

County of Santa Clara

Office of Supportive Housing

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March 28, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Ky Le, Director, Office of Supportive Housing

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SUBJECT: Hope Village Encampment

Summary

This memorandum is an update regarding Hope Village, which is located on Ruff Drive in San José. The encampment has been given notice that they must vacate the property by March 30, 2019. Under advisement from February 26, 2019 (Item No. 16), the Administration took some initial steps to temporarily relocate the current Hope Village participants to and establish a new program on a Santa Clara Valley Water District-owned (Valley Water) property south of Willow Street at Lelong Street in San José (Site). In accordance with Board direction, Administration would proceed with the relocation if: a) the Valley Water Board of Directors approved a lease between Valley Water and the County; and, b) the San José City Council approved funding half of the initial and on-going costs to establish and operate Compassion Village.

On March 18, 2019, the Valley Water Homeless Encampment Ad Hoc Committee opted not to forward the proposal from the County and the City of San José (City) to Valley Water's March 26, 2019, Board meeting.¹ Given the Ad Hoc Committee's actions, the County removed implementing actions from the Board's March 19, 2019 agenda, and the City removed implementing actions from the City Council's March 26, 2019 agenda.

Relocation of Participants by March 30, 2019

As a result of Valley Water's decision not to move forward to lease the Site, County and City staff have shifted their focus to helping current Hope Village participants with their temporary shelter and long-term housing needs. Teams of outreach workers have visited the camp daily to engage the residents. There are 17 current participants at Hope Village. Staff have connected with all but one participant, who is out of the area visiting family. The remaining sixteen participants have agreed to move into motels for 30 days. The 16 participants began moving into

¹ The Valley Water Homeless Encampment Ad Hoc Committee moved to: a) have staff facilitate and assist a meeting with the FAA in requesting that the City extend the Hope Village's time; b) have staff investigate Valley Water properties that are more amenable for a sanctioned Encampment site, discuss with Mr. Miron-Conk and work with the City and County to identify additional sites; c) have staff continue to analyze the County's proposal and come back to the committee with recommendations; and d) have the three Committee Members meet with the elected official(s) in the respective areas and bring back the information to share with the community.

motels on March 27, 2019. All 16 participants will be moved into motels by March 29, 2019. The motel stays would give the outreach workers time to connect these participants to more intensive services and longer-term shelter and housing solutions.

City-Owned Site on Ruff Drive

County staff have heard that one of the organizers, Mr. Miron-Conk, is still exploring sites on which to relocate Hope Village. However, he made it clear at the March 18, 2019 Valley Water Ad Hoc Committee meeting that he is not interested in working with the County or the City. Other Hope Village volunteers have agreed to begin dismantling the camp and store the equipment.

During the week of April 1, 2019, the County's Roads and Airport Department will remove County-installed fencing and other debris from the site. The City's encampment abatement team will store any personal belongings and do a clean-up of the area around the City-owned property. The City's team will be accompanied by San José Police Department. County and City staff and outreach contractors will also be available to provide assistance to participants.

Background

Hope Village is the tent community for homeless people established by Casa de Clara Catholic Worker (Organizers). On September 9, 2018, Hope Village occupied a California Employment Development office parking lot on Ruff Drive in San José. Under threat of removal by the State, Hope Village moved down the street to a parking lot owned by a labor union. On September 27, 2018, the City and County entered into a temporary use agreement for a portion of the City-owned property for six months. Subsequently, Hope Village was able to move to its current location on Ruff Drive.

The County entered into a no-cost agreement with the Organizers for use of the property. It allowed for 14 people in the encampment at any one time. During their brief stay, the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) was able to document that three participants, who had been enrolled in the countywide network of permanent supportive housing programs, moved into permanent housing. Two other individuals were asked to leave for not complying with rules, and one person left Hope Village on their own accord.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) advised the City that Hope Village may violate the terms of an FAA grant made for runway-approach protection, and Hope Village's continued presence could jeopardize future funding for other airport projects. Thus, the temporary use agreement will terminate on March 30, 2019.

cc: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Jackie Maclean, Deputy Director, Office of Supportive Housing