To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Paul Buddenhagen, Director, Health, Housing and Community Services

Subject: Companion Report: Addressing Critical Concerns of the Homeless - Port-a-Potties, Wash Stations and Trash Removal at Encampments/Hepatitis A Vaccine Distribution

RECOMMENDATION
Take no action on the Homeless Commission’s resolution, and instead allow City staff to continue making progress on current efforts to distribute port-a-potties, handwashing stations, trash pick-up, and Hepatitis A vaccine.

FISCAL IMPACT of RECOMMENDATION:
The City is already executing responses to all of these efforts. On December 5, City Council allocated $60,000 in funding for placement of port-a-potties and handwashing stations near encampments and other areas heavily used by pedestrians, and $100,000 in additional funding for illegal dumping response, including near encampments.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS
The Homeless Commission submitted a report that recommended adopting a resolution to (i) to develop a quick, barrier-free process to provide port-a-potties, wash stations, and trash pick-up for unsheltered homeless residents, prioritizing the largest encampments and taking into consideration proximity, safety and accessibility; and (ii) to support the City’s securing and administration of Hepatitis A vaccines; have them provided where homeless persons generally congregate; and have community-based organizations that receive funding from the City distribute information about where homeless persons can access these vaccines. This report clarifies the City Manager’s responses to date on these matters and makes an alternate recommendation.

As of the writing of this report, there have been no documented cases of Hepatitis A anywhere in Alameda County, including Berkeley. City staff have implemented a two-pronged approach that aims to prevent the possible spread of Hepatitis A by (i) increasing access to public toilets and public sanitation facilities across Berkeley; (ii) increasing community outreach and education efforts to distribute information and materials on the virus and possible preventative action, and (ii) vaccinating at-risk populations (especially persons experiencing homelessness) against the virus.
The City of Berkeley activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on 9/27/17 to mobilize a Hepatitis A virus prevention response and the Health, Housing and Community Services Department (HHCS) activated its Department Operations Center (DOC) on 9/28/17. Since that time, the HHCS DOC has met numerous times to develop and execute a plan for obtaining and distributing Hepatitis A vaccines (HAV) to State-identified priority populations. The plan involved close coordination and partnership with community agencies (Berkeley Drop-in Center, Berkeley Food and Housing Project, BOSS, Dorothy Day House, Women’s Daytime Drop in Center and Steamworks). While people experiencing homelessness are at-risk, the State has identified other at-risk populations who may not necessarily experience homelessness (including users of illicit drugs and men who have sex with men). HHCS developed and executed the HAV distribution plan in alignment with these State guidelines on priority populations and best practices, in a holistic, partnering way.

HHCS obtained 750 doses of HAV (at no charge from the State) on November 16. HHCS mobilized 30 staff – nurses, doctors, outreach workers and administrative staff from every division -- to go out to the City’s encampments, shelters and drop-in centers and provide HAV to homeless people. Sixteen mobilizations took place, many in close partnership with community agencies serving homeless people, and as of December 18, 108 people in the high risk category had received HAV through this effort (82 people also received flu vaccine).

Hepatitis A typically spreads orally among people who have insufficient access to sanitation facilities, making public toilets and handwashing stations for those who otherwise lack access an important preventative measure in fighting Hepatitis A. On December 5, Council allocated $60,000 in funds to place portable toilets and handwashing stations “throughout the City, near encampments and in other public spaces heavily used by pedestrians (parks, commercial areas).” ¹ Since that time, Staff have determined that the following is feasible for $60,000:

- Placement of handwashing stations at the existing public port-a-potties at Civic Center Park, Ohlone Park, the Berkeley Marina, Tom Bates Field (off Gilman), and Aquatic Park South;
- Placement of handwashing stations at the existing public plumbed toilets at Live Oak Park and Willard Park;
- Placement of an ADA-accessible port-a-potty and hand washing station to at 2nd and Cedar Streets to service the nearby encampments;
- Allowing 24/7 access to the existing portable toilet and handwashing station at the Transfer Station on 2nd Street;

All facilities will be serviced a minimum of four times per week, with units placed at the 2nd/Cedar, Civic Center Park, Aquatic Park South, Berkeley Marina, and Ohlone Park to be serviced daily.

On December 5, Council further allocated $100,000 in additional funding to prioritize illegal dumping and debris removal around the City, especially near encampments. Public Works staff will use this funding to continue or expand existing services to those areas.

All of these ongoing responses are consistent with the resolution recommended by the Homeless Commission. Therefore, the City Manager recommends taking no action on the Homeless Commission’s resolution, and instead allowing the City’s current efforts to continue as planned.

BACKGROUND
The Homeless Commission passed two motions, recommending as follows:

On 9/13/17:

**Action:** M/S/C Orgain/Kealoha-Blake recommending that Council develop a quick, barrier-free process to provide port-a-potties, wash stations, and trash pickup for unsheltered homeless residents, prioritizing the largest encampments and taking into consideration proximity, safety, and accessibility.

**Vote:** Ayes: Feller, Gor, Hirpara, Kealoha-Blake, Marasovic, Orgain, Sutton  

And on 10/11/17:

**Action:** M/S/C Marasovic/Hirpara that (1) the Homeless Commission move to recommend and support the City’s securing and administration of Hepatitis A vaccines; have them provided in locations where homeless persons generally congregate; and have community-based organizations that receive funding from the City distribute information about where homeless persons can access these vaccines; and that (2) in the interim, the Homeless Commission emphasize the urgency of immediately placing port-a-potties and wash stations directly at or adjacent to encampments.

**Vote:** Ayes: Gor, Hirpara, Marasovic, Orgain.  

On September 27, the City of Berkeley activated its Emergency Operations Center to mobilize a Hepatitis A virus prevention response. On September 28, HHCS activated its Department Operations Center. HHCS received 750 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine on November 16 and as of December 18 had administered 108 doses of the vaccine to
people at the City’s shelters, drop-in centers, and via outreach at Second Street, Civic Center Park and in People’s Park. Targeted populations were prioritized in accordance with State guidelines.

On December 5, Council allocated $60,000 in funding for placement of port-a-potties and handwashing stations near encampments and other areas heavily used by pedestrians, and $100,000 in additional funding for illegal dumping response, including near encampments.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
No environmental sustainability considerations.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION
A city-wide effort for placement of port-a-potties and handwashing stations and for administration of Hepatitis A vaccinations is already underway.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED
None.

CONTACT PERSON
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