



MEMORANDUM

DATE: 1/25/2013

TO: Chair David Terrazas and Members of the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Scott Collins, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Public Safety in Santa Cruz Parks, Beaches, Open Space and Neighborhoods

RECOMMENDATION: In addressing the vital public safety issues discussed at the December 2012 Public Safety Committee (Committee), staff is proposing a comprehensive action plan containing immediate, mid-term and long-term solutions to affect positive and meaningful change in the community. Staff will present a summary document of this action plan to the Committee during its January 29th, 2013 meeting.

In support of this action plan, staff recommends the Public Safety Committee consider the following action items:

1. Creation of a citizen task force to assess underlying public safety issues in Santa Cruz and make recommendations to the City Council
 2. Develop and enact oversight measures on the local hypodermic needle exchange program, in partnership with Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
 3. Authorize Police Chief to hire new police officers and community service officers in numbers above current authorized strength
 4. Provision of additional community sanitation services and facilities
 5. Assess the Homeward Bound pilot program
 6. Assess opportunities to further partner with Santa Cruz County, non-profits and other regional agencies to address public safety issues
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At the December 2012 Committee meeting, staff was directed to return to the Committee with recommendations to address the public safety concerns in the City's parks, beaches, open space, neighborhoods and commercial areas. In particular, the Committee tasked staff with analyzing options, identifying potential issues and developing recommendations in the following areas:

- Creating a citizen-driven public safety task force
- Creating effective oversight of local hypodermic needle exchange programs and pharmacies
- Achieving a fully staffed Santa Cruz Police Department, in particular police officers
- Placing additional restrooms, trash cans and sharps containers in public locations

- Developing a coalition with other agencies to address the underlying issues

At the December Committee meeting, members of the public pointed to the degradation of our beaches, open space, park, neighborhoods and business areas as cause for alarm and need for immediate action. The community presented the Committee with potential solutions to mitigate the mounting garbage, human waste and needles problems. Discussion also focused on the underlying issues of drug abuse, homelessness and an overburdened justice system that hamper civic response to public safety issues.

Police, Parks and Recreation and City Manager staff presented an overview of the City's previous efforts to address these issues to the Committee at its December meeting. Illegal campsites, human waste, litter and illegal disposal of needles have been long-standing issues in the community. These issues are clearly articulated in the attached staff report to the Transportation and Public Commission (*Attachment A*) which identifies areas that are heavily impacted by these issues, including the San Lorenzo River banks and levee, Pogonip Open Space, railroad right-of-way, Neary Lagoon/Jesse Street March and the beach areas near the Wharf.

City staff and community groups (Leveelies, Save Our Shores, Take Back Santa Cruz, the Clean Team and others) have dedicated countless hours to improving these areas, but the Committee, recognized that cleanups are only effective when done in tandem with a long-term plan to address the underlying problems plaguing our community.

The remainder of this report outlines in greater detail the proposed recommendations, which include action items and requests for further research and analysis.

Immediate Actions:

Police Patrols in Beach Area. As presented at the December Committee meeting, Santa Cruz Police Chief Kevin Vogel assigned additional police patrols in and around the Beach Area, with supporting deployment of First Alarm Security guards. During the period of December 14 through January 21 the operation netted 55 citations and 13 arrests for a variety of violations including numerous open alcohol containers, illicit drug use, smoking on the beach and illegal trespassing. The operation also led to the arrest of an individual who possessed a stolen bike. The bike was returned to its owner.

In the period from December 17 – 31, First Alarm Security Patrol contacted over 100 individuals for a variety of municipal code violations in the Beach Area, including 32 for trespassing, 9 for use of profane/abusive language and 2 for malicious mischief/vandalism. First Alarm Guards refer all serious offenses to the Santa Cruz Police Department.

The Police Chief intends to run these patrols through February of 2013, at which point he will evaluate the patrols' overall effectiveness and determine if they should continue into the future and in what manner.

Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff will be responding to issues in the beach area as well. Parks has installed lights to light up the Cowell's Beach steps and area under the Wharf at night to discourage illegal activities and are opening the beach restrooms an hour later than usual to discourage unlawful morning activities. They have also partnered with Save Our Shores to conduct more routine cleanups of cave areas as a supplement to city maintenance crew work.

Parks and Recreation staff will also increase existing levels of sifting, beach raking and debris removal from the beach as we approach summer.

Campsite and Railway Cleanups. During the summer of 2012, Police, Parks and Recreation and Public Works Department staff ramped up the City's illegal campsite removal efforts. Between July 4 and September 14, police made 175 arrests during the cleanup of more than 200 illegal camp sites. City crews removed 374 tons of garbage and 358 needles during this enforcement window.

Building upon this work, Parks and Recreation has contracted to conduct cleanup and vegetation clearing on the Westside and in the Seabright areas during the last two weeks of January 2013. At the Committee's December meeting community members identified these portions of the railway as particularly troublesome areas that encourage illegal camping. The cleanup is designed to remove brush, vegetation and branches to dissuade illegal camping in those areas in the future. After its purchase of the rail line in late 2012, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) will take on the responsibility of maintaining the vegetation growth along their railway.

Needle Distribution and Littering. The community has made it absolutely clear about their desire to rid the community of littered needles in our beaches, parks and public spaces. City staff and officials are equally concerned and are collaborating with County staff to address this important issue.

Since the December Committee meeting, staff has learned that recent State Law (Senate Bill 41) allows anyone over the age of 18 to obtain up to 30 needles at local pharmacies without a prescription. Senate Bill 41 also eliminates the requirement that a local government entity authorize pharmacists to provide hypodermic needles or syringes without a prescription, in effect eliminating our ability to regulate needle distribution.

The aim of the new law is to encourage clean use of needles thereby reducing the spread of deadly communicable diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C. The local mobile needle exchange program, which operates in Santa Cruz County (with minimal County oversight) shares the same goal as Senate Bill 41. While the exchange program exchanges over 250,000 needles annually in the County, there continues to be a visual consequence and public safety threat in our community in the form of illegally discarded needles.

The City is working closely with the Santa Cruz Health Services Agency to better understand the uptick in illegal needle littering and develop effective policies and actions to

limit this nuisance and public safety concern. This topic is discussed in greater detail in the “Mid-term Actions” section below.

Homeward Bound. City Council approved \$25,000 in the FY 2013 Budget to provide bus fare to homeless individuals who are in need of transportation to their place of origin. The program, as executed with the Homeless Service Center has garnered some positive benefits. Since July of 2012, the program successfully transported 100 individuals to their previous communities to reconnect with friends, family and/or receive the care they need. The program is entirely voluntary as individuals are not required to take the fare. In fact, there is great demand for this program amongst Homeless Services Center clients. The Homeless Service Center provided a brief report on the program to City staff and is captured in *Attachment B*. Based on the program’s early success, the City is exploring expanding the program to facilitate the voluntary transport of those who have exited mental health facilities or the County jail. Overall the program is but one piece of a larger puzzle in reducing the homeless population in Santa Cruz. This issue will be discussed in more depth below under the “Long-term Actions” section.

Mid-term Actions and Policies (2 to 12 months):

Police Staffing. As noted at the December Committee meeting, Police Chief Vogel has made it a top priority to hire additional police officers to meet his authorized personnel compliment. In order to stay ahead of retirements and other fluctuations in staffing levels, SCPD is constantly recruiting new police officers. SCPD maintains a continuous recruitment for police academy graduates and lateral transfers from other law enforcement agencies. Moreover, SCPD recently took the additional step of holding a recruitment drive for individuals who are interested in becoming police officers but have not graduated from the academy.

In addition, Police Chief Vogel may seek City Council approval to hire additional police officers and community service officers above the number of budgeted positions. This maneuver will allow the SCPC to stay ahead of the retirement curve and maintain a fully staffed force into the future.

Safety Enhancement Zones and Public Disorder Policy. In late 2012, the Public Safety Committee reviewed and forwarded on two proposed ordinances for City Council consideration addressing illegal activities in parks, open spaces and beaches and recommended that the full City Council consider the items in late February/early March 2013.

The Safety Enhancement Zone ordinance revision will increase penalties for municipal code violations in our parks, beaches, open spaces and libraries. Violators of littering, smoking, public intoxication, fighting, and similar city ordinances will face triple fines for their infractions.

The proposed Public Disorder Ordinance, which stipulates that individuals who are cited for municipal code violations in our parks be barred from entering the parks in which they are cited for 24 hours. City Park Rangers note that typically, violators of our municipal code who are cited rip up the issued ticket and remain in the park, creating an unsafe situation for the Ranger and our community. This change in policy provides an opportunity for the violator to cool off in a different location and provide a more safe and welcoming environment for our entire community.

In combination, these Council actions should limit illegal behavior in our community's public gathering locations.

Needle Legislation and Coordination. City staff, law enforcement and County staff are collaborating to identify and implement solutions to reduce the increasing number of improperly disposed syringes in the City of Santa Cruz.

With that in mind, the City is confident that the needle exchange program would better serve its public health mission and the greater community if it were overseen by Santa Cruz County. City and County staff also agree on the importance of engaging with our local pharmacies to develop effective needle litter mitigation practices.

To that end, the City and County began discussions in January to explore the following:

- County bringing the needle exchange program under their control, either in the form of direct service provision or overseeing a contract with a non-profit organization.
- Assessing needle disposal kiosks throughout the County, determining the costs and potential locations
- Creation of an inter-agency committee/advisory body to review broader needle policies and practices
- Outreach to pharmacies to improve procedures/sharps containers provided to needle users, take back programs, and sale of retractable needles
- In the short-term, greater communication between the City, County and needle exchange program to improve their practices and enhance transparency

City and County Health Services staff have committed to working together to create positive change on the needle issue. However, should the needle exchange continue to operate without County oversight, the City is within its legal rights to set time, place and manner restriction on the needle exchange program.

Community Cleanup Coordination. The City has a long history of community-based groups conducting cleanups on our beaches, riverways and open space. The City applauds these cleanup efforts and greatly appreciates the great outcomes they have achieved so far. The majority of these groups coordinate with the City in advance to obtain waivers and develop protocols for dumpster drop-offs and pick-ups. However, other groups have operated their cleanups more informally, leading to unsafe work conditions and unorganized assistance from the City. To counter this trend the City encourages regular

communication between the groups and City staff to ensure cleanups are conducted in a safe manner, protecting volunteers from unsafe conditions and reducing the City's liability in the process. To that end, City staff intends to reach out to the groups to develop a strong working relationship that will improve coordination and the overall safety of our community. And, we request that community groups contact the City a week in advance before conducting any cleanups.

We continue to encourage residents to report illegal campsites and littered needles to the proper authorities. The following city web page identifies the pertinent agencies to contact depending upon location of the issue www.cityofsantacruz.com/cleanupcontacts. For individuals or small groups interested in volunteering for cleanups, we recommend they contact Save Our Shores via their website at www.saveourshores.org/volunteer.

Parks and Recreation staff continues to work with the Coastal Commission to limit public access to coastal caves along West cliff, as they have become ideal location for illegal campsites and drug dens. Coastal Commission approval is required to alter the caves.

Resource Management, Clean Community and Measure E Funds.

City staff has formed a team to assess the need for 24-hour public restrooms and the placement of additional public restrooms and trash cans in targeted locations.

This group will also explore expanding City-funded cleanups in our community. City crews currently conduct cleanups throughout the community, however, there is limited funding for such operations at this time (see *Attachment A* for a description of these services). Staff believes these efforts have succeeded in some measure in reducing the number of illegal campsites and returning our public spaces to the entire community. Therefore, the team will investigate the use of General Fund and Measure E revenues to expand funding for additional City cleanup teams and determine the most effective use of these crews.

Staff intends to return to City Council with recommendations on these issues for the FY 2014 Budget process.

Community Programs. The City funds over \$1 million annually in non-profit programming in Santa Cruz County, to provide safety net services to our at-risk populations (youth, seniors, and homeless). The funding is provided in three major focus areas: public safety, health and financial services. The Community Programs Committee, a sub-committee of City Council, recommends program funding levels to the full City Council in the annual budget process. In that capacity, the Committee maintains flexibility in terms of recommending what non-profit programs are funded in the community. Therefore, the Community Programs Committee has an opportunity to enhance funding for public safety programs, such as gang prevention, drug prevention and/or treatment, etc. Public safety oriented programs could help impact some of the underlying issues facing our community. The Community Programs Committee is scheduled to meet in mid-February to begin discussions of their priorities for the FY 2014 Budget process.

Long-term Actions and Policies (1 year and beyond):

Problems of this nature are not resolved by one agency, it requires the efforts of the entire community.

In reality much of the above discussed actions and policies address symptoms. Homelessness, mental health, crime, drug abuse and an overburdened criminal justice system are systemic issues that we must grapple with.

The City is committed to a long-term vision of making Santa Cruz a safer and cleaner community for all its inhabitants. Therefore, it is important that we develop a long-term process and plan to confront and deal with these issues.

Citizen Task Force. City staff researched other communities facing similar public safety circumstances as Santa Cruz. Based on conversations with leaders from these communities, staff learned that tapping into the community for ideas is the first and most important step to changing course.

Commissions of this type provide an unbiased and community view of the issues, unfiltered and reflective of what ordinary citizens experience everyday across the City. Santa Cruz has a long tradition of encouraging our residents to participate in our decision-making process and provide feedback on how we are doing and how we can improve.

Taking this into consideration, staff recommends the formation of citizen task force to review our underlying public safety problems in-depth and deliver a report with recommendations to City Council.

The task force should represent the broad perspectives of our community, and include community members and business owners. Ideally, members of the task force will reflect a broad geographic representation of the City. We do not recommend filling the task force with experts, as they (Sheriff, Court representatives, social service providers, public health and drug treatment administrators, school officials, etc.) can be brought in for the provision of background information and discussion. That way, the task force will not be swayed or distracted by one dominant point of view. Staff further recommends that the full City Council appoint task force members and set further direction for the group.

Countywide Agency Coordination. Staff further recommends partnering with Santa Cruz County and regional agencies to determine effective strategies to address the underlying issues that affect all segments of Santa Cruz County. As noted above, the City alone cannot alter the underlying public safety concerns. A meaningful response requires broad coordination and evidence based approaches, and potentially new funding sources. Consequently, more time is needed for the various agencies to confer, analyze and develop proposals for the various governing bodies to consider. Staff will regularly inform the Public Safety Committee and City Council abreast of developments in this regard.

Cowell and Main Beach Environmental Issues. Cowell and Main Beaches in the City of Santa Cruz, are two of the most popular beach swimming areas in Santa Cruz County. However, over the past years the County of Santa Cruz has posted health warning signs for much of the summer months due to high levels of bacteria in the near-shore waters. In order to help determine the cause of the bacteria, the City of Santa Cruz has entered into a three-year partnership with the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) and Professor Ali Boehm (Stanford University) to study the impacts of kelp removal on water quality and beach ecology as part of the City's Beach Management Plan. The results of this kelp-water quality study will provide at a minimum a causal correlation of water quality to kelp removal and should be able to identify discernible trends or relationships associated with the study data (including kelp, wildlife, debris, and water quality) as well as recommendations for adapting kelp removal operations to better protect coastal resources.

Dr. Boehm has worked cooperatively with City of Santa Cruz, Parks and Recreation Department staff and the California Coastal Commission staff to design a study guided by four research objectives: 1.) Define the microbial pollution problem at Cowell Beach spatially and temporally, 2.) Determine if (wrack) kelp affects the concentration of E. coli and enterococci in near-shore water, 3.) Assess the presence or absence of human molecular source tracking markers and pathogens on wrack at Cowell Beach and, 4.) Assess whether wrack affects indicator bacteria species in the underlying sand at Cowell Beach. These research objectives were determined to meet the needs of both agencies and provide valuable information that will be used to inform decisions regarding the protection of coastal environmental and recreational resources.

In year two of the three year study, researchers are confident that their work should yield answers as to the cause of high bacteria counts in our Cowell and Main Beach waters and ultimately lead to recommended action to improve the water quality for beach goers and our wildlife.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Transportation and Public Works Commission Report (1/16/2013)
Attachment B – Homeless Services Center Report on the Homeward Bound Program

Attachment A



TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: January 16, 2013

AGENDA OF: January 28, 2013

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

SUBJECT: Efforts to Reduce and Clean Up Illegal Campsites, Hazardous Waste,
Litter and Disposal

RECOMMENDATION: For Information Only

At the November 2012 Transportation and Public Works Commission meeting, Commissioner Becker asked for more information about the issues of trash and needles in the rocks and area along West Cliff Drive.

Illegal campsites, human waste, litter and illegal disposal of needles and syringes have been long-standing issues in the community. Areas that are heavily impacted include the San Lorenzo River banks and levee, Pogonip Open Space, railroad rights-of-way, Neary Lagoon/Jesse Street Marsh and the beach areas near the Wharf. In November 2012, a local resident videotaped trash and needles found in the rocks and caves along the back of Cowell's Beach, put it on YouTube and notified the media, calling attention to the problems in that area. Citizens' groups have since appeared before the City Council and the Council Public Safety Committee requesting increased City action to address trash, needles and human waste on the beach and along pathways and trails.

The City has been working on many fronts to clean up and reduce illegal camping and disposal for many years. This is a frustrating, expensive and seemingly endless effort, since campsites and debris cleaned up one day may reappear the next day when transient persons and/or drug users move back in or move on to another site. The following is a brief summary of the efforts and approaches the City has used and is using to address these problems.

Illegal Campsite Removal:

Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Police Department staff work cooperatively to locate illegal campsites, notice and cite campers when appropriate, and remove and dispose of debris, human waste and needles found. There has been an ongoing effort for many years, using Parks, Streets and Wastewater crew labor, and using contract labor. An annual budget of \$40,000 from the General Fund for contracted campsite cleanup is administered by the Parks and Recreation Department Chief Ranger.

The passage of the Measure E parcel tax provided a new source of funds that can help clean up campsites contributing to water pollution. In FY2012, \$25,000 of Measure E funds was used to add temporary Parks employees under the Park Rangers to clean up debris and campsites along the

San Lorenzo River. In FY2013 this amount was increased to \$45,000 and now funds two temporary employees to work on this year-round. From January 13, 2012 to December 7, 2012, these Measure E funded temporary Parks staff removed 341.75 yards of garbage (approximately 136 tons) and 878 hypodermic needles from the San Lorenzo River banks and levee.

This past summer, the Police Department coordinated an expanded effort along the river by dedicating a team of police officers to assist Park Rangers to intervene with and cite illegal campers and break up campsites. Parks crews removed the campsite debris and Public Works crews helped dispose of the materials. The improvement along the river was noticeable, but unfortunately, problems seemed to increase in other areas as illegal campers and drug users moved away from the river.

The Police and Parks staff also clarified signage along the river levees mostly regarding smoking. The prior signage was not posted properly and the City had to dismiss several citations. The smoking ban has been useful in reducing the large groups that were loitering on the levee and contributing to the larger amounts of debris and garbage left along the pathway.

In order to try to make more lasting impacts with Police citations, the City modified the Municipal Code to address individuals with multiple citations where they have failed to appear in court or pay the associated fine. The Municipal Code now allows for misdemeanor warrants to be issued for individuals who have multiple "failure to appear" violations after receiving citations and disregarding them. Enforcement of this provision requires Police staff to compile and submit substantial information packets and a report to the city attorney to request a warrant from the court. While the process is an improvement, it is still labor intensive for Police staff.

Cowell's Beach Response:

In response specifically to the issues raised by the YouTube video about trash and needles at Cowell's Beach and in low caves along the base of the cliff at the back of the beach, City staff has taken a number of steps and is making every effort to ensure the conditions that were discovered before the holidays do not reoccur. Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff responded quickly and cleaned up the identified hazards. They have met with Coastal Commission staff to see if permission could be obtained to fill in the low caves behind rocks at the base of the cliff, to remove them as an attractive shelter/hiding area for camping and drug use. No decision has been made, but Coastal Commission staff agreed to consider the request.

The Police Department immediately increased their patrols in the area, have added an extra First Alarm security guard to patrol the beach and Wharf, and there is a Community Service Officer assigned to that area four days a week. Police staff has contacted the volunteer Street Outreach Supporters needle exchange to see if there are any possibilities for reducing used needles left at beaches, parks and other public areas. The City once had metal needle disposal boxes in some park and beach restrooms, but they were removed after they were routinely vandalized and broken off the wall by people trying to obtain access to the needles. Parks has installed lights to light up the Cowell's Beach steps and area under the Wharf at night to discourage illegal activities. Parks staff is opening the beach restrooms an hour later than usual to discourage unlawful early morning activities. Increased maintenance attention to the Cowell Beach restrooms was initiated last summer and will continue this coming year.

The City recently partnered with Save Our Shores to coordinate and promote volunteer beach and cave areas clean ups at Cowell's on a regular basis to supplement the work provided by the City's maintenance teams. Parks and Recreation staff will increase existing levels of sifting, beach raking, and debris removal from the beach as we approach summer.

Parks Beach Cleaning:

City Parks staff assigned to the wharf/beach crew do regular cleaning of Cowell's Beach and portions of Main Beach, including grooming and sifting using tractor-towed equipment in areas permitted by the Coastal Commission that the equipment can reach, and hand raking and hand picking litter in areas they cannot reach with equipment. Measure E currently contributes \$25,000 per year to help pay for this crew and the remainder of the costs come from the General Fund.

Seaside Company Beach Cleaning:

The City has an agreement with the Seaside Company wherein Seaside Company employees clean and groom Main Beach in front of the Casino and Boardwalk down to high water line.

City-Sponsored River and Beach Cleanups by Volunteers:

Using Measure E funds, the City contracts with Save Our Shores to promote and organize four volunteer beach and river cleanups annually, and, in addition, to go to City beaches on July 4 and do an anti-litter campaign and then run beach cleanups at City beaches on July 5. Annual cost for these efforts is \$9,230 and in FY12 volunteers removed 1,433 pounds of trash and 322 pounds of recyclables. On July 4 they educated 3,100 people and distributed 1,350 litter bags. The City also sponsors the Annual Coastal Cleanup event. In 2011, Coastal Cleanup volunteers at 15 beach and river sites in the City removed 1,998 pounds of trash and 537 pounds of recyclables.

Parks Levee Maintenance:

The Parks and Recreation Department has a crew that maintains vegetation, picks up litter and empties trash and recycling containers along the San Lorenzo River levee system pathways and landscaping along with all other Eastside park facilities. Using Measure E funds, five new refuse and recycling containers were added to the levee in 2012, joining 5 existing containers, and cigarette butt receptacles were also added.

Adopt-a-Levee Volunteer Program:

In FY2012, the City worked with and contracted Save Our Shores (SOS) to set up a program for volunteer groups to "adopt" a section of the San Lorenzo River levee and to clean it up on a regular basis. SOS recruits and signs up volunteer groups, gets waivers signed, trains volunteers on safety protocols, and provides equipment for the volunteer groups. SOS also notifies Parks, Police and Public Works of planned cleanups, arranges to haul the collected material to the landfill if necessary, and has volunteers report the amount and type of material collected. Five volunteer groups participated in FY12, performed over 15 cleanups and removed 1,925 pounds of trash and 371 pounds of recyclables. The annual cost of this program is \$10,000 from Measure E budget. In addition, the City has installed locked refuse dumpsters along the levee so that volunteer groups can deposit trash collected.

Illegal Disposal in Public Rights-of Way:

The City receives many calls (sometimes ten a day) about items illegally dumped on streets, sidewalks and alleys. Resource Recovery collection crews are routinely sent out to pick up

abandoned couches, mattresses, refrigerators, televisions, chairs, dressers, etc., as well as just dumped trash. This illegal dumping happens in spite of two free appliance and bulky item pickup days conducted by the City each year, and a “Bulky Item Pickup” service that can be scheduled by residents and visitors at any time.

CalTrans has right-of-way properties under the Highway 1/17 intersection and the Highway 1 Bridge over the river that are attractive to illegal campers.

Illegal Disposal on Private Property:

Illegal dumping on private property is the responsibility of the property owner to clean up. This is typically enforced by the Code Enforcement unit of the Planning Department. Unfortunately, when the property owner is told that it is their responsibility to dispose of illegal dumping on their land, those items initially dumped on private property often “walk” onto the sidewalk or street.

Illegal Campsites and Disposal on Railroad Rights-of-Way:

Much of the area along the railroad lines through the City is attractive to illegal campers, especially near the Trestle Bridge in the beach area and in the Harvey West area. In the past, it has been difficult to get the railroad owner to clean these areas up. Now that the Regional Transportation District owns the rail line and has a new contract line manager, the City will again try to work with them on developing a plan to remove campsites and trash from their lands.

The City Council Public Safety Committee is reviewing these issues of illegal camping, litter and disposal and existing responses by the City and others. Upon completing their review, the Public Safety Committee will report back to Council with any recommendations.

Prepared by: Mary Arman, Public Works Operations Manager

Submitted by:

Robert Solick
Principal Management Analyst

Attachments:
None

Attachment B



Homeward Bound Program Overview

Homeward Bound is an initiative of the Homeless Services Center that has successfully reunited over 600 homeless travelers with their families since 2006. The project was founded by an anonymous donor who allocated funds to buy homeless individuals tickets to safely return home to loved ones. The program is in very high demand among service recipients, therefore the program is frequently short of funds. The program is operated through the Daytime Services department, coordinated by a case manager and supervised by the Director of Programs.

Homeward Bound is intended to provide transportation assistance to individuals currently experiencing homelessness who have demonstrated that their most viable pathway out of homelessness exists within another geographic location. Typically the program caters to individuals who have family and/or employment opportunities in another community and consider themselves “stranded” in Santa Cruz without resources for transportation. Program applicants are not eligible for assistance if they cannot prove that they have an appropriate housing placement on the receiving end.

Once interest in the program is expressed, our dedicated case managers work individually with candidates to verify a valid place of relocation, ensuring stability and reconnection with their families upon arrival. All program candidates must fill out an application and participate in a one-on-one case evaluation with staff. Once the application is complete, the case manager confirms the need via phone, and diligently works to create and secure travel reservations. Most transportation is provided via bus ticket. To ensure that funds are used appropriately, HSC writes a check directly to “Love Transportation,” an entity of Greyhound Bus. HSC’s Homeward Bound compassionately addresses our homeless traveler’s request to go home with the necessary resources, care, and personalized attention.

Homeward Bound Report 2012/2013

As recommended by City Council, in July 2012 the Homeless Service Center began spending up to \$10,000 in city-assisted Homeward Bound funding. In December 2012, an additional \$2,000 was allocated by the recommendation of the Assistant City Manager. A summary of the allocation is as follows:

7/6/2012 – 1/3/2013

Total Number of Participants Served: 59*

Total Spent: \$10,047.43

Average ticket cost: \$170.29

Average tickets per month: 10

Tickets were purchased to 24 different U.S. states

18 tickets were purchased to cities within California

Number of people known to return to Santa Cruz: 1**

* As of 1/8/2013, six additional applications have been submitted that are not reflected in this report.

** This individual was a part of a couple sent to stay with an in-law. Shortly after arriving, the relationship dissolved and the individual returned to his last known location of Santa Cruz.