

ATTACHMENT 3

LOCAL NEWS

How Upland residents plan to curb panhandling, address homelessness



Photo by Liset Marquez

A "Say No to Panhandling" sign is posted near the Mountain Square shopping center in Upland.

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Homelessness in Upland has been a contentious issue for years.

Residents of the city have long claimed [panhandlers](#) cause crime and create blight for the city.

Councilwoman Carol Timm has embarked on a private effort to address panhandling. The group which is not part of any of the city's committees, has met a handful of times.

"We've met with interested citizens to address their concerns with panhandling," she said at the Nov. 13 meeting.

Timm said she knew it was a big issue in the city and decided to start a committee.

The goal is to put up "say no to panhandling" signs. The city has agreed to order the signs, she said, and so far one is up near the Hobby Lobby on Mountain Avenue.

"It has been successful so far, we haven't seen the panhandlers," she explained. "Mainly it's been about education."



A sign near the Mountain Square shopping center.

Interim City Manager Martin Thouvenell said the city is working with the state to get signs posted on the freeway off-ramps and on-ramps.

The group, Timm said, is also working on a website. She also urges residents to give their money to local homeless organizations instead.

"Give your money to groups that help legitimate homeless," she said. She said she's read reports that show that 65 percent of panhandlers are not homeless. "We want to give to the real homeless in Upland, we don't want to give to the panhandlers."

Christy Mac, founder of Ladies of the IE for Strong Communities and an advocate for Upland-area homeless, agrees with Timm.

At the Campus exit on the 210 Freeway, Mac said she's heard panhandlers get an average of \$50 to \$75 a day, and on the best day, someone got \$200.

"We want people to get help but to do it in a way that is productive and actually makes a difference," Mac said. "Giving them a dollar makes it easier for them to stay on the streets."

She encourages people to report panhandlers to her group and others like it so they can help.

Prior to Timm getting involved, Mac said she and her group were also working on addressing the issue of panhandling.

"In an effort to help with the situation, my mentor and me went to go visit the city manager," she said. At that point the ladies of the IE had put up a banner encouraging people not to give to panhandlers but wind kept knocking it down.

When she learned that Timm wanted to address the issue, Mac said she decided to join that effort.

Mac said she has been able to attend two meetings.

"We're all in the same team making it better for residents," she said.

Also in attendance at meetings has been Eric Gavin, coordinator of the [Upland Community Restoration Team](#), which focuses on [homelessness](#) in the city. Gavin said he's there to inform the public with his team's progress.

For those looking for options to make a donation, Timm pointed to the restoration team as an option.

The next meeting will be at 2 p.m. Dec. 5 at the Cooper Regional History Museum, 217 East A St.

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