Homeless Encampments, Water Courses & MS4 Regulation

A Riverside Perspective
Homelessness

- Homeless Population
  - United States – 550,000 (2017)
  - California – 115,000 (2015)

- Trends
  - Numbers declining across United States except 5 western States including California
Current State of Homelessness:
Point in Time Counts and Permanent Housing

• Total and Unsheltered Homeless:
  • **2015** Point in Time: 2,470 homeless (17% decrease from 2013)
    • 1,587 unsheltered
  • **2016** Point in Time: 2,165 homeless (12% decrease from 2015)
    • 1,351 unsheltered
  • **2017** Point in Time: 2,406 (11% overall increase since 2016)
    • 1,638 unsheltered
Southwest Corridor:  
*Point in Time Counts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lake Elsinore</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menifee</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrieta</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perris</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temecula</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildomar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unincorporated:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anza</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Valley</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mead Valley</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakeland Village</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun City</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temescal Valley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*unsheltered homeless count results*
Current State of Homelessness: *Emergency Shelter Beds*

- Increase in permanent housing (PSH + RRH) beds countywide:
  - 2010 - 364 beds
  - 2013 - 862 beds
  - 2016 - 1,830 beds
  - 2017 - 1,894 beds

- 2017 Emergency shelter beds countywide: 554
  - 65 beds for cold weather (December-April)
  - Loss of 80 beds due to Roy’s DRC closure
  - 336 for specific sub-populations
    - Veterans
    - Families
    - Unaccompanied youth
    - Domestic Violence
    - Mental health

- Enough emergency shelter beds for 34% of unsheltered homeless population
## Two Groups of Homeless

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Group A</strong></th>
<th><strong>Group B</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~2/3 of homeless population</td>
<td>Living in encampments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to use existing services/resources to get off street</td>
<td>Tents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May experience situational homelessness</td>
<td>Makeshift shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can benefit from supportive services and housing to become self sufficient</td>
<td>Public places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May just need one time/short term assistance</td>
<td>Remote areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complaints by businesses and residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most contact with law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher frequency at jails, hospitals, shelters, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group B: Chronically Homeless

• Most challenging
• Most severe barriers
  • Mental health
  • Substance abuse
• Highly “service resistant”
  • Do not want to go into emergency shelter
  • Frequent contacts with:
    • Law enforcement
    • Homeless outreach teams
      • Offered services multiple times
Why Watercourses?

- Fenced environment – Safety and place for animals
- Near highways – White noise
- Bridges – Weather protection
- Removed from urban centers – Out of sight; reduced risk of eviction
- Proximity to light industry and commerce – Source of materials
- Low flood risk – Relatively safe

Source CCCFCD, 2013
Homeless Encampments In Watercourses
Homeless Encampment Watercourse Impacts
Regional Homeless Outreach

The City of Temecula has taken the lead on crafting a comprehensive approach to addressing regional homelessness in a way that respects the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

• **Background**
• **Increase Community Awareness**
  • What is responsible compassion?

“Never do for the poor what they can do for themselves…to provide an emergency response to a chronic need is to harm people…”
Three-pronged Approach

**Collaboration** – working with a variety of partners and non-profit stakeholders, Regional Collaboration

**Coordination** – Police Department, Riverside County Flood Control, Park Rangers, Code Enforcement

**Communication** – Community Education of residents, businesses, faith-based and non-profits

Address concerns of homelessness with local businesses
Work in collaboration with local stakeholders
Regional Homeless Alliance

A Regional Homeless Alliance
Elected officials, city agencies, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations

Collaboration

City involvement overview

Silo-System
TEMECULA HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM

Dedicated to helping and protecting those in need by providing resources, intervention, and enforcement

• Began in 2014 with two officers
• In 2017, two additional officers joined the team
• Dedicated Sergeant, Lieutenant
• Chief of Police serves on boards of housing and domestic violence organizations
• Temecula spent $1.4M in homelessness-related public safety costs last year
Homeless Outreach Team

The police department created this new team to work with those experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Outreach Team works closely with the homeless and the city's non-profit partner to help the people who are willing to get up and out of their situation.

Our Homeless Outreach Team employs a two-pronged approach; (1) a zero-tolerance stance on crime and (2) a concerted effort to get law abiding homeless people the resources they need so they can get out of their homeless situation.

Temecula deputies unite homeless man with family
Partners & stakeholders

Community Mission of Hope
  Housing Crisis Response Center
  Case Management
  Outreach Teams
  Mentorship
  Housing Locator
Assistance League
Supervisor Washington’s office
School Districts
Health care providers/hospitals
Foster Care agencies
Senior Services
Project Touch
Educators

Law Enforcement
Probation Department
Local Cities
Rotary Clubs
Chamber of Commerce
Local Realtors
Property Management Companies
Workforce Development
Department of Social Services
The Vet Center
US Vets
Western Riverside Council of Governments
Abatement & Clean-Up
Regulatory Challenges with Homeless Encampment Cleanup

- Trash Removal – Trash removal by hand and small equipment typically does not result in grading subject to Section 404/401 or a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA).

- If access ramps, roads and/or vegetation removal is needed, regulatory permits (e.g. Section 401) may be required.

- Encampment cleanups during the nesting season may need to avoid nesting birds protected by the MBTA and/or the Endangered Species Act.
Conclusions

• The problem of discharges of trash and human waste from homeless encampments is entwined with complex and challenging societal issues, including poverty, mental illness and substance abuse

• Local agencies and partnerships are motivated for multiple reasons to abate and clean-up homeless camps in watercourses and are doing so
Conclusions

• Regional Board can:

  • Make funding available – SEPs?

  • Support encampment/trash clean-up authorization in conservation easements and regulatory maintenance permits

  • Support efforts to work with CDFW, USFWS, USACE to streamline 404/401/1600/Section 7 permits and/or authorizations

  • Be kept apprised