**Study Session
on Homeless Encampments
and Vehicle Dwelling
facilitated by the
Police Department**

Item 2
RTC 21-942
August 24, 2021

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Study Session Topics

- Overview of Study Session
- Homelessness in Santa Clara
- Various forms of Homelessness
- Legal Context
- Homelessness during Covid
- Homeless Encampments in Santa Clara
- Vehicle Dwelling in Santa Clara
- City's Current Response
- Council Priorities and Next Steps

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City of Santa Clara Homeless Statistics

City of Santa Clara Homeless Population	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
2013	203	275	478
2015	150	227	377
2017	199	73	272
2019	264	62	326

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City of Santa Clara Homeless Statistics

- The majority (81%) of respondents reported living in Santa Clara County at the most recent time they became homeless.

- The unemployment rate among homeless survey respondents was 82%

- The biggest obstacles to obtaining permanent housing were the affordability of rent (66%), a lack of a job/income (56%), and a lack of housing (40%).

- Homeless survey respondents also reported having these health conditions: a psychiatric or emotional condition (42%); drug/alcohol abuse (35%), and PTSD (33%).

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Various Forms of Homelessness

Form of Homelessness	Brief definition / examples
Chronic	Sleeping in parks, undeveloped properties, vacant buildings, transit stations Frequently suffer from long-term health conditions, such as mental illness, substance abuse, disabilities or other medical conditions, and lack access to healthcare
Transitional	Shelter system, boarding house, emergency shelter
Hidden	Hotel living, couch surfing, doubling up or reliance on friends/family
Vehicle dwelling	Personal vehicle, recreation vehicle
Encampments	Multiple people living in an unsheltered area
Imminent risk of homelessness	Domestic violence, runaway, sex trafficking, etc.

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Citizen Complaints Connected with Our Unhoused Population

- Blight and corresponding property value decline and/or business viability
- Concern for safety, particularly in City parks
- Noise
- Fire
- Vandalism
- Solid waste
- Unhealthy conditions and impact on the environment, particularly in our creeks
- Costs to society
- Potential for an increase in crime

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Laws, Court Rulings and City Code Restrictions

- Martin v Boise Federal Appeals Court Ruling
- Panhandling / Solicitation
  (City Code Section 5.05.210)
- Vehicle Dwelling
  (City Code Section 12.50.010)
- Parking Regulations
  (City Code Section 10.05.470)
- Coronavirus Pandemic Early Inmate Release
- Santa Clara County Superior Court Zero Bail

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Coordination of Services

- Coordinating a successful intervention is a lengthy process:
  - Multiple visits may be required to gain acceptance of assistance
  - Jurisdictional issues
  - Identification of Needs
  - Availability of Staff Resources
  - Availability of Partner Resources
  - Coordination of Services
    - Timeframe restrictions
    - Costs associated with clean up or clear out
  - Unique situations specific to the person(s) in need (e.g. pet, children, vehicle, etc.)

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Temporary Impacts as a Result of the Coronavirus Pandemic

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- Center for Disease Control guidelines
- Individual agency responses
- Early inmate release
- Zero Bail

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Location of Unhoused Individual

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- Private Property
  - A landowner is required to initiate enforcement action for trespassing. The decision of the landowner and subsequent process in collaboration with law enforcement to address trespassing of unhoused individuals is time consuming and labor intensive. Law enforcement then works with the agency of jurisdiction
- Public Property
  - On public property, a person can be asked to leave however they are not required to do so based on the Martin v City of Boise Federal appeals court ruling

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Location and Agency of Jurisdiction

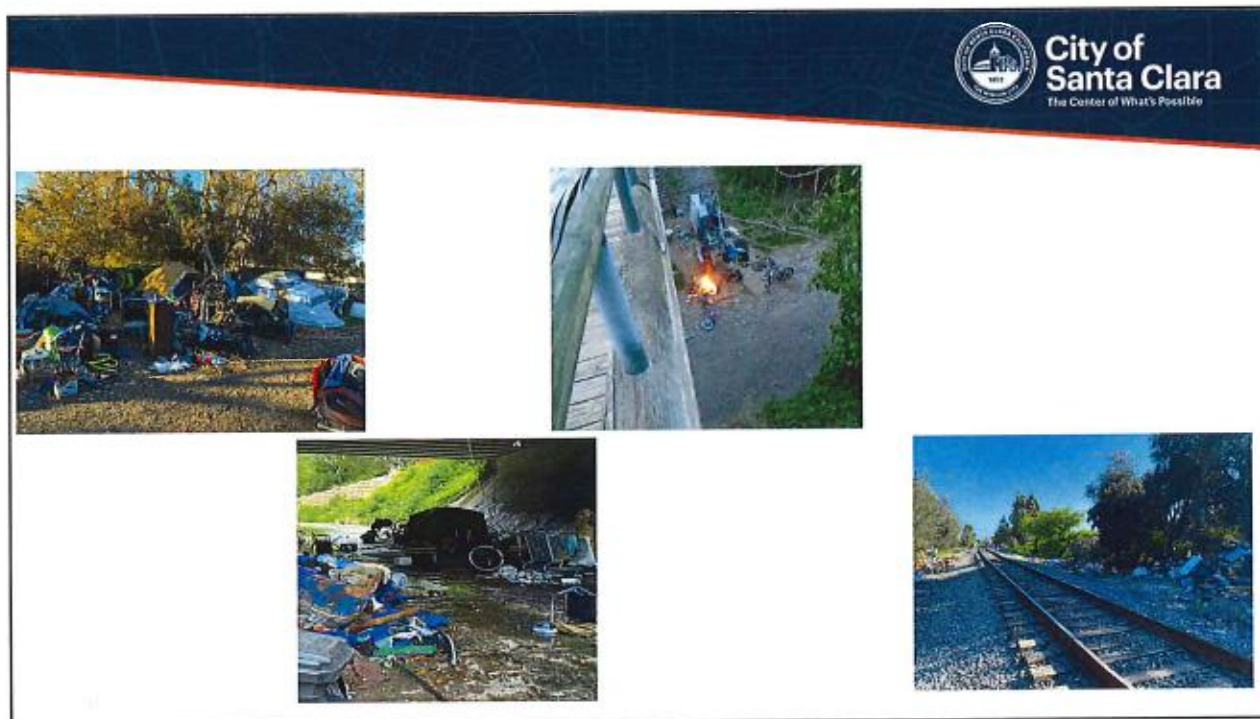| Location	Agency of Jurisdiction
In and around creeks	Valley Water
Along the freeways	CalTrans
Under the expressways	County Road
Along the railroad tracks	Cal Train
In City parks	City of Santa Clara
Private property	Private property owner (varies)
In adjacent municipalities	City of Jurisdiction
Public street	City of Santa Clara

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Homeless Encampments in Our City

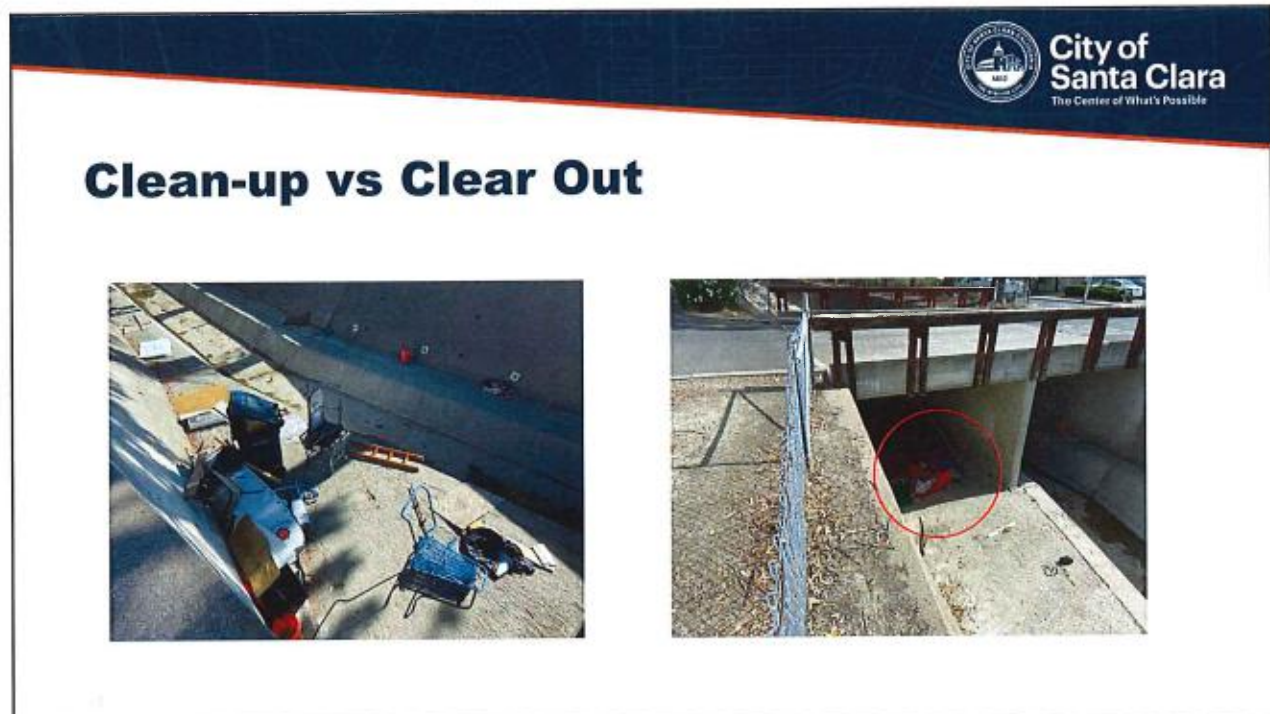| Encampment Location	Agency of Jurisdiction
Lafayette Street at Laurelwood Road	City of Santa Clara
San Tomas Aquino / Saratoga Creek Trail at Homestead Road	Valley Water
San Tomas Aquino / Saratoga Creek Trail at Mauricia Avenue and Tracy Drive	Valley Water
Calabazas Creek north of El Camino Real	Valley Water

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Procedures for Each Case

- Outreach to individuals advising of community resources (e.g. emergency shelter, showers, laundry service, meals, medical services, case management, employment training, etc.) and determine next steps to resolve the reported concern
- Notification advising of intent to conduct the clear out at least 72-hours in advance, encouraging individual(s) to remove their personal property and provide free bags to do
- Document pertinent information to third-party vendor regarding the location, making note of potential jobsite hazards and conducting employee safety training as necessary
- Coordination with an experienced third-party vendor to conduct clear out
- Staff a police officer to be present for the clear out
- Clear and dispose of debris
- Sort and tag personal property, prepare the items for storage and ensure the items can be claimed up to 90-days following the clear out
- Return of personal property as requested

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Photos Taken 8/16/21

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Department Oversight for Vehicles
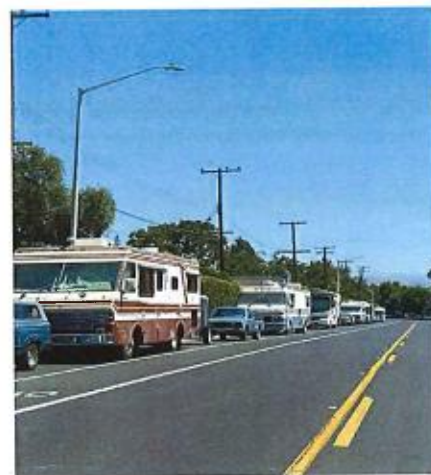
Matter of Concern	Department Oversight
Storage on private property	Code Enforcement Division
Illegal parking on public property	Police Department
Potential issues associated with RV, personal vehicle or commercial vehicle dwelling	Police Department

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Vehicle Dwelling in Santa Clara

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Vehicle Dwelling Locations in Our City

- As of 5/5/21, there were 107 vehicles counted with evidence of people living in them
- 97 of these were recreation vehicles *
- 73 of which were in one of the following locations:
  - Hope Drive from Lafayette Street to Lick Mill Boulevard
  - Bassett Street from Laurelwood Road to Agnew Road
  - Agnew Road from Lafayette Street to Mission College Boulevard
  - Memorex Drive from Lafayette Street to Richard Avenue
  - Richard Avenue from Lafayette Street to Martin Avenue
  - Space Park Drive, Kenneth Street and Raymond Street area
  - Grant Street and Reed Street area

It would be nearly impossible to do a complete inventory of personal vehicles serving as residences City-wide.

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Citizen Complaints Specific to Vehicle Dwellers

- Blight and corresponding property value decline
- Excessive litter and garbage
- Discharging sewage on the public right of way
- Line of sight safety issues for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers
- Encroachment of items outside, on top of, or attached to the RV
- Reduced parking availability
- Noise from generators
- Unleashed pets
- Concern for personal safety
- Potential for increase in crime

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Intersecting Issues Among Departments

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- City Attorney's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Community Development Department (Housing and Community Services Division)
- Fire Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Planning Department (Code Enforcement Division and Planning Division)
- Police Department

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City's Current Homeless Response

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- Multiple City Department's have initiatives, programs and services intended to serve those at risk of being unhoused and our homeless population, including:
- Housing and Community Services Division
    - The City of Santa Clara endorsed the Community Plan to End Homelessness on Tuesday, March 17
    - In August 2021, the City Council will consider an item to formalize the Housing Commission
    - Congregate Shelter: Bill Wilson operates 20 shelter beds in Santa Clara for homeless youth
    - Non-congregate Shelter: Bill Wilson Center manages roughly 15 transitional living group homes (5-6 bedrooms each) where they place homeless youth
    - Motels/Hotels: The County has secured beds at two sites, the Western Motel (2250 El Camino Real) and Hotel E Real (3580 El Camino Real), to shelter clients in emergency situations

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City's Current Homeless Response

- Housing and Community Services Division
  - <u>Covenant House California</u> opened a full-service Transitional Housing program for 30 youth, ages 18-24. In collaboration with Santa Clara County and CISCO as primary partners, the site at the 'Western Motel' was renovated to meet the needs of young people transitioning from homelessness
  - <u>Emergency Financial Assistance:</u> COVID Emergency Rental Assistance Program — $2.8 million to provide three consecutive months of rent for eligible households based on income levels
  - <u>Tenant Based Rental Assistance:</u> Abode Services and Bill Wilson Center provide tenant based rental assistance of up to 24 months with case management services to support families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Currently, up to 50 households receive rental assistance through TBRA
  - <u>April 2021:</u> Approved a $4,000,000 loan agreement with Allied Housing to Support the Construction of 80 Affordable Housing Units, 39 of these units set aside for chronically homeless residents
  - <u>May 2021:</u> Calabazas Community Affordable Apartments completed construction and began accepting applications May 24-June 7. The Calabazas Apartments provides 144 units of affordable and supportive housing at 3311 Kifer Road
  - <u>June 2021:</u> Closed financing on Agrihood by Core companies, a $250 million mixed-use development on city-owned land, which includes 108 units at 30% AMI or lower

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Potential Short-term Strategies

- Approve establishing a Housing Commission / Task Force
- Through the Housing Commission, Study and advance the needs of Santa Clara's unhoused populations, including providing recommendations to Council regarding implementation of Community Plan to End Homelessness
- Leverage existing County and State funding, programs and resources
- Provide trash pick-up services / Clean-up
- Offer more frequent street sweeping following movement of RV's
- Coordinate delivery of fresh water to homeless encampments
- Submit a Project HomeKey application for upcoming State funding opportunity to establish transitional housing site for homeless people

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Possible Mid-term Solutions

- Fund additional Code Enforcement Division, Community Development Department and/or Police Department (Community Response Team) employees dedicated to homelessness
- Fund a mental health clinician to work from the Police Department's Crisis Intervention Specialists to serve as a mobile outreach worker among our chronic homeless population Enhance or establish local partnerships with County services, regional non-profits and faith-based communities
- Contemplate an ordinance to limit RV, boat vehicle overnight parking in industrial areas
- Consider an ordinance to limit RV parking on private property to be occupied as a long-term residence
- Consider a ballot measure to restrict large vehicle parking on residential streets and/or streets with a certain width or less
- Mobile ADA compliant portable toilets and sinks
- Portable shower facilities and laundry facilities

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Potential Longer-term Strategies

- Work with County to establish a temporary cold/hot weather shelter (requires land and operator)
- Implement a Safe Parking Program (requires land, operator and services)
- Build more affordable housing (extremely low-income units)
- Increase affordable housing percent in developments (15%+)
- Expand City services to provide higher-touch services based on supplementing programs provided by the County and service providers

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How Residents Can Support Our Efforts

- On August 24, 2021, the City Council will consider adopting an Ordinance formalizing the City's Housing Commission. The City's Housing Commission will study and advance the needs of Santa Clara's unhoused populations

- Housing Commission membership shall consist of five council appointed members who shall not hold any paid office or employment in the City government

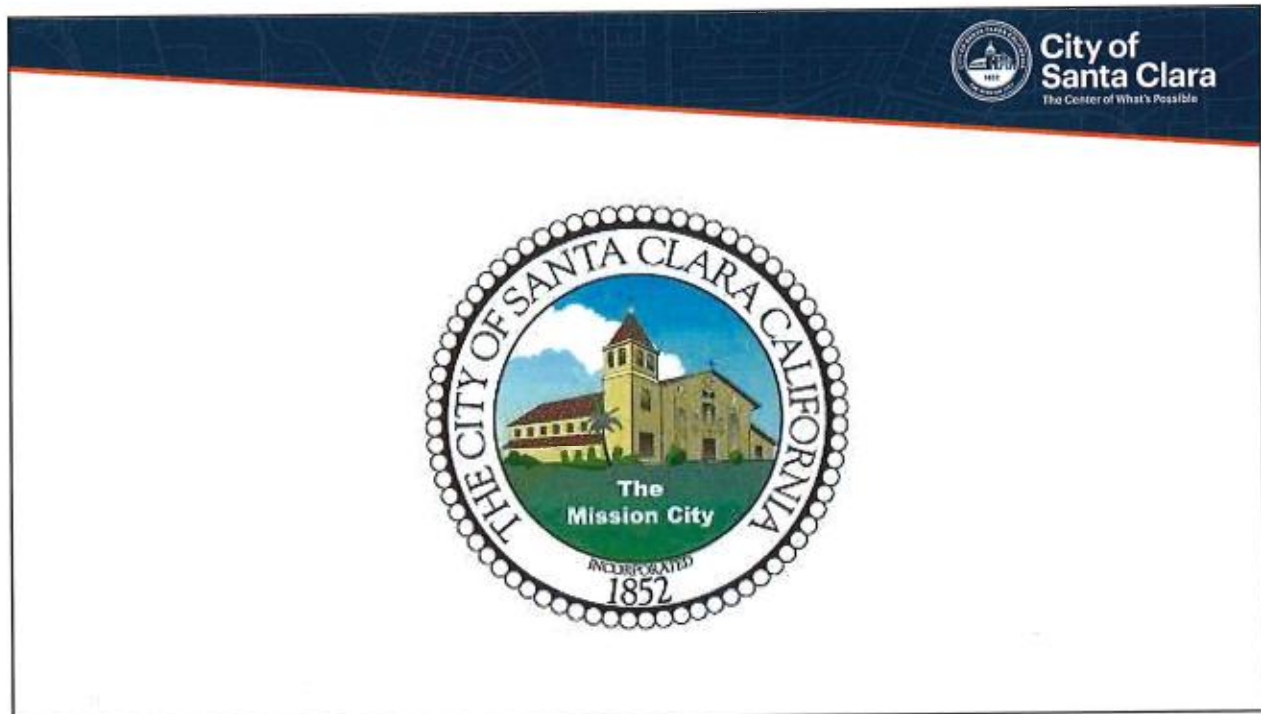- We encourage residents to fully engage in Housing Commission meetings

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Next Steps

- **Council Feedback and Discussion**
- **Input or Direction on Next Steps, including Short, Mid and Long-Term Options**
    - **Status quo**
    - **Ordinance amendment(s)**
    - **New programs and/or services**
    - **Pilot program(s)**
    - **Ballot measures**
    - **Designation of personnel and financial resources**

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