City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: **HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: MAY 19, 2026**

FROM: **HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES** **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: **INTRODUCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 9 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE BY ADDING CHAPTER 9.56 REPORTING OF TRANSPORT OF PERSONS WHO LACK A FIXED, REGULAR, AND ADEQUATE NIGHTTIME RESIDENCE**

ISSUE:

Introduce and subsequently adopt an ordinance amending Title 9 of the Riverside Municipal Code by adding Chapter 9.56 Reporting of Transport of Persons Who Lack a Fixed, Regular, and Adequate Nighttime Residence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council introduce and subsequently adopt an ordinance amending Title 9 of the Riverside Municipal Code by adding Chapter 9.56 Reporting of Transport of Persons Who Lack a Fixed, Regular, and Adequate Nighttime Residence.

SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND YOUTH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

At the request of Chair Perry, this item was brought to the full City Council for approval.

BACKGROUND:

Homelessness continues to be one of the most significant public health and safety challenges facing the City of Riverside and the State of California. Statewide data indicates that more than 131,109 individuals experienced homelessness on a given night in 2025. Despite significant state and local investments, the supply of emergency shelter beds and permanent supportive housing remains insufficient to meet demand.

State law places responsibility on local governments to support vulnerable populations within their jurisdictions. Welfare and Institutions Code section 17000 requires counties to relieve and support all incompetent, poor, indigent persons and those incapacitated by age, disease, or accident, lawfully resident therein, when such persons are not supported and relieved by their relatives or friends, by their own means, or by state hospitals or other state or private institutions. Additionally, Government Code Sections 65580 and 65583 require local jurisdictions to plan for and facilitate housing for all economic segments of the community, including those in need of emergency shelter.

The City of Riverside has made substantial investments through its Homelessness Action Plan, expansion of shelter capacity, housing navigation services, and coordinated outreach efforts conducted by the Public Safety and Engagement Team (PSET). The city also partners extensively with nonprofit service providers and Riverside County agencies to deliver shelter, recuperative care, behavioral health services, and permanent housing placement.

Despite these efforts, homelessness remains a significant challenge locally. The 2025 Point-in-Time Count administered by the Riverside County Continuum of Care identified 614 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the City of Riverside.

As a regional hub for services, Riverside is home to the Robert Presley Detention Center, regional hospitals, behavioral health facilities, motels being used as shelters and emergency shelter providers. The presence of these facilities has contributed to an influx of individuals experiencing homelessness who originate from outside city boundaries.

In some instances, individuals are transported into Riverside by organizations without prior coordination or a confirmed housing or service plan. For example, staff recently documented an incident in which a Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy transported and dropped off an individual experiencing homelessness from the City of Jurupa Valley outside of the Riverside Access Center without prior coordination with City staff or service providers**.** Incidents such as this highlight the operational challenges created when individuals are transported into the City of Riverside without advance notice or a coordinated service plan. Similarly, some individuals are cited or arrested in their home jurisdictions for low-level offenses and subsequently released within the City of Riverside without a stable housing plan, resulting in individuals remaining within the city.

When individuals are transported into Riverside without coordinated discharge planning or service linkage, the city's limited shelter beds, outreach capacity, and housing resources are further strained. These circumstances can create a disproportionate service and financial burden on the city and may reduce available resources for individuals for whom Riverside has primary responsibility.

Data from local recuperative care providers further illustrates this impact. A significant percentage of patients originate from outside the city, and a substantial portion remain in Riverside following discharge without a permanent housing plan. Without coordinated placement, many individuals return to unsheltered homelessness within City limits.

In addition to operational impacts, uncoordinated drop-offs create fiscal impacts. Staff has calculated the estimated fully burdened cost to provide shelter, rental assistance, housing navigation, case management, and outreach services necessary to stabilize one unsheltered individual at approximately $63,376.19. When individuals are transported into the City of Riverside without coordination and subsequently require services, these costs are borne by city resources and may reduce capacity to serve individuals for whom Riverside has primary responsibility.

Given the regional nature of homelessness and the limited availability of housing and supportive services, the city seeks to ensure improved coordination when individuals are transported into Riverside by other agencies.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed Ordinance would amend Title 9 of the Riverside Municipal Code to add Chapter 9.56, establishing a reporting requirement for transportation of individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and

adequate nighttime residence into the City of Riverside.

The Ordinance does not prohibit transportation of individuals experiencing homelessness into the city. Instead, it establishes a minimal reporting and coordination framework designed to ensure continuity of care, protect public health and safety, and responsibly manage limited municipal resources.

The Ordinance requires that pre-scheduled drop-offs must occur during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday through Saturday) to allow city staff and service providers to coordinate shelter placement, behavioral health services, and housing navigation.

Under the proposed ordinance, any organization or government entity, or employee or agent acting on behalf of an organization or government entity, who intends to transport and drop off an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence within the City of Riverside must provide written notice (i.e. form of an email, website form, or application) to the City Manager and the Director of Housing and Human Services at least 24 hours prior to the drop-off.

The notice must include:

1. The name, address, phone number, and email address of the government entity or other organization providing the notice;
2. The date and time of the notification;
3. The staff person submitting the notification;
4. The full name (first name, last name, and middle initial), date of birth, phone number of the individual being transported and/or dropped off;
5. The location where the person named is being transported from;
6. The reason for transport (Shelter placement, Family Reunification, Medical/Behavioral Health, Other: _____);
7. The name, address, phone number and email of the organization to whom the person being transported is being delivered;
8. Whether the organization receiving the person being transported has confirmed the acceptance of the person prior to being transported;
9. A list of any conditions that the organization receiving the person being transported requires prior to their acceptance of that person;
10. The name and title of the staff person who has agreed to receive the person being transported;
11. The expected date, time, and mode of transportation by which the person is being transported;
12. The names and titles of staff members accompanying the person being transported;
13. Whether the person being transported requires any assistance to maintain Activities of Daily Living (Y/N);
14. The criminal justice status of the person being transported (i.e. Probation/Parole (County:_____);
15. Whether person being transported is required to be listed on Sex Offender Registry as per PC 290 (Y/N); and
16. Whether the person being transported has any Arson Related Restrictions (Y/N).

The proposed ordinance also requires that, any organization or government entity, or any employee or agent acting on behalf of an organization or government entity, who files a notice, as described above, and/or who transports and/or drops-off an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence within the City of Riverside, must provide a follow-up written notice (i.e. form of an email, website form, or application) to the City Manager and the Director of Housing and Human Services at least 24 hours prior to the drop-off.

The follow-up notice must include:

1) The name of the individual that was transported and/or the name of the person for whom the notice, as per the requirements of the notice above, was submitted;
2) The exact drop-off location of the person that was transported;
3) The Date and time of the drop-off;
4) Whether the person being dropped off was successfully placed into services;
5) The name and title of the staff member that accepted the person being dropped-off into their services; and
6) If the person was not transported and/or successfully placed into services, an explanation of why the person was not transported and/or successfully placed, including a description of what happened to the person and whether any follow-up contact has been scheduled.

The ordinance defines the phrase “lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” consistent with commonly used homelessness definitions, including individuals residing in places not meant for habitation, temporary shelters, certain institutional settings, or exiting detention without a stable residence.

The ordinance includes explicit exemptions for lawful and necessary activities, including:

- Transportation for booking into jail or custody alternatives;
- Transportation to licensed medical facilities;
- Transportation to verified social service or court appointments;
- Transportation conducted by the City of Riverside within its jurisdiction; and
- Public transit operations.

The purpose of the reporting requirement is to:

- Identify the place of origin of individuals transported into the City of Riverside;
- Improve coordination with service providers to reduce the likelihood that individuals are released into unsheltered conditions;
- Facilitate interjurisdictional dialogue regarding shared responsibility and funding; and
- Ensure that limited city shelter and outreach resources are managed effectively.

To mitigate the financial burden and negative impacts associated with uncoordinated drop-offs, it is necessary to establish coordination with service providers and increase access to housing navigation, case management, and behavioral health support. Research and local experience demonstrate that coordinated service planning significantly reduces the likelihood of individuals returning to chronic homelessness.

The ordinance regulates institutional transportation practices and does not restrict an individual’s right to travel or relocate. It does not criminalize homelessness and does not prohibit charitable acts

or basic survival assistance as outlined in Government Code section 53069.44.

The City of Riverside, as a charter city, possesses authority under Article XI, Section 7 of the California Constitution to enact police, sanitary, and other regulations to protect public health, safety, and general welfare. The proposed ordinance constitutes a limited administrative reporting requirement intended to address identifiable fiscal and operational impacts while supporting a coordinated and compassionate response to homelessness.

The intent of the ordinance is threefold:

1. **Ensure Coordination and Continuity of Services**
   Advance notice allows city staff and service providers to confirm shelter availability, behavioral health needs, and housing navigation pathways to prevent individuals from being released into unsheltered conditions without support.

2. **Promote Regional Accountability**
   Reporting enables the city to identify jurisdictions of origin and engage in data-driven dialogue regarding shared responsibility, funding allocation, and regional planning.

3. **Protect Public Health and Safety**
   Individuals transported without a service plan face heightened risks of victimization, untreated medical or behavioral health conditions, and chronic homelessness. Coordinated discharge planning reduces the likelihood that individuals will return to the streets without support.

To ensure compliance with the reporting requirements, the ordinance establishes an enforcement framework through the city's existing administrative citation process. Violations of the chapter may be subject to administrative citations in accordance with Chapter 1.17 of the Riverside Municipal Code, including applicable administrative hearing and appeal procedures and the city's authority to pursue civil remedies to collect unpaid administrative fines. The Community & Economic Development Code Enforcement team will be responsible for processing ordinance violations. First time offenders will receive a warning and second time offenders will receive a citation.

The ordinance also includes a severability provision to ensure that if any part or provision of the chapter, or its application to any person or circumstance, is found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of the chapter will continue in full force and effect.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the proposed ordinance.

Prepared by: Michelle Davis, Housing and Human Services Director
Certified as to availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:
1. Ordinance