood.

SECTION 6. The City of West Hollywood will continue to support and fund permanent affordable housing, including housing for those who have been homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ day of _____, 20__.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

City Clerk