City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: March 23, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager

Subject: **On-Call Storage Program for People Experiencing Homelessness**

This memorandum provides an overview of current City of Long Beach (City) protocols for the handling of personal property belonging to people experiencing homelessness. This memorandum also provides programmatic and budgetary considerations in implementing a 24-hour, on-call collection, inventory, and storage program to assist City departments as they engage people experiencing homelessness and their belongings.

BACKGROUND

At its November 19, 2019 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager to prepare a report on the feasibility of an on-call program that collects, inventories, and stores personal property belonging to people experiencing homelessness. This program is intended to help maintain public spaces, provide services to those with accumulated belongings, and improve the ease for individuals to accept services knowing they will not have to abandon their belongings.

Oftentimes, when a City employee engages with a person experiencing homelessness, the person may possess large belongings such as tents, bicycles, mattresses, or other bulky items, which they would like to bring with them, or store in a secure place, while they are receiving services. In many cases, service providers do not have the capacity to store these belongings; therefore, some people experiencing homelessness are reluctant to accept services because they are concerned they must forfeit their items in the process.

The City, through the Homeless Services Division (HSD) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), coordinates homeless outreach and response efforts through the Interdepartmental Team. The Interdepartmental Team comprises of the following City departments:

- Public Works – Clean Team
- DHHS – Homeless Outreach Teams
- Police Department
- Fire Department – Homeless Education and Response Team (HEART) units
- Parks, Recreation, and Marine
- Library Services
- City Attorney

In addition, the City Prosecutor's Office works closely with the Interdepartmental Team when they identify an individual experiencing homelessness on their docket and seeks to divert them into services. The City Attorney is also available to assist City departments through legal consultation regarding the handling of personal property of people experiencing homelessness.

CURRENT PROCEDURES

Homeless Encampment Protocol

In 2018, the Homeless Services Division updated the Homeless Encampment Protocol, which serves as a guideline for City Departments and corresponding land jurisdictions to identify, respond to, and remove homeless encampments within the City of Long Beach (Attachment A). Pursuant to this policy, and in accordance with Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment rights, City departments are required to post 48-hour notices at encampment sites to ensure due process and allow inhabitants time to gather their belongings and vacate the premises (Attachment B). Most departments currently engage with the Public Works Department's Clean Team (Clean Team) to respond to these encampments. The following language specifies this process as outlined in the policy:

- The City department having jurisdiction over the encampment site will arrange to have the encampment posted for cleanup. The posting will provide encampment inhabitants a minimum of 48 hours to gather belongings and vacate the premises. The posting will include the date of the posting, the date of the cleanup and where the personal belongings can be retrieved upon cleanup.

- On the date of the scheduled cleanup, items left at the encampment may be removed. Staff will document with photographs or notes if possible. City departments will document the actions they have taken, as well as note date, time, and location of the encampment cleanup.

- If personal belongings are collected that are not a sanitary hazard and/or safety concern, they will be inventoried and stored by the appropriate City department (e.g. the Public Works or Parks, Recreation and Marine Departments) for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to disposal.

- Personal belongings that are held will be marked by time, date, and location of pickup by the corresponding City department. Individuals may claim their property if they can identify belongings and follow the established City department retrieval process.

Although this policy explicitly outlines procedures to address homeless encampments, the City does not have a clear standardized process to engage individuals experiencing homelessness in the possession of bulky items that are not living in an encampment site.

Existing Homeless Property Storage Facility

In compliance with the Homeless Encampment Protocol, the Public Works Department inventories and stores personal property for people experiencing homelessness when requested. The Public Works Department currently utilizes a 40-ft. recycled shipping container located at one of its properties as a storage facility for this purpose (Attachment C). Items that are stored in this facility are tagged with the appropriate owner's contact information, including the location and date of when they were collected. The Clean Team then tracks the belongings using a whiteboard installed inside the container.

Individuals have up to 90 days to retrieve their belongings and they must arrange a pickup time at the storage site. This storage facility is currently located at the Construction Management Division building, 970 W Chester Place.

Current City Department Procedures

As previously mentioned, City departments typically coordinate with the Clean Team to handle items belonging to people experiencing homelessness. However, depending on the nature of the incidents, departments may follow their own procedures when handling this issue. The chart below summarizes each department's response.

Department	Description
Public Works Department – Clean Team	The Clean Team follows the steps outlined in the Homeless Encampment Protocol and posts a 48-hour notice at the site of an encampment. If the encampment remains after 48 hours, personal belongings are taken to the designated property storage facility or disposed of if they pose any sanitary or safety concern. Based on the court ruling from *Lavan v City of LA* (2011), items that can be seized for disposal must have no intrinsic value and are abandoned, a serious health and safety risk, or evidence of a crime or contraband. All other items must be stored.
DHHS – Homeless Outreach Teams	The HSD deploys Homeless Outreach Teams to proactively engage people experiencing or on the verge of homelessness to connect them to supportive services. Currently, these teams depend on shelters to provide the storage capacity to hold belongings; otherwise, they ask the person experiencing homelessness to arrange with other storage options. Opening in the Summer of 2020, the newly acquired Navigation Center will offer people experiencing homelessness who are engaged in services a safe place to store their belongings for as long as necessary while they work towards a permanent housing solution.
Police Department	Current protocols require that Police Officers collect non-soiled items at the point of an arrest for people experiencing homelessness. These non-bulk items are transported with the arrestee and taken into the evidence room of the respective Police

Department	Description
	Department's property section. The items are then marked with the name of the property owner and the date they were entered into storage. The owner will be provided a receipt, which they will need to reclaim their property upon release from custody. Items are stored for a maximum of 90 days. Section 205 of the Long Beach Police Department's Training Bulletin specifies policies related to the proper handling of prisoner property in detail (Attachment D).
Fire Department – Homeless Education and Response Team (HEART) units	The Fire Department and the HEART units do not have the infrastructure or staff to handle items belonging to people experiencing homelessness. Essential items such as wallets, documents, money, ID, wheelchairs and the like are kept in the possession of the patients that are transported to hospitals. Other larger items may be abandoned until the Clean Team coordinates a response.
Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department	The Parks, Recreation and Marine Department follows the Homeless Encampment Protocol and defers to the Public Works Department to handle this process. They currently do not store any belongings for people experiencing homelessness.
Library Services Department	The Library Services Department does not have any formal storage options for belongings of people experiencing homelessness. Current Library Code of Conduct states that patrons cannot bring in items that are larger than 24"x16"x10". Should patrons obstruct walkways or entrances with their belongings and leave them unattended for an extended period of time, Library Services will engage with the Clean Team.

COST CONSIDERATIONS

This section provides programmatic and budgetary considerations for extending services provided by the Clean Team in handling personal property for people experiencing homelessness. The Environmental Services Bureau provided cost estimates for an on-call program dedicated to collecting, inventorying, and storing personal property, targeted towards bulky items. This program is intended to secure personal property when individuals experiencing homelessness are being arrested or are otherwise required to vacate a vicinity. Currently, the Clean Team provides this service as part of the Homeless Encampment Protocol five days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. However, this new program would expand this service to provide 24-hour coverage. In addition, cleanup services would be extended to individual interactions, not only situations that involve encampments. These services would be available at any time, by request, should City staff need assistance to collect and store bulky items such as a large cart, mattresses, and bicycles for people experiencing homelessness.

Under this program design, the Clean Team would continue to sort through and collect personal property left behind at homeless encampment sites or when City staff engage with an individual experiencing homelessness in the possession of bulky items. For example, the dedicated Clean Team would respond as soon as possible to a Police Officer's request for service to assist with collecting and storing large possessions for a person experiencing homelessness that is undergoing an arrest in the middle of the night. Those items would be catalogued and stored in a secure facility at a designated storage site. Access to the storage facility would be limited to specific time frames of the week, but owners could also pick up their items by appointment. Any items that remain unclaimed after 90 days would be disposed.

The Clean Team would also dispose of any non-hazardous waste refuse material they collect in the process. All hazardous material, such as human feces and medical supplies, would need to be collected by an independent contractor that can properly dispose such items.

The following employee classifications are needed to carry out this program:

- Two Maintenance Assistant III (MA III) positions to collect and sort the personal items.

- Two Refuse Operator I (RO I) positions to collect and sort personal items, operate the refuse trucks, and dispose of the non-hazardous refuse material left behind.

- Two Refuse Operator II (RO II) positions to collect and sort personal items, operate the refuse trucks, and dispose of non-hazardous refuse material left behind.

- One Refuse Operator I non-career (RO I NC) (1,600 hours) to sort and tag personal items and staff the secure storage facility during hours of operation.

- One Clerk Typist III (CT III) (half-time) to maintain reports related to the program. Half of the CT III salary could be absorbed by the Refuse Fund.

- One currently employed Refuse Supervisor would be on standby to assist with the program.

These employees would be required to undergo appropriate training and would need to be supplied with uniforms, safety equipment, and tools. In addition, communication equipment such as radios, cellphones, and computers may be required to facilitate coordination with other departments and dispatch services accordingly.

The dedicated storage program would consist of two shifts for the Clean Team. The first shift would be scheduled for 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The second shift would be scheduled for 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. After 7:00 p.m., staff would be kept on paid standby, and be eligible for overtime, in case they are needed to assist with the collection and cleanup of personal property.

Other items to consider:

- Since this program is focused on the collection and storage of personal property belonging to people experiencing homelessness, related program costs must be charged to the General Fund. These services are not related to rate-payer services; therefore, they cannot be charged to the Refuse Fund.

- City employees on standby pay must be paid for a minimum of three (3) hours, if they are called in for duty. Overtime rates for standby employees start when they receive the call to come into work.

- If Clean Team employees work the day following a standby shift, that may impact normal refuse collection. In addition, there may be issues with employees that have commercial driver's licenses and the amount of time required between shifts.

Fiscal Impact

The total cost of expanding the Clean Team's capacity to provide on-call, 24-hour coverage for bulky items belonging to people experiencing homelessness will depend upon on the program design, service availability, and amount of storage space provided. The on-call program described above assumes one additional storage container to augment the existing unit at the Chester Place site. In-kind contributions or shared use agreements for lot space and storage facilities may reduce the overall cost of the program.

Based upon a preliminary assessment, staff estimates that the costs associated with expanding the Clean Team's services to a 24-hour on-call program would amount to approximately $807,350 annually, which is inclusive of personnel, maintenance, and training. An additional one-time cost of approximately $262,212 would be required to purchase equipment to support the program. In total, this program would anticipate a cost of approximately $1,069,500 in the first year of implementation. These amounts are subject to change, depending upon the program design. Changes can be made to reduce this cost through service reductions, on-call availability, or other scaling-down measures.

Due to significant General Fund costs to initiate this program, staff recommends considering enhanced on-call storage services for people experiencing homelessness as part of the annual budget development process. This will allow the City Council to identify specific revenue enhancements or expenditure reductions to offset the one-time and ongoing cost of the program.

Please see Attachment E for additional information on the breakdown of program costs.

CONCLUSION

Although the City enacted the Homeless Encampment Protocol, a more robust process to efficiently collect, inventory, and store belongings for people experiencing homelessness may help support the Interdepartmental Team as they connect people into services, provide emergency medical transport, conduct an arrest, or otherwise need to vacate encampments. This program ultimately supplements the City's current procedures in handling personal property and adds on to the overall spectrum of resources in reducing homelessness.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact Interim Deputy City Manager Teresa Chandler at (562) 570-5116.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT PROTOCOL
B. PUBLIC WORKS CLEAN TEAM NOTICE
C. IMAGES OF STORAGE FACILITY
D. POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAINING BULLETIN – PROPER HANDLING OF PRISONER PROPERTY
E. STORAGE PROGRAM EXPANSION COST ESTIMATE

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DEPARTMENT HEADS

Attachment A

City of Long Beach
Homeless Encampment Protocol

Purpose

The purpose of the Homeless Encampment Protocol serves as a guideline for City Departments and corresponding land jurisdictions to identify, respond to, and remove homeless encampments within the City of Long Beach. The procedures set forth in this document are intended to facilitate the removal of encampments while supporting the relocation of the encampment inhabitants into alternative housing options and services. Encampments are defined as a group of tents or temporary shelters in one place.

Procedure

1. Any City Department that encounters a new encampment, or responds to a call for service will assess for any safety concerns upon arrival. Safety concerns will be addressed by appropriate City Department before any other action is taken. If possible, staff will document the site with photographs or notes. Identified immediate health or safety concerns to encampment habitants, the community, or City staff can be removed immediately and does not have to abide by the 48 hour posting protocol.

2. Notification of an encampment site will be reported to the Interdepartmental Work Group by calling the Street Outreach hotline at (562) 570-4MSC. The Outreach Coordinator will dispatch an outreach team to assess, and if appropriate, engage with individuals at the location. The Street Outreach Network can offer linkages to social services, emergency shelter, and other services.

3. The Street Outreach Network will assess if any further action is necessary at the site by other City Departments and will inform the Homeless Services Officer to further coordinate.

4. The City Department having jurisdiction over the encampment site will arrange to have the encampment posted for cleanup. The posting will provide encampment inhabitants a minimum of 48 hours to gather belongings and vacate the premises. The posting will include the date of the posting, the date of the cleanup and where personal belongings can be retrieved upon cleanup.

5. On the date of the scheduled cleanup, items left at the encampment may be removed. Staff will document with photographs or notes if possible. City Departments will document the actions they have taken, as well as note date, time, and location of the encampment cleanup.

6. If personal belongings are collected that are not a sanitary hazard and/or a safety concern, they will be inventoried and stored by the appropriate City Department (e.g. Public Works or Parks and Recreation) for a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to disposal.

7. Personal belongings that are held will be marked by time, date, and location of pickup by the corresponding City Department. Individuals may claim their property if they can identify belongings and follow the established City Department's retrieval process.

8. Individuals engaging in illegal activity may be arrested, cited or advised at the Police Officer's discretion.

9. Private property owners are responsible for cleanup activities and the removal of any safety concerns resulting from the encampment site. Any structural repairs, sanitary and hazardous cleanups will be the responsibility of the private owner.

10. City departments that are assigned to cleanup encampment sites should take appropriate safety precautions.

Attachment A

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Attachment B

NOTICE

ON

THIS AREA WILL BE CLEANED OF ALL DEBRIS BY THE CITY OF LONG BEACH. ALL PERSONAL BELONGINGS SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM AREA PRIOR TO 7 AM

Posted Date:_____

NOTICE

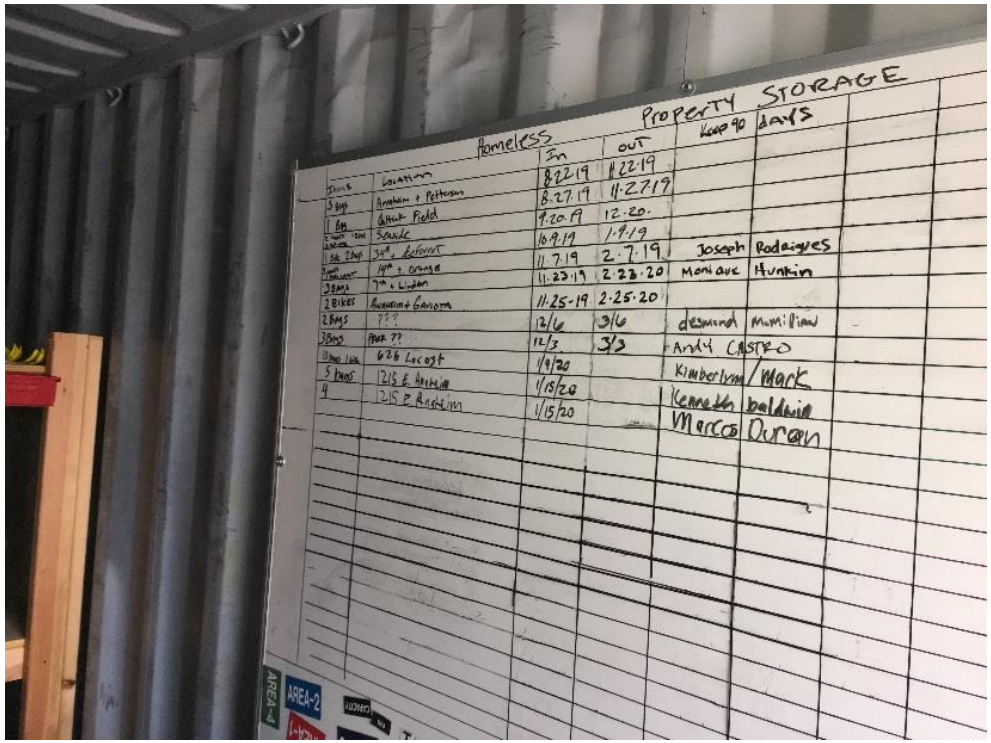
Pursuant to LBMC 2.78.020, the unclaimed property left on this public property was removed on the date shown below and is being stored at owner's expense.

For information on the retrieval of this property contact Public Works at (562) 570-8300 or (562) 570-2887

Date:_____

Attachment C

Images of Public Works Storage Facility located at 970 W Chester Place, Long Beach, CA 90813



LONG BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT
TRAINING BULLETIN

PROPER HANDLING OF PRISONER PROPERTY

PURPOSE
The purpose of this Training Bulletin is to provide accountability for prisoner's property when booked into the jail.

Booking
Upon arrival in booking, every officer transporting a prisoner will collect any property belonging to that prisoner. Each officer shall confirm that they have included any property that may have been retained in the field, together with property removed from the prisoner, and place into the plastic trays provided in booking.

After completing the booking work sheet, the searching officer shall note each item in the plastic tray on the booking work sheet under the title of prisoner property. These items shall then be placed into a clear plastic bag.

Search and Property Inventory

- It is recommended that only one officer begin and complete the searching procedure in order to avoid any missed areas
- **All** property removed from a prisoner shall be noted on the booking worksheet
- All loose property will be placed in the provided, clear plastic bag. Property that does not fit into the clear plastic bag will be sent to fifth floor property room with the appropriate property report being filed and appropriate notation made on the booking worksheet
- All shoelaces shall be removed from the prisoner's shoes and placed into the clear plastic bag
- No lighters, matches, open packs of cigarettes or tobacco products shall be placed in the plastic bag (unopened, sealed packs of cigarettes or tobacco products are the only exception)
- All batteries shall be removed from pagers and cell phones, they should not just be turned off
- Jewelry shall be identified on the booking sheet and placed in the special envelopes provided
- All medication shall be placed into the plastic bag, **NO** medication, prescription or otherwise is to be brought to the jail
- Special items such as collectible coins, currency, food stamps or checks shall be placed into the plastic bag with the loose property

Cash

- **All** money belonging to the prisoner shall be placed into the provided envelope after being counted by the searching officer
- The searching officer shall ask the prisoner if he/she has any money concealed on their person
- The searching officer shall complete the required information located on the outside of the envelope and then give the envelope to the booking supervisor
- The booking supervisor shall ensure that the cash count is accurate, initial and seal the envelope with clear tape
- The booking supervisor shall return the envelope to the searching officer who will retain it until the envelope is sealed into the plastic bag
- The searching officer will ensure that the prisoner's booking number is written on the cash envelope
- The searching officer must also write the amount of cash on the booking sheet and be sure all counts listed are the same on the booking worksheet, on the cash envelope and on the final booking face sheet

Sealing the Bag

- All loose property, including the jewelry envelope, will go into the lower portion of the plastic bag
- The pink copy of the completed booking slip shall be placed in the lower portion of the bag in a manner that the prisoner's name, booking number and money deposited, can be read. The lower portion will be sealed
- The cash envelope shall be placed in the top portion of the bag and sealed separately from the loose property
- It is the booking supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the money is counted properly and that the plastic bag is sealed correctly before the bag is placed into the safe

Any property that does not fit into the plastic bag, for example, large back packs, large purses, etc., will be inventoried and placed into the fifth floor property room. The correct property form will be filed with a receipt copy being placed in the plastic bag to ensure that the prisoner can locate his/her property when released.

When a prisoner's bicycle is placed into property, a property report will be filled out, a copy attached to the bike and a copy placed in the prisoner's plastic bag. Bicycles do not remain at the station; they are taken to the bicycle warehouse. Paperwork indicating the bicycle has been stored is necessary for the subject to locate the bike when he/she is released.

Any property or money that is kept as evidence also needs to be indicated on the booking sheet.

It is the responsibility of every searching officer to be certain prisoner's property is correctly collected and stored.

REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY
Support Bureau