



City of Arts & Innovation

Housing Authority Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND HOUSING AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

DATE: JUNE 26, 2018

FROM: OFFICE OF HOMELESS SOLUTIONS

WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: HOUSING FIRST - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BY AND BETWEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE AND THE SANTA ANA WATERSHED PROJECT AUTHORITY FOR A PARTNERSHIP TO STUDY AND PLAN FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND STRUCTURAL IMPACTS RELATED TO HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES ALONG WITH SANTA ANA RIVERBED

ISSUE:

Approve a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Housing Authority of the City of Riverside and the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority to initiate a partnership for study and cooperative planning to alleviate structural and environmental issues related to homeless encampments along with Santa Ana River and immediately surrounding areas of the City of Riverside.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Housing Authority:

1. Approve and authorize a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the Housing Authority of the City of Riverside and the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority to cooperatively investigate and plan for the alleviation of structural, social, and environmental issues surrounding homeless encampments along, and immediately adjacent to, the Santa Ana River in the City of Riverside; and
2. Authorize the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

BACKGROUND:

The Housing Authority began discussions in August of 2017 regarding the potential of forming a partnership to identify and alleviate issues related to homeless encampments along the Santa Ana River in the City of Riverside. The Housing Authority and the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority saw an overlap of that mission; that growing homeless encampments were causing pollution and habitat damage along the Santa Ana River and that the formation of a partnership with the Housing Authority would bring an expanded set of resources and knowledge to the

problem. The Housing Authority could provide technical knowledge and access to potential resources as part of its efforts to rehouse homeless, and particularly chronically homeless individuals. The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority could act as a knowledgeable partner in looking at environmental issues related to watershed areas and greater environmental issues related to homelessness, and also be a key partner in forming cooperative projects to merge the Housing Authority's interests in finding homeless solutions, with a need to address greater impacts caused by homeless encampments.

The mission of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority is to produce a sustainable Santa Ana River Watershed that provides clean and reliable water resources for a vibrant economy and high quality of life, while maintaining healthy ecosystems and open space opportunities. The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and its member agencies facilitate collaboration across boundaries to address common goals and tackle problems that are larger than individual entities related to watershed issues.

DISCUSSION:

The City's approved Housing First Plan calls for the formation of development agreements with selected service partners. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority furthers the above directive, and produces a unique partnership to explore the extended impacts of homelessness on the environment in the City of Riverside and its impacts on City residents. Ultimately, the discussion between the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and the Housing Authority regarding homeless issues along the Santa Ana River may involve other City departments, such as Community & Economic, Police, Fire, Public Works, and the Public Utilities Departments.

The Community & Economic Development Director concurs with the recommendations of this report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the recommended actions of this report. The partnership may enhance the City's ability to attract external grant funding from the State and other sources by adding a strong regional planning partner to homeless service planning and project implementation.

Prepared by: Emilio Ramirez, Office of Homeless Solutions Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Adam Raymond, Chief Finance Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Memorandum of Understanding