



**San Luis Obispo
Countywide 10 Year
Plan to End
Homelessness**

*We envision a future
in which the housing
and comprehensive
services necessary to
remain housed are
available for all,
affording everyone
maximum self-
sufficiency, and the
opportunity to be
productive and
participating
members of our
community*

**HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (HSOC)
Encampment Committee Meeting Agenda**

March 5, 2020, 2 p.m.

San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services
3433 S. Higuera, Room 356
San Luis Obispo, CA

1. Call to Order and Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Action/Information/Discussion
 - 3.1 Discussion Item: Background and Committee Goals
 - 3.1.1 Attachment: Letter from Supervisor Bruce Gibson to the Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC)
 - 3.1.2 Attachment: HSOC Action Item to Create Encampment Committee
 - 3.1.3 Attachment: Proposed Goals for HSOC Encampment Committee
 - 3.2 Discussion Item: Committee Structure, Assignments, and Timelines
4. Future Discussion Items
5. Next Meeting Date: April 2, 2020
6. Adjournment



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Bruce Gibson District Two Supervisor

May 2, 2019

TO: Hon. Kristen Barneich
Chair, Homeless Services Oversight Council

RE: Proposal for HSOC sub-committee on encampments

Dear Ms. Barneich:

I write to propose that HSOC establish a sub-committee to address the community impacts of homeless encampments. As I note below, such encampments are of concern throughout the county and I believe a sub-committee with broad geographic representation could provide important support and direction as community members and the county work on solutions.

As I'm sure you know, virtually every community in our county has direct experience with unsheltered homeless persons, as that population has grown significantly in recent years. In my district, I've been heartened by the interest shown by many caring community members as they try to provide what programs they can to deliver food, clothing and shelter, especially during adverse weather.

Among the most challenging issues our communities face is the notable increase of homeless encampments on both public and private property. On the North Coast we have seen significant encampments in Los Osos, Morro Bay and Cambria. Typically, these have been groupings of tents and other improvised shelter erected in riparian areas of creeks, forested areas and other open areas, especially near the urban boundary. Such encampments have a number of public health and safety risks and impacts.

First, in areas such as Cambria and Los Osos there is considerable concern that open flames used for cooking and warming pose a substantial fire risk. Second, riparian areas and water supplies are negatively impacted by trash and human waste. Some discarded materials – such as syringes and cooking fuels – pose serious health and environmental hazards. Finally, there is community concern regarding criminal activity in some encampments.

We appreciate the efforts of non-profit organizations and county agencies to address these impacts. For instance, the Sheriff's Department Community Action Team has been active in contacting encamped individuals and seeking to connect them with services. As with every issue regarding homelessness, we realize that more resources are necessary to make progress.

I believe that an established HSOC subcommittee would be able to:


- assess the scope and location of homeless encampments county-wide;
- assess the severity of various impacts and identify the resources necessary for mitigation;
- provide a forum for developing community action plans that would involve local non-profit organizations and jurisdictions beyond cities and the county. For example, some community services districts (CSDs) have facilities affected by encampments, while also having solid waste disposal authority that could provide useful mitigation;
- advise the Board of Supervisors on programs and budget allocations that would best mitigate these issues.

I feel that such a sub-committee should be based on broad geographic representation. That is, I understand that the formal membership of HSOC is comprised largely of service providers and city/county representatives. The sub-committee membership could be broadened to include public members from communities affected by encampments and representatives from special districts such as CSDs or a community health care district.

I greatly appreciate the ongoing efforts of HSOC and would be happy to discuss this proposal with anyone interested. Please don't hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Blake Fixler (bfixler@co.slo.ca.us – 805-781-4338), if you have further questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



BRUCE GIBSON
District Two Supervisor

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (HSOC)
ACTION ITEM
July 24, 2019

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4.2.1

ITEM: AUTHORIZE THE CREATION OF AN AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ENCAMPMENTS

ACTION REQUIRED:

Vote to authorize the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Encampments.

SUMMARY NARRATIVE:

A substantial number of persons experiencing homelessness in the county are unsheltered. The 2017 Homeless Point in Time (PIT) Count found that 69% of the population of homeless people in the County were unsheltered on a single night in January 2017.

The impact of being unsheltered may have substantial impact on the physical and mental health of homeless adults, children and youth. For example, lack of access to hygiene and sanitation facilities may put homeless persons' health at risk. Being unsheltered also may make homeless persons more vulnerable to being the victims of violent crime.

Unsheltered homelessness also impacts the communities in which it occurs, including increasing expenses for those communities. Lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities and trash pick-up for people living in encampments may lead to contamination of nearby waterways, and campfires started for the purpose of cooking or providing warmth may create fire dangers. Cleaning up encampments may cost communities as much as tens of thousands of dollars.

Some communities in California and elsewhere have implemented actions to try to reduce unsheltered homelessness or mitigate the impact of unsheltered homelessness on persons experiencing homelessness and the communities in which they live. These actions have included increasing the supply of permanent supportive housing and offering housing when clearing waterways of encampments,¹ creating tiny home villages,² leading public

¹E.g. <https://voiceofoc.org/2018/02/anaheim-approves-homelessness-policies-focused-on-housing/>.

² E.g. <http://cms.klove.com/news/2018/07/05/Tiny-Houses-On-Church-Property-Ease-Sacramento-Homelessness-podcast-/>.

health campaigns to immunize homeless persons from Hepatitis A,³ providing trash pick up to homeless encampments,⁴ and providing hygiene and sanitation facilities to encampments.⁵ Locally, cities and the County have implemented or are planning efforts to address some of these issues as well, such as by adding mental health therapists to law enforcement Community Action Teams, planning immunization campaigns, and other efforts.

On May 2, 2019, County of San Luis Obispo District 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson sent a letter to the Homeless Services Oversight Council (HSOC), outlining some of the impacts of unsheltered homelessness on local communities and requesting that the HSOC create a Committee on Encampments (see Attachment 4.3.1A). The proposed goals of the Committee would be to assess the scope and geographic distribution of encampments, examine the severity impacts and identify resources needed to address, provide a forum for coordination – including coordination with agencies from unincorporated communities – and making recommendations as to programs and budget allocations needed to address these issues. At the June 19, 2019 meeting of the HSOC Executive Committee, Supervisor Gibson attended and requested that the proposal be brought to the full HSOC for consideration. The Executive Committee discussed and recommended that this proposal be brought to the July 24th meeting.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There would be no immediate financial impact from this recommendation.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff recommend that this item be adopted and that the Committee create subcommittees to work on specific issues of that include health and the environment, engagement and connection to services, Safe Parking, and public safety.

³E.g. <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/newsMediadocs/2017PR/DPH-release-Hepatitis-A-vaccination-campaign.pdf>.

⁴ E.g. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-encampment-cleanup-dumping-bathrooms-trash-20190619-story.html>.

⁵ E.g. see: <https://www.watereducation.org/western-water/can-providing-bathrooms-homeless-protect-californias-water-quality>.

Proposed Goals for Homeless Services Oversight Council's Ad Hoc Encampment Committee

1. Provide data on the scope of encampments and the regional distribution of encampments
2. Quantify the cost impact of encampments
3. Identify and recommend alternatives to encampments
4. Make recommendations to improve public health and safety, both for the persons in the encampments and for the community
5. Make process recommendations to increase and improve coordination between cities, counties, districts, nonprofits and other entities
6. Make recommendations to increase and improve outreach to, engagement of, and placement of unsheltered persons from encampments into permanent housing
7. For each of the recommendations, identify costs and resources needed to implement, including any impact on law enforcement staffing needs, e.g. outreach and engagement activities that require outreach staff to be accompanied by a law enforcement officer such as a Community Action Team officer

GIS Map Data

3/5/2020

Occupied/active encampments county wide: 117

Total encampments: 339

