

RESOLUTION NO.

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RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ
DECLARING A HOMELESS SHELTER CRISIS
(Government Code Sections 8698 et seq.)

WHEREAS, according to the 2017 Point-in-Time Homeless Census, Santa Cruz County currently has an estimated homeless population of approximately 2,249 persons on a given night, approximately 1,204 of whom reside within the City of Santa Cruz and 934 of them unsheltered (78%); and

WHEREAS, our community's homeless population includes veterans, women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, seniors and other vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, there is a shortage of available and affordable housing units in Santa Cruz due to the very low rental vacancy rate (approximately two percent); and

WHEREAS, over the past few years, the City of Santa Cruz has routinely ranked in the top three least affordable communities in the country and the least affordable community in California by a variety of sources when comparing housing prices to income levels; and

WHEREAS, although current programs offered by the City and local non-profit service providers are providing assistance to many persons living without permanent housing, a significant number of persons within the city still remain without the ability to obtain shelter; and

WHEREAS, many of those unable to obtain shelter continue to reside on the streets, along creeks and pathways, in alleys and doorways, and in unauthorized encampments throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, persons without shelter are also often without adequate sanitary facilities, are at risk from theft, crime and extreme weather conditions, and are without security; and

WHEREAS, such conditions result in a critical threat to the physical and mental health and safety of those experiencing homelessness, including the recent Hepatitis A outbreak; and

WHEREAS, such conditions also result in a threat to the natural environment and the public health and well-being of the surrounding community; and

WHEREAS, the Council has heard extensive testimony on the impacts of homelessness on persons without shelter as well as on the community at large; and

WHEREAS, in May of 2017 the Santa Cruz City Council formally adopted the 20 recommendations of the Council's Homelessness Coordinating Committee, which included support for emergency homeless services and pursuit of day services and a permanent year-round shelter, and further directed that the City accelerate efforts to expand shelter options and to explore an official declaration of a state of emergency for homelessness; and

WHEREAS, to address the overwhelming number of unsheltered homeless individuals, the City, in partnership with the County of Santa Cruz, is pursuing a phased approach to increase permanent shelter capacity and strengthen pathways out of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, this approach includes, as a first step to assist individuals to exit homelessness, the temporary provision of a managed homeless campground on public property, and then to transition to an interim building site for day services and navigation center shelter; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code sections 8698 through 8698.2 authorize the governing body of a city to declare a shelter crisis when a significant number of persons within the jurisdiction are without the ability to obtain shelter, resulting in a threat to their health and safety; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 8698.1 provides that, upon a declaration of a shelter crisis, the provisions of any state or local regulatory statute, regulation or ordinance prescribing standards of housing, health, or safety, shall be suspended with respect to public facilities opened to the homeless, to the extent that strict compliance with those provisions would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the shelter crisis; and

WHEREAS, if the provisions of any state or local regulatory statute, regulation or ordinance prescribing standards of housing, health, or safety, are so suspended, California Government Code Section 8698.1 authorizes the City to adopt substitute standards to ensure public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 8698.2 provides that, upon a declaration of a shelter crisis, a city may allow persons unable to obtain housing to occupy designated public facilities during the duration of the crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Santa Cruz finds, determines and declares that a significant number of persons within the jurisdiction of Santa Cruz are without the ability to obtain shelter, and that the situation has resulted in a threat to the health and safety of those persons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, pursuant to the authority set forth in California Government Code Sections 8698 through 8698.2, the Council hereby declares a shelter crisis in the City of Santa Cruz.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the City Manager or his designee to apply this declaration of a homeless shelter crisis to the City's proposal for a temporary managed homeless campground and interim day services and navigation center building site and other subsequent actions to provide homeless shelter.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DISQUALIFIED:

APPROVED: _____
David J. Terrazas, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Bonnie Bush, Interim City Clerk Administrator