

EXPANSION OF PSET TEAM PROGRAM FOR ADDITIONAL WILDLAND SUPPORT (AKA WILDLAND PSET TEAM)

This concept¹ for an expanded PSET Team Program (Program) would implement the anti-camping Ordinance (Ordinance) that is being prepared for City-wide environmentally sensitive and hazardous lands as defined by sourced and cited Geographic Information Systems mapping data. By fielding two shifts of the PSET Team per day (day and evening - 7 days/week), the Program services would be expanded into these special areas. With additional staffing and resources, the Program would be able to focus on the public wildland areas resulting in a significant reduction of encampments in these areas.

Should City Council consider and approve an anti-camping Ordinance for wildland areas, the enforcement of the ordinance would occur through the expanded PSET Team. The composition of the expanded PSET Team, as presented below, will have an immediate and ongoing effect by implementing and enforcing the Ordinance. The expanded PSET Program would help to return and maintain environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas to their natural states during the first two years of the program. A shift to reduced-sized “maintenance level” PSET support would potentially begin in year 3 (see Fiscal Impact section below) as the Program is designed to scale down.

REQUEST SUMMARY

Create an expanded PSET Team to: continue the current Program and expand into the City’s wildland areas; enforce a City Council approved anti-camping Ordinance for wildland areas; and provide homeless encampment clean-up, outreach services, and homeless engagement resources in Riverside’s wildland areas including, but not limited to, the Santa Ana River, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, Hole Lake, and other areas. The Program would be expanded to seven days a week (early morning to late evening). In its fully programmed composition, the expanded PSET Team would include non-personnel costs of \$2,827,539 and personnel costs of \$3,723,101 in FY 2022/23:

- 8.0 FTE (3.0 FTE Existing & 5.0 FTE Safety, Wellness & Youth Committee*/BEC*-Recommended Code Enforcement Officers) \$500,955*
- 8.0 FTE Outreach Workers \$524,760
- 4.0 FTE Firefighters \$421,756
- 16.0 FTE Police Officers \$1,952,720 and 2.0 FTE Police Sergeants \$322,910
- 2 Code Enforcement (CEDD) vehicles \$100,000
- 8 PD trucks, 4 UTVs (4 person), 4 vehicle trailers, 2 CEDD trucks, 2 OHS trucks, 2 FD trucks \$1,265,000
- Office reconfiguration for additional Code Enforcement Staff, computer equipment, uniforms, etc. \$60,000
- OHS Outreach computer equipment, cell phones (including monthly fees), uniforms, etc. \$15,000
- Cleanup services, mental health beds, and special services \$1,287,539
- Vehicle Maintenance, Gas \$100,000

¹ Upon any City Council direction received, further City staff resources will be invested to refine the program and provide more specific personnel and non-personnel details for BEC and City Council consideration.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The PSET Team is a multi-departmental approach to providing services and resources to clean up homeless encampments and engage with the homeless community in wildland areas. These wildland settings are not suitable for human habitation (i.e., camping, makeshift shelters and dwellings, etc.). The expanded PSET Team would enforce a City Council anti-camping Ordinance for those environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas in the City. The staffing levels and specializations of the current PSET Team – which works primarily in the urban context of the City – would be expanded to ensure that the specialized service needs for the wildland areas, including the Santa Ana River, Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, Hole Lake, and others, are considered. Encampments impact environmental quality and threaten life and property due to fire hazards, flooding, etc.

The expanded PSET Team is a program that would implement any anti-camping Ordinance for environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas that is considered and approved by City Council. Enforcement of the Ordinance would occur through the expanded PSET Team. The work of the expanded PSET Team will include outreach and engagement of homeless individuals in the wildland areas; providing resources and assistance to homeless individuals; and addressing issues of unlawful panhandling, abandoned personal belongings, fire hazards and vagrancy. Cleanup and mitigation of sites prone to homeless encampments, including weed abatement, facilitating the removal of invasive species and preventative maintenance, etc. will help return environmentally sensitive areas closer to their natural state and reduce risks associated with hazardous areas in wildland areas of the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

The intent of this program is to scale down its fiscal impact as the existing conditions in wildland areas are effectively addressed and City resources can be moved into a maintenance mode. The fiscal impacts below are focused on the direct costs to expand the PSET Team. There will also be unknown fiscal impacts pertaining to providing housing and services to homeless individuals in wildland areas as well as incidental costs (i.e., “No Camping” signage in wildland areas related to the anti-camping ordinance, motor pool impacts, etc.).

The total cost of the program is approximately \$6,550,640 in FY 2022/23 and \$5,110,640 in FY 2023/24. Approval of this request would result in personnel costs of \$3,723,101 million annually, with non-personnel costs of \$2,827,539 in FY 2022/23 and \$1,387,539 in FY 2023/24. The team will be reevaluated by all stakeholders, including the Budget Engagement Commission and City Council, prior to the FY 2024/2025 budget planning to determine the needs of the team based on the state of environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas in wildland areas and the enforcement status of the anti-camping ordinance. It is anticipated that the size of the team will scale down after the first two years and transition into ongoing maintenance and enforcement – thus, necessitating less personnel.

Scaling down the staffing of the Wildland PSET Team would occur as follows:

- The Police Department will absorb any positions no longer needed for the expanded PSET Team through salary savings until those positions are eliminated through attrition.
- The Fire Department will staff the Wildland PSET Team responsibilities with (4) special assignments of existing Fire Captain personnel. The (4) vacant positions will be pushed down to the Firefighter level minimizing costs. As the program ramps down the (4) Fire Captains would be absorbed back into the system eliminating the (4) Firefighter FTE Positions.
- The Office of Homeless Solutions will transition Homeless Outreach positions via attrition.

- The Community & Economic Development Department will transition Code Enforcement positions via attrition as needed.

The following table is an illustration of possible reductions in the size of the PSET Team and illustrates the potential diminishing costs after two years. Although it is not possible to accurately project what the needs will be two years from now related to the City’s wildland areas and the enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance in wildland areas, this table provides a simple illustration of the potential scale down of the expanded PSET Team.

Fiscal Year	100% Staffing	75% Staffing	50% Staffing	25% Staffing
2022/2023	\$6,550,640			
2023/2024	\$5,110,640			
2024/2025	\$5,110,640	\$3,832,980	\$2,555,320	\$1,277,660

IMPLEMENTING THE EXPANDED PSET TEAM

The expansion of the PSET Team will implement the *Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan* through its Vision & Mission, three cross-cutting threads and two strategic priorities:

- ✓ **Vision & Mission** - Riverside is a city where every person is respected and cherished, where equity is essential to community well-being, where residents support one another, and where opportunities exist for all to prosper. In Riverside, everyone comes together to help the community, economy and environment reach their fullest potential for the public good.

The cross-cutting threads include:

- ✓ **Community Trust** – Riverside is transparent and makes decisions based on sound policy, inclusive community engagement, involvement of City Boards & Commissions, and timely and reliable information. Activities and actions by the City serve the public interest, benefit the City’s diverse populations, and result in greater public good.
- ✓ **Sustainability and Resiliency** – Riverside is committed to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City’s capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times alike.
- ✓ **Equity** – Riverside is supportive of the City’s racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, identity, geographic, and other attributes of diversity and is committed to advancing the fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, and equitable distribution of services to ensure every member of the community has equal access to share in the benefits of community progress.

The strategic priorities include:

- ✓ **Community Well-Being** – Ensure safe and inclusive neighborhoods where everyone can thrive.
- ✓ **Environmental Stewardship** – Champion proactive and equitable climate solutions based in science to ensure clean air, safe water, a vibrant natural world, and a resilient green new economy for current and future generations.