Manager's Report

February 9, 2021

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE



Key Takeaways

- City has followed CDC guidance on not removing homeless camps on City-owned property since issued and will continue to do so, unless there is an imminent safety concern.

- NCDOT has also agreed to pause removal of homeless camps unless there is an imminent safety concern.

- Opportunities to improve communication both internally and externally.

- Homelessness is a community-wide issue that requires a community-wide response.

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Presentation Overview

- City Policy on Homeless Camps
- Review of Homeless Camp Removal
- Overview of City's Homeless Initiatives
- Moving Forward

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City Policy on Homeless Camps

- Proactive outreach
  - Community Engagement Division of Asheville Police Department
  - City-funded outreach position at Homeward Bound
- Campsite removal on City-owned land
  - Rare
  - Advance notice (7 days) unless immediate risk
  - Connection to community resources
  - Currently following CDC guidance *not* to remove camps unless imminent danger
- Campsite removal on private property
  - Discretion of the property owner
  - APD responsible for enforcing trespass laws at the request of the property owner
  - Connection to community resources
- Dignity and respect

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Review Homeless Camp Removal

- Last week a homeless camp located on NCDOT property on Lexington Avenue under the I-240 bridge was removed.

- The removal was as a result of safety concerns with campfires and the proximity of the camp to NCDOT roadway.

- APD officers did not initiate the removal of the camp. As per City policy, APD reached out to community partners to make sure resources were available for the people being displaced. APD officers also offered to transport individuals to overnight facilities.

- Individuals were given the opportunity to remove their belongings before the NCDOT clean up began.

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Ending Homelessness in Asheville

- Goals
  - Move beyond managing homelessness to **ending homelessness**
  - Develop and support a homeless service system that can quickly respond to resolve housing crises
  - Make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring
- Values
  - Homeless people are not the problem. Homelessness is the problem.
  - Homelessness is a public health issue, an equity issue, and a housing issue.
  - Strategies and decisions should be data driven.
  - Homelessness is a solvable problem.

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City Response to Homelessness

- Developing and supporting the community's homeless service system
  - Not a direct service provider
  - HUD Continuum of Care lead
  - Collaborative Applicant for CoC and Regional Applicant for ESG funding: $1.9M
  - Data (HMIS, Point-in-Time count)
  - Strategy and solutions: moving beyond crisis response to ending homelessness
- City Investment
  - Critical services: coordinated entry, outreach
  - CDBG and HOME funding for homeless programs
  - Permanent housing developments targeting homelessness

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COVID Response

- Emergency shelter at Harrah's Cherokee Center: 50 beds
- Non-congregate shelter at Red Roof Inn: 60 rooms
- Code Purple: 50 beds
- Collaboration with Buncombe County on resources for service providers, PPE distribution, COVID testing, vaccine planning
- CDBG-CV
  - Rental assistance and services to prevent eviction/homelessness and provide rapid rehousing
- ESG-CV
  - Street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing

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Moving Forward

- Immediate
  - Continue to follow CDC guidance
  - Workgroup with NCDOT to establish shared protocol
- Long-term solutions
  - Low-barrier shelter
  - Permanent housing and services
- Homelessness is a community-wide issue that requires a community-wide response.
  - We know how to end homelessness. We need the will, resources, and capacity to act.

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