



DEPARTMENT OF  
HOMELESSNESS AND  
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

# Encampment Resolution Team San Francisco's Approach to Homeless Encampments

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# Encampments in San Francisco in 2017

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- Defined as more than 1 tent or structure
- Approximately 80 encampments in San Francisco
  - 2-5 people – 40
  - 6-20 people – 30
  - 20+ people - 10
- Up to 1,000 people in tents/structures each night
  - 13% of homeless population
  - 25% of unsheltered population





# Why Resolve Encampments:

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## PROBLEM

- Higher levels of substance abuse and communicable disease in large encampments
- Increase in public health and public safety concerns in and around encampments
- Public outrage impacts City's ability to address homelessness
- Previous attempts to address encampments failed and led to lawsuits, reducing confidence in the City.

## GOAL

- Assist as many people as possible by connecting them to shelter, services and housing
- Address quality of life issues for housed and unhoused individuals
- Change culture on streets to permanently eliminate large, long term encampments
- Focus on effectiveness, legality and compassion while not redirecting entire service delivery system



# Principles for Resolving Encampments

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- Evidence-based: Strive to follow the USICH guidelines for addressing encampments
- Legal: Ensure that the legal and civil rights of those in encampments are not violated
- Compassionate: Lead with a persistent and loving offer of services and shelter
- Effective: Do not simply move encampments or individuals from one place to another
- Collaborative: Involve residents (housed and unhoused) and other agencies



# Encampment Resolution Team (ERT)

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- Special section within the city's homeless outreach team
- LCSW and 2 outreach workers focus on large encampments
- Working at 2 sites at a time in different stages of resolution
- ERT leads efforts but collaborates with other city agencies





# Resolving Encampments: Selection

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- Coordinated through citywide working group
- Focus on encampments with 6 or more tents/structures in place for over 1 month
- Evaluation of community impacts with partners and develop a quarterly schedule





# Resolving Encampments: Process

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- 1<sup>st</sup> week: Encampment Resolution Team (ERT) focuses on engagement, relationship building, noticing, community meetings
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week: Residents logged to coordinated entry system; lookups in data sets to assess needs; develop action plan for service needs (individual and encampment); inform public health department of need for special services
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week: Service provision and engagement; begin relocation to shelter/housing and/or special services (behavioral health, substance abuse treatment)
- 4<sup>th</sup> week: Increased connection with residents. Begin to emphasize alternatives and remind of resolution date.



# Resolving Encampments: Services

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- Health and Wellness Fair
- Incentives (gift cards) successful
- Testing/treatment for disease
- Urgent care
- Suboxone starts
- Prevention medications for HIV
- Access to basic hygiene
- Case management
- Problem solving
- **Referrals to shelter and services**







# Resolving Encampments: Completion

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- 72 hour notice is posted advising residents they will need to depart
- Reservation of shelter beds as needed
- Addressing needs of high acuity Individuals
- Remaining individual offered available options and then asked to leave
- Mobilization of police, public works and ERT during final 2 days



# Preventing Re-Encampment

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- Walk through with Public Works to assess safety and access
- Coordinate with neighbors on prevention (fencing, lighting, security)
- Providing neighbors contact information for key city staff
- Ongoing re-encampment prevention team (outreach workers, police and public works); note that re-encampment prevention outreach worker wear different uniforms as their roles are different
- Education of clients



# Preventing Re-Encampment


**PLEASE RESPECT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD:  
DO NOT SET UP TENTS IN THE VICINITY.**

**NO LODGING ZONE**

Lodging on public property without permission is unlawful. Cal. Penal Code § 647(e).

The City and County of San Francisco recently worked to resolve illegal encampments in this area.

If you need shelter or if you see tents in this area, please contact **311**.

## HEALTHY STREETS

WE VALUE AND RESPECT EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

**PASSABLE STREETS**

- Please do not set up permanent tents or structures
- Please limit your belongings, do not block doorways or driveways
- Please keep streets and sidewalks clear so people, wheelchairs, strollers, bikes and cars may pass

**SAFE STREETS**

- No fires, candles, stoves or heaters—they are very dangerous! Battery operated lights are safer.
- Safely dispose of used syringes in sharps containers
- Protect your pets, keep them on leash and safe

**CLEAN STREETS**

- Please keep your surroundings neat and clean
- Please move your belongings when the City comes to clean or make repairs
- Please throw away trash in garbage containers and clean up after pets

**IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE OR A NEIGHBOR NEEDS HELP**

- For a medical or mental health emergency, call 911
- For shelter information, call 311
- For information about services, call SF HOT, 415.355.7580
- Be prepared and carry Narcan in case of accidental overdose

**RESOURCE CENTERS**

**MSC South**  
525 Fifth Street  
Open daily, 24 hours  
Shelter reservations, showers, information, snacks

**United Council of Human Services**  
2111 Jennings Street  
Open daily, 7pm-9am  
Shelter reservations, showers, laundry, lockers, breakfast and dinner

**MNRC**  
165 Capp Street  
Open Monday-Friday, 7am to 7pm, closed 12pm-2pm.  
Shelter reservations, showers, laundry, lockers

**Glide**  
330 Ellis Street  
Open Monday-Friday, 12pm-9pm  
Shelter reservations

**A Woman's Place**  
211 13th Street  
Open daily, 24 hours  
Showers, laundry

**6th Street Harm Reduction Center (welcoming folks who inject)**  
117 6th Street  
Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm  
Saturday 7pm-11pm  
Syringe access + disposal, Suboxone tx, narcan, testing, harm reduction groups, counseling, and lounge



# Outcomes: August 2016 – Dec 2017

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- ERT has resolved 23 encampments
- 944 people were camping at these sites
- 622 accepted a place of safety off the streets – 66%
- Approximately 25% exited homelessness
- 16 of the 23 encampments have remained clear (70%)
- Neighborhood-based initiative led to a sustained 85% reduction in tents in a ~100 block radius with 65% accepting shelter



# Lessons Learned

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- None of this work would have been possible without expanding our shelter capacity
- Ongoing outreach to encampment residents is the most critical part of this process
- Providing medical and other services at the encampments assists with the transition
- Educating encampment and shelter residents on being good neighbors helping to change culture on the streets; all departments sharing the same message
- **Partnerships with other agencies and systems to manage these partnerships are critical**
- Outreach workers need to have distinct roles and work separately (but in partnership with) other agencies



# Next Steps: Health Streets Operations Center

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- Activated the City's Emergency Operations Center to better address street behavior
- Police, Public Works, Public Health and Homelessness Departments are lead agencies
- Coordinating all efforts related to encampments, etc.



# Next Steps: Adding Capacity

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- Double size of ERT (3 to 6 outreach workers)
- Expand medical/behavioral health shelter system (40 beds, 40 in pipeline)
- Expand temporary shelter system (200 beds with 170 in pipeline)
- Expand diversion, job training and temporary rent subsidy programs as well as grow the supportive housing pipeline