



## City of Eureka

### Memorandum

Date: May 8, 2017  
To: Greg L. Sparks, City Manager  
From: Andrew Mills, Chief of Police  
Subject: Crime and Blight at 3rd and Commercial

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#### **Background**

For approximately thirty years, individuals have gathered at 3rd and Commercial, adjacent to the Saint Vincent de Paul (SVDP) due to the provision of a free meal. However, in the past year the number of people spending the day on the sidewalk and street has grown, resulting in an increase in vandalism, trash accumulation, graffiti, drug use, and other violations of the municipal code such as Sit and Lie and Camping. To address the concerns from businesses in this area, a meeting was held on May 5, which included business owners, managers, and employees, SVDP, EPD, Public Works-Code Enforcement, City Manager, and Council Member Brady.

On May 2, 2016, the city removed approximately 180 people living in the PALCO Marsh and behind the Bayshore Mall. Prior to the thirty day notice of the action, over 200 were living in the area, in makeshift encampments, with numbers as high as 240. When the vacation was implemented, many people were displaced and loitering on 3rd and Commercial became more prevalent. However, many of those that were displaced have now been housed, either through the efforts of the city/county 30 in 60 campaign, the container village operated by Betty Chinn-first at the Mercer Fraser lot from May to November, 2016, and at the city owned parking lot on Washington Street, since November.

#### **Problem**

The 40-60 individuals congregating on the sidewalk, street, and adjoining properties across from or next to SVDP, have engaged in behavior that is detrimental to businesses in the area. SVDP provides about 250 lunches a day. Business owners, manager, and residents have complained of the high level of disorder including drug use, discarded needles, fights, disorderly conduct, large amounts of litter, and bodily waste left in the alleys and surrounding properties. People block sidewalks, graffiti buildings and harass pedestrians and motorists. Business has suffered from lost customers, vandalism, and theft. In addition, businesses are concerned for the safety of their employees.

To further understand the specific issues, Problem Oriented Policing (POP) officers will interview all people frequenting 3rd and Commercial to learn where they have come from, how long they

have been here and how long they expect to stay. They will also learn why they have chosen this specific area to spend the day.

### **Initial Action/Solution**

EPD does not believe what is described here is a long term solution, but rather a temporary one to alleviate the problems for local businesses. The goal is not to simply displace the problem to another location, but to find reasonable solutions that address violations of the municipal code and improve the overall business climate in the surrounding area.

Reducing problems at 3rd and Commercial requires a holistic solution and the commitment of all parties involved, including the individuals on the street. The focus is to create consequences for unlawful behavior. *The solution described below must be timed appropriately, well-coordinated and consistently applied for it to be successful.*

The City's recommendations are as follows. *The idea is to leverage what the individuals want in exchange for lawful behavior, while reducing the blight and disorder:*

### **Communication**

1. The Chief of Police will hold a meeting with those individuals congregating in the area.
  - a. Solicit their help
  - b. Explain the consequences of criminal violations or causing blight
2. EPD will survey the group to learn who they are, how they got here, where they are from and what their future plan might be.
3. Communicate progress with community and accept feedback monthly.

### **Environment**

4. City staff will walk through the area scrutinizing the location for environmental changes. Minimally the following changes should be made.
  - a. Change the curb space to controlled parking for customers and business owners. This includes signs and painting.
  - b. Remove the overhang at the loading dock.
  - c. Work to remove the burned out railroad building.
  - d. Post no sitting, lying or storage of personal property signs in area.
  - e. City will clean area including:
    - i. Graffiti removal program
    - ii. Shopping cart pick up program
    - iii. Weekly street and sidewalk cleaning
5. Work with local non-profits or other interested parties to establish a daytime use area that is managed and controlled.
  - a. Place to store limited amounts of personal property.
  - b. Move mobile services to this location. (SOS, Mobile Medical, NeedleX)
  - c. Mow Balloon Track to provide easy access to patrol.
6. Deterrence of Behavior

- a. Community red flags individuals or the group for law and code violations as well as behavioral problems.
- b. EPD coordinates with SVDP halt to feeding for specific time periods based on complaints.
  - i. Individual and larger group-must be specific and in unison.
  - ii. Police notifies St. Vincent de Paul of arrests.
- c. Police will adjust MIST efforts to 3rd and Commercial as a priority over greenbelts.
- d. POP will increase its efforts at 3rd and Commercial.
- e. Police focus on individuals who camp on the street or create violence.
- f. Police seek vertical prosecution for the few multiple offenders. Police/POP to create list to identify multiple offenders.
- g. Police and Main Street Neighborhood Watch will make efforts to disperse individuals after food services are complete.
- h. Police will divert individuals for minor offenses. (They are tasked with cleaning up the area and having it verified before feeding or by local business owners through a voucher system.)
- i. SVDP in coordination with EPD will use meal privileges to control behavior.
  - i. Refuse food service to those whose behavior is criminal, disruptive or violent.
  - ii. Shut down the facility after meeting with local businesses during a crisis period.
  - iii. Refuse food to those who have been diverted until they obtain a voucher.
  - iv. SVDP to adjust times of meal service so once lunch is finished being served, the facility is closed for the day.

#### 7. Reverse Marketing Campaign

- a. Main Street and local businesses will provide foot patrol for the most problematic locations.
- b. Businesses will create and execute a campaign to reduce transients from coming to Eureka. (Go Home and Here's How)
- c. Businesses will work to ensure jail releases get home.
- d. Businesses will engage DHHS with options to reduce income or increase time to declare residency for those individuals relocating to Humboldt County.
- e. Businesses will clean area and ensure environmental changes are made to prevent blight.
- f. Businesses will collaborate with the City of Eureka to establish a graffiti removal program.

| <b>Behavior</b>                    | <b>Solution</b>                                  | <b>Responsible</b>           |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b>All – 3rd and Commercial</b>    | Hold Meeting with SVDP meal recipients           | Mills                        |
| <b>All- Transients in Old Town</b> | Survey group                                     | EPD – Watson                 |
| <b>All- Monthly updates</b>        | Email news letter                                | City                         |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Environmental Change Analysis                    | EPD/Public Works/Community   |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Paint Curbs resign                               | Public Works                 |
| <b>Camping</b>                     | Remove overhang loading dock                     | Building owner               |
| <b>Camping</b>                     | Demolish Railroad building                       | Community-Railroad Authority |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Post No loitering signs                          | City/Public Works            |
| <b>Vandalism</b>                   | Remove Graffiti                                  | City/Community               |
| <b>Camping</b>                     | Remove shopping carts                            | City/Code Compliance         |
| <b>Clean Streets</b>               | Spray down street                                | HBFD                         |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Establish Daytime use area<br>*Location, Funding | City/Non profits             |
| <b>Blight</b>                      | Storage of property at day use                   | City/Non-Profit              |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Move Mobile Services                             | City/DHHS/SVDP               |
| <b>Blight/Loitering</b>            | Mow Balloon track                                | Security National            |
| <b>Violence</b>                    | Reduce feeding (individual)                      | Community/SVDP               |
| <b>Violence</b>                    | Reduce feeding (group stand down) Red Flag       | Community/SVDP               |
| <b>Mental health</b>               | Adjust MIST efforts                              | DHHS/EPD                     |
| <b>Violence/Drugs</b>              | POP adjust focus and efforts                     | EPD                          |
| <b>Violence/ Drugs</b>             | Create Frequent Flier list                       | EPD/Community                |
| <b>Camping/Sit, Lay, Stand</b>     | Vertical prosecution                             | EPD/City Attorney            |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Disperse after lunch                             | EPD/SVDP                     |
| <b>Loitering</b>                   | Education and notification                       | EPD/SVDP                     |
| <b>Blight/Loitering</b>            | Divert individuals-voucher system                | EPD/Community/SVDP           |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Adjust times of meal service                     | SVDP                         |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Reverse market Eureka                            | Community/Main street        |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Go home campaign                                 | Community/Main street/TAP    |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Jail release transportation                      | Community/ Sheriff           |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Reduce profitability of transients               | DHHS/Community               |
| <b>Loitering/Blight</b>            | Environmental Changes<br>Rapid Graffiti removal  | Community/Main Street/City   |