



TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Steven D. Powers, City Administrator

DATE: June 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Encampment Workgroup Report – Continuum of Care Board

Attached is the Continuum of Care report regarding the 'humane displacement of homeless encampments' as requested by City Council.

Further detail on the current process for notifying campers in City parks that camping is not allowed:

1. Park staff and citizens contact Police to report location of camp and nature of complaint.
2. Police will attempt to locate the camp to provide PORT information to the campers or the information is posted.
3. Police contact PORT.
4. PORT is giving time to contact the campers.
5. Police post the camp after hearing back from PORT.
6. Once posted the residents have 48hrs to vacate the camp and remove their belongings.
7. After that Parks cleans up belongings, refuse, and other material left on City property.

From the time the police receive a complaint, campers generally have at least 4 days to remove their belongings from City parks.

CONTINUUM OF CARE WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMANE DISPLACEMENT OF HOMELESS TENT ENCAMPMENTS

Re: City of Ann Arbor Council Resolution #15-0088

BACKGROUND

In March of 2014, OCED convened a meeting to discuss the process for handling encampment complaints received by the AAPD. OCED and AAPD met with staff from PORT and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) to determine a clear process for coordinating campsite responses. The process agreed to and subsequently implemented is as follows:

1. Once AAPD receives a complaint, AAPD attempts to make contact with individual(s) to deliver a 48 hour notice. If no contact is made, they post a 48 hour notice in a visible location;
2. PORT is notified via email by AAPD that individual(s) have been given a 48-hour notice. National Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) is also on the notification email, however they will be asked to get in touch with AAPD after 48 hours to receive the green light for site clean-up.
3. PORT attempts to make contact with individual(s). If contact is not made, they will post a sign in a visible location that states their contact information and that they help with transporting and relocating. PORT attempts to engage individual and connect them to services.

In January of 2015, The City of Ann Arbor resolved that the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board make recommendations related to humane displacement and how to better meet the needs of individuals not currently served by the formal shelter system (Resolution #: 15-0088, Version: 1). At the February 11, 2015 CoC Board meeting, Board members volunteered to work with other agencies and entities in order to complete this task. These CoC Board members represented a wide range of community systems including emergency shelter, veterans, faith organizations, and the Ann Arbor Police Department (AAPD). MISSION, PORT, and Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) representatives were also invited to attend the encampment workgroup meeting.

ENCAMPMENT WORKGROUP DISCUSSION

Before discussing the specifics of humane displacement, the workgroup talked about the Community Housing Prioritization (CHP) process implemented in August 2014 and how this has helped house the most vulnerable people who are homeless in the community. The CHP process includes assessing clients with a common assessment tool to determine vulnerability and permanent housing and service needs. The assessment tool score, along with other criteria, are used to prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing programs. The CHP process has helped increase the efficacy and efficiency of how Washtenaw County responds to those experiencing homelessness, including campers.

Encampment workgroup members discussed current practices to determine whether the current process was humane and if there were ways to make it more humane. Workgroup members also noted that is difficult to discuss "humane displacement" in a vacuum void of a deeper discussion of where campers are displaced to. Most often, campers have limited options for housing, so displacement often means campers are moving from one outdoor living situation to another. With that said, so long as

encampments are being displaced, workgroup members agreed that there are ways to make displacement more humane.

Discussion points were as follows:

- Typically, campers have high barriers and vulnerability, which makes it difficult to find permanent housing. In discussing whether or not there was a need to expand the rotating shelters to a year-round option, it was determined that this was not a short or a long-term solution to encampments. Campers typically do not stay at shelters, even when there is space, for a variety of reasons.
- Current practice gives the campers 48 hours to relocate with the flexibility of more time if possible and if needed, unless other extenuating circumstances exist. During this time, PORT works with campers to find a place to relocate and help with the transporting of belongings. The group discussed whether or not the 48 hours indicated on the notice was sufficient and fair for campers to relocate. Many workgroup members supported the 48 hour window since current practice typically allows for additional time as needed for campers to relocate. Some workgroup members felt that a longer period – 5 to 7 days, for example – would be preferable. The workgroup could not come to consensus on this issue and recommended that the CoC Board further discuss the appropriate amount of time to indicate on the notice.
- Additionally, some workgroup members indicated a request to include specific information on the 48 hour notice regarding the trigger that led to the displacement – specifically what reason was cited, if any, to AAPD or other City entity when a complaint is submitted regarding a tent encampment. AAPD has advised this is already occurring. When the displacement is from private property the campers are advised the authority is under the State trespass statute and the property owner is the party requesting the displacement. When the displacement is from a park, the campers are advised it is due to notification of violation of city ordinance prohibiting camping in parks.
- The workgroup members noted that PORT and other community partners currently do excellent work to engage people experiencing homelessness that are camping and connect them to appropriate services and housing as quickly as possible. The workgroup indicated that a primary area for improvement in the current response to campers is to better provide for their personal property as camps are disbanded. The group noted that while this would be complex for the City to undertake directly, funding for storage and transportation of personal property could be coordinated through a nonprofit community organization as campers relocate.
- The workgroup also requested that a long-term solution should be addressed by the CoC Board and be included in the Blueprint to End Homelessness. Workgroup members indicated that this conversation should include the voices of those currently experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are currently camping.

CoC BOARD DISCUSSION : 48 HOUR NOTICE

In discussing the appropriate time for a notice, it is important to remember the two responses that can occur when camping on Ann Arbor City public or private land. If camps are located on private property, the AAPD is bound to follow State trespass statute and the wishes of the private property owners. In the case that it is public land, AAPD response follows city ordinance. Therefore, the recommendations put

forth by the workgroup and the CoC Board can only apply to City of Ann Arbor public property, not private property. It is also important to remember there are other private properties within the City of Ann Arbor which are policed by other law enforcement agencies, such as the University of Michigan Police, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and the Railroad Police. CoC Board discussion on this matter considered the campers, service providers engaging with campers, and the need to assist with the transporting and storing of personal belongings. It was determined that 7 days was appropriate for a notice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing current practices, the workgroup and CoC Board agrees that the AAPD, in conjunction with PORT and other service providers, is utilizing a 'humane displacement' model for addressing homeless tent encampments. The CoC Board recommends that the existing humane process should be changed to accommodate a 7 day notice, in place of the current 48 hour notice, for community members who are homeless and camping to vacate City of Ann Arbor public lands, with the exception of extenuating health and safety circumstances. Moreover, the Workgroup and CoC Board recognize that additional support and coordination is necessary. While community resources should be targeted to provide permanent housing solutions, the storing and transporting of property is a necessary step in the relocation process. If City Council could allocate funds to support the process of humane displacement, it is recommended that they should be used to safely store and transport the belongings of campers as they engage with agencies to find permanent housing. Workgroup and CoC Board members noted that liability and staffing issues may prevent the City from addressing this need directly, however, local nonprofits or other community groups could be identified to take on this responsibility and coordinate with PORT, AAPD and campers as displacements occur. To assist in evaluation of this recommendation, CoC staff has provided some estimated cost breakdowns for local storage options below for the consideration.

Item	Details	Estimated Cost for 1 Encampment (assuming 10 campers)	Estimated Costs per Year (assuming 5 encampments per year of 10 campers each)
Moving truck- 10ft. (\$35, plus \$.79 per mile, plus gas)	Initial camp relocation- Assume 20 miles of travel	\$55	\$275
Pick Up Truck- (\$30.95, plus \$.59 per mile, plus gas)	Relocating camper belongings to permanent housing, assuming 20 miles of travel.	\$45 x 10 campers = \$450	\$2250
Storage Unit (10x10)- \$145 (climate controlled), \$10 one-time sign up	1 month	\$155	\$775
Totals		\$660	\$3300

Finally, it should be noted that while humane displacement is already occurring in the City, the long term solution to the social challenge of people experiencing homelessness camping on public (and private) property is the creation of sufficient affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing for

those who are most vulnerable and with the highest needs. In 2004, City Council endorsed the community's Blueprint to End Homelessness, which outlined the need for *at least* 500 new units of permanent supportive housing in Washtenaw County. And this year, City Council adopted the Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis published by OCED in January of 2015. The report recommends that various levels of government address housing affordability and other economic inequities in order to effectively respond to symptoms of inequity, such as tent encampments. The workgroup and CoC Board agreed that these commitments are most important in the long-term solution to homelessness and tent encampments.