



City of Santa Barbara

Office of the Mayor

SantaBarbaraCA.gov

RRowse@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Randy Rowse
Mayor

August 20, 2024

City Hall
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA
93101-1990

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA
93102-1990

Tel: (805) 564-5322
Fax: (805) 564-5475

The Honorable Pauline Maxwell
Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
P.O. Box 21107
Santa Barbara, California 93121 – 1107

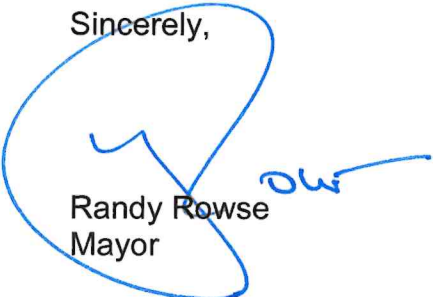
Reference: Response to Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report titled, "Homeless Encampments in Santa Barbara County" received June 21, 2024.

Honorable Pauline Maxwell and Grand Jury Foreperson:

Please find attached the City of Santa Barbara's response to the above referenced Grand Jury report. As directed by the Grand Jury, all responses are provided in accordance with Sections 933 and 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

Should the Grand Jury have any questions regarding the City's response, or wish to follow up with the City, please contact me or City Administrator Kelly R. McAdoo.

Sincerely,


Randy Rowse
Mayor

Cc: Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Santa Barbara City Councilmembers
Kelly R. McAdoo, City Administrator

Attachment



Please consider the environment before printing this letter.

City of Santa Barbara's Response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report: Homeless Encampments in Santa Barbara County

The City of Santa Barbara's responses below are only to the findings and recommendations that pertain to the City of Santa Barbara as identified in the Grand Jury's report.

Finding 2: The negative effects of encampment sweeps can be mitigated when a variety of community resources are present at the time of the clean-up.

Response to Finding 2: Agree. The City of Santa Barbara does not facilitate "sweeps" of encampments. The City's Encampment Response Protocol carefully details our approach which includes a guiding principle that addressing encampments requires collaboration from community partners and agencies.

Recommendation 2: The County and cities shall ensure that all sweeps occur utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach.

Response to Recommendation 2: *Has been implemented.* The City of Santa Barbara's Encampment Response Protocol includes the utilization of a multi-disciplinary approach when engaging individuals that are living in encampments. The City's Encampment Response Team is comprised of staff from Sustainability and Resilience, Community Development, Fire, Police, Parks and Recreation, City Administrator's Office, Airport Patrol, Harbor Patrol and Public Works. This team also works directly with homeless outreach providers as well as County and State departments and agencies, as needed. The response team initially assesses the encampments reported for health and safety risks, provides education on hazards, and facilitates referrals to shelter and services. The Sustainability and Resilience Department Community Engagement Division tracks reports of encampments, deploys the response team, coordinates interventions, and manages logistics for removal.

Finding 3: Encampments lack basic sanitation services.

Response to Finding 3: Agree. Encampments create unsafe and unhealthy conditions for several reasons and chief among them is the lack of basic sanitation services. Encampment sites often contain the presence of human waste, needles or other unsafe, unsanitary and hazardous material.

Recommendation 3: The County and the cities shall make trash cans, porta-potties, resources for handwashing, and sharps containers for safe disposal of needles and other hazardous waste available near encampment sites.

Response to Recommendation 3: *Will not be implemented.* The City's Encampment Response Protocol does not include sanctioned encampments because they have not improved conditions or resulted in solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

Creating what in essence would be a sanctioned camping site has shown very little impact on reducing homelessness in other cities and may exacerbate the health and safety issues due to the more permanent nature of the site. This includes risk of fire, impacts on public recreation areas and the environment, safety of the broader community, and concern for the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness of which the majority have reported chronic health conditions.

The City does provide trash cans, portable restrooms, and handwashing stations in areas impacted by encampments and/or people experiencing homelessness on a case-by-case basis and in general works to mitigate these issues by conducting the following: Waste removal is made available to active encampments to reduce the footprint of the site and mitigate public health and environmental health concerns while offers of shelter and services are being facilitated. Moreover, waste / recycling / compost receptacles and restrooms including resources for handwashing are broadly available to the public. This includes multiple facilities that are open during the day to specifically provide basic relief services to people experiencing homelessness including the daytime navigation and workforce development center in downtown Santa Barbara (The FARO Center), PATH and the Father Virgil Cordano Day Center.



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Honorable Pauline Maxwell, Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
PO Box 21007
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1107

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SB Sup. Ct p.o. box is

21107