

\$3.45 million in Measure Z funding for personnel and homeless encampment cleanups. This provided sufficient funding for two teams to operate and allowed coverage seven days per week. From the outset and continuing through today, staff is committed to refining the practices, makeup, and mission of PSET to most effectively, and efficiently, advance public interest, public benefit, and public good.

A multi-departmental approach is beneficial given that a holistic approach is necessary to address the challenges brought forth by homelessness. The Teams consist of representatives from the City departments listed below. It was determined that new personnel would be needed in order to facilitate implementation of the Program not impact the ongoing operations of these departments. Where possible, departments have absorbed work related to the PSET Program, grown at a deliberate pace, and have pursued opportunities to work with external providers (i.e., social workers and mental health professionals).

- Riverside Police Department (RPD)
- Code Enforcement Division – Community and Economic Development Department (Code)
- Office of Homeless Solutions – City Manager’s Office
- Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department (PRCSD)

PSET members have a distinct skillset beyond what is normally expected of them in their professional capacity: compassion, determination, understanding, patience, and a sincere desire to serve individuals experiencing homelessness. For these reasons the PSET Program’s operations are underpinned by the following guiding principles:

1. Engage individuals in a constitutionally compliant manner;
2. Treat individuals with the utmost dignity and respect;
3. Maintain order in the public realm, upholding the law;
4. Respect private property rights; and
5. Ensure employee safety at all times.

In support of the PSET Program, staff issued a Request for Proposals to select a vendor to perform homeless encampment clean-up services in a manner consistent with the City’s abatement procedures and in compliance with all applicable laws. DeAngelo Brothers, LLC (DeAngelo) was selected as the most qualified bidder.

The City acquired the Outreach Grid platform, a collaborative and mobile software program that provides for a more coordinated entry for homelessness management. The platform is assisting staff in collecting client information from first contact to housing, tracking the number of engagements, location of engagement, as well as the services offered to the individual. As the system is stood up, we will all be able to see and track activities throughout the City.

Homeless Encampment Cleanups – Hole Lake, Fairmount Park, and Spring/Iowa

The PSET Program has been able to undertake large-scale cleanups in three areas around the City that have been historically challenged with encampments – Hole Lake (generally northwesterly of Van Buren Boulevard and Arlington Avenue), Fairmount Park (generally the areas between the Park and the Santa Ana River), and Spring/Iowa (a natural area southeast of Spring Street and Iowa Avenue). In the fall of 2019, these areas had monthly scheduled clean ups that totaled a collective of 374.31 tons of debris removed.

PSET has encountered individuals attempting to resettle in the areas where cleanups have

occurred. Staff continues to engage these individuals and work to prevent the encampment from resettling.

COVID Impact

In March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness released new guidance on how to interact with individuals experiencing homelessness in encampments during the COVID-19 pandemic with the following instructions:

1. During community spread of COVID-19, consider encampments as a reasonable alternative to crowded congregate shelters.
2. Unless individual housing units are available, do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.

As a result of this guidance, the City initially scaled back PSET operations but has resumed activities taking all necessary precautions while focusing on the guidance listed above. With the changing state of COVID-19 restrictions placed by the State, PSET has accommodated and adhered to CDC guidance in daily operations.

The City did make shelter provisions to address encampment cleanups as referenced in the guidance stated above. An example includes the MAP Home project, in which the Office of Homeless Solutions provided bridge shelter housing and storage for individuals in encampments, prior to clean up efforts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this overview presentation.

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