

Chairman's Weekly Update on Addressing Homelessness

The County has shelter beds available for everyone who has expressed interest in transitioning out of the Riverbed.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tara Campbell
Communications Director
Office of Chairman Andrew Do, First District Supervisor
(714) 552-5834
tara.campbell@ocgov.com

(Santa Ana, Calif.) - The Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, Andrew Do, provides a weekly update on the continuous and consistent progress in addressing homelessness through increasing access to services, increasing housing, and expanding stakeholder engagement and investments.

SANTA ANA RIVERBED TRAIL

The County began its closure of the Santa Ana River Trail from Memory Lane to Ball Road on Monday to prepare for an environmental remediation project at the site. The project is expected to take approximately three months to complete. As of Thursday, the area subject to closure includes approximately 490 tents occupied by homeless individuals and regular usage by bicyclists, joggers and walkers.

The County of Orange currently has beds available at the Courtyard Transitional Center, Bridges at Kraemer Place, and the seasonal Armory Shelters in Santa Ana and Fullerton for those who voluntarily transition out of the Santa Ana Riverbed Trail in addition to providing links to wraparound services. The County has asked for voluntary compliance in vacating the project area, providing those affected with access to resources such as storage of belongings for 90 days, the free kenneling of pets, and transportation to County-run shelters for those who wish to transition out of the flood control channel. To date:

- Over 80 tons of debris have already been removed from the project area,
- Approximately 500 needles have been collected since the start of the project on January 22, 2018,
- Four individuals have been transitioned to the Courtyard since the start of the project.

Faith-based groups and leaders are joining the Orange County Sheriff's Department in helping homeless individuals move to permanent supportive housing or reconnecting with their families.

Since May 2017, 46 individuals from Bridges at Kraemer Place and 221 individuals from

the Courtyard Transitional Center have been linked to greater housing stability. In addition, 157 individuals from these two programs are documented as being currently employed. Since July 2017, 175 individuals from the Santa Ana Flood Control Channel have made street exits. Of these street exits, 60 have been to the Courtyard and the rest have been to other emergency or transitional shelters, substance use disorder treatment centers, and family reunification.

ACTION TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Spending on shelter services is projected to reach \$21.9 million for this Fiscal Year, a significant increase from \$5 million in Fiscal Year 2016.

In 2016, the Orange County Health Care Agency's Outreach and Engagement Program consisted of \$1.9 million in funding and 30 full-time staff members engaging with homeless individuals. By comparison currently funding has increased to \$4.7 million along with 42 full-time Outreach and Engagement personnel.

To aid in the need for permanent supportive housing, Chairman Andrew Do and Vice Chairman Shawn Nelson recently directed County staff to allocate \$15 million dollars in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding for mental health permanent supportive housing targeting those experiencing homelessness. The Board also took action to:

- Approve Grant Award – Health Care Agency – No Place Like Home Technical Assistance Grant – **\$150,000**
- Approve Grant Award- Health Care Agency - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program Agreement - **\$919,322**
- Approve an Agreement for Housing Navigator Services for homeless individuals with mental illness - Total of **\$1,587,192**
- Increased the amount of available Recuperative Care Services by **\$738,430** for a total amount of \$4,886,500 for the period July 1, 2017, through December 31, 2020

The total amount approved at Tuesday's meeting for services dedicated to helping homeless individuals is **\$3,394,944**. Additionally, Chairman Do directed the Orange County Community Resources to return to the Board of Supervisors for additional housing navigators for all homeless individuals.

"We are actively reviewing our County operations to better address homelessness," said Chairman Andrew Do. "Creating more permanent supportive housing for those with severe and persistent mental illness using MHSA funding is just one example of how we're putting that into practice in continuing to build our System of Care."

COLLABORATION FROM THE COMMUNITY

All sectors working together is key to addressing our regional homelessness issue. One

recommendation by Susan Price, Orange County's Director of Care Coordination, was to restructure the Commission to End Homelessness to include a wider range of stakeholders. The new composition of the Commission includes:

- 1 Philanthropic Leader
- 2 Board of Supervisors
- 2 Business Representatives
- 3 Members of Law Enforcement
- 1 Representative from the Affordable Housing Community
- 1 Hospital Representative
- 1 Behavioral Health Representative
- 1 Representative from the faith-based community
- 2 Members at Large
- 2 Non-Voting Continuum of Care Representatives

Anyone can apply to be a part of the commission if they meet the qualifications of one of the above criteria. The County is seeking influential leaders from across these industries to facilitate this momentum to solve homelessness.

"This newly restructured Commission to End Homelessness along with the Continuum of Care Board will respond to the greater needs in our community," said Chairman Andrew Do. **"The 10-year plan to end homelessness isn't going away; we are building on the progress made by this commission."**

Chairman Andrew Do will continue to send out weekly updates on how the County is addressing homelessness.

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