



OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD THIRD COUNCIL DISTRICT

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COUNCILMEMBER WARD PROPOSES ADDITIONAL HOMELESS STRATEGIES FOR SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – (Monday, March 20, 2017) – San Diego Councilmember Chris Ward (District Three) today issued a memo outlining a number of approaches and strategies to address San Diego's ongoing homelessness challenges. The memo, directed to San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and San Diego City Council President Myrtle Cole, comes following a special City Council meeting specifically to receive updates on regional efforts to address homelessness from a variety of government and non-government stakeholders. Ward, who recently became Vice Chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, also lauded Cole's proposal to form a Select Committee to continue working on opportunities to reduce San Diego's homeless crisis.

"The Mayor's office, and our other presenters and speakers today, have provided an update on the current services being provided as well as the challenges and opportunities that are still before us," Ward said. "This is a critical step that puts permanent supportive housing front and center, and now it's up to us to make sure all potential options are on the table and we're pursuing a coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive strategy to both serve our homeless neighbors and provide relief to impacted communities."

Ward's expansive memo proposes a wide variety of ideas for further exploration and action, including:

- A comprehensive review of public lands;
- Establishing a City-sponsored community land trust to support affordable and permanent supportive housing;
- Conversions of 'red light' and nuisance properties and potential for adaptive reuse to increase supportive housing;

- Zoning updates to embrace micro units and tiny homes;
- Implementing Homeless Care Zones, which would provide homeless people a place to reside without fear of arrest over carrying out the routine behaviors of daily life;
- Establishing a protocol for city engagement with the homeless, and expand public health and safety outreach programs;
- Halting citations by the City of homeless encampments and explore forgiveness of outstanding penalties;
- Expanding shelter opportunities and the supply and diversity of diversion programs, and support for inclusive, low-barrier shelter and transitional housing facilities;
- An expansion of the successful Project Homeless Connect program;
- Exploring the use of large city-owned facilities such as Golden Hall or the former Downtown Library as interim shelter opportunities.

"We cannot continue to criminalize homeless people without fulfilling our responsibility to provide them with sufficient places to go," said Ward. "We'll continue to push aggressively for permanent supportive housing, but in the meantime we need to consider all options to connect homeless individuals with safe places to receive services and get back on their feet."

According to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count, 8,692 homeless individuals and families live in the San Diego region, an estimated 4,940 of them unsheltered. These people, as well as the services to assist them, are disproportionately concentrated in the District Three communities represented by Ward. The suggested Council Select Committee to work on homeless issues is expected to be considered by the Rules Committee at its next meeting in April.

For more information or to interview Councilmember Ward, contact Lucas O'Connor at (619) 236-6633 or (619) 368-3153.

Councilmember Chris Ward represents San Diego's Third Council District including communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill.

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