



Isla Vista Recreation and Park District
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Date: 11/9/2020
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Isla Vista Recreation and Park District
Subject: Temporary Emergency Sheltering Option for COVID-19 Response

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

Community members experiencing homelessness in Isla Vista's parks has raised growing concerns over the risk of fire, environmental degradation, and the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness as well as from the community at large. Starting in March of 2020, IVRPD formed an internal COVID-19 taskforce and advocated for directed resources from agency providers that have the expertise, budget, and mandates to support these concerns. With the formation of the encampment working group in May of 2020, IVRPD and its working group partners have identified resources to support a concerted response to the increase in service calls, the need for sanitation services, removal of biohazard and hazardous materials, and the routine and deferred maintenance of parks due to encampment activity.

On June 30, 2020, outreach workers counted 44 persons experiencing homelessness in Isla Vista parks. Current estimates of persons experiencing homelessness is as high as 80 and is concentrated within four Isla Vista parks owned and operated by IVRPD. Due to health, safety and public accessibility concerns posed by encampments, IVRPD outlined criteria for levels of intervention, and an operational approach in the COVID-19 Encampment Management Policy (CEMP), adopted by the IVRPD Board of Directors on August 27th, 2020.

For the last 6 months, IVRPD has been working collectively with partners of the "IV Encampment Working Group", which includes representatives from Food Not Bombs, Santa Barbara United Way Home for Good, Isla Vista Community Services District, Isla Vista Foot Patrol, the Third District Supervisor's Office of Joan Hartmann, and County of Santa Barbara Housing and Community Development Division to find ways to reduce health and safety risks posed by the encampments by providing measures of harm reduction and resources.

On October 26th, 2020, IVRPD was cited by Santa Barbara County Fire for "significant potential for the fire and life hazard conditions associated with the inspected homeless encampments to adversely impact life, property, and the environment" and ordered to reduce the threat to life and property by 1) "removing all combustible material and debris associated with the inspected homeless encampments, and 2) eliminating the unpermitted use of open fire on all IVRPD property" by November 20th, 2020.

IVRPD wishes to express its wholehearted support for the proposed tiny home or "pallet home" project, as presented by Dinah Lockhart and staff, that would provide shelter and services to approximately 50 unsheltered individuals for a six-month period, starting December 2020 and lasting until June 2021.

IVRPD believes that this project proposal is a fair and equitable solution that protects the health and safety of all unsheltered persons, while allowing parks in Isla Vista to continue to be safe and accessible for everyone amidst a pandemic. A successful response to this public health emergency will require the participation and involvement of the County Departments responsible for providing direct services and assistance to the temporary structures established near the current encampments in Isla Vista. IVRPD is committed to supporting this project and continuing to be a strong partner in providing further assistance in any way it can to support this project.

We look forward to working with the County to reach a definitive agreement that will allow the pallet home project to become a reality.

Thank you and sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kimberly Kiefer', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kimberly Kiefer
General Manager, Isla Vista Recreation and Park District