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PLAN FOR YEAR-ROUND HOMELESS SHELTER, SERVICES FUNDING PROVIDES 110 BEDS, NAVIGATION SERVICES

(JUNE 12, 2019) – Taking measures to reduce homelessness throughout Santa Cruz County, the Homeless Action Partnership of Santa Cruz County is pleased to announce a public-private partnership to provide year-round shelter and housing navigation services to local homeless persons.

Under the plan, shelter services at the Salvation Army Community Corps Center on Laurel Street would remain open year-round, and shelter at 1220 River Street would be extended through March 15, 2020. In addition, the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) approved funding to provide mobile hygiene and housing navigation services to accelerate transitioning homeless persons out of shelters and into permanent housing.

"Ending homelessness demands a Housing First approach," Santa Cruz County Homeless Services Coordinator Rayne Marr said. "Expanding shelter and day services will help stabilize vulnerable homeless persons, and the need for housing resolution services is so great that the HAP is moving forward with a plan to provide them while we continue searching for an appropriate venue to establish a permanent Navigation Center."

The combined sites would extend availability of 50 beds and 60 tent sites, with both venues previously set to close June 30. Both are operated by the Salvation Army, and include beds, meals, security, transportation, access to health services and more. The Salvation Army also operates the seasonal Winter Shelter Program in Live Oak, as well as the Salvation Army Day Center and 38-bed shelter in Watsonville, which will now operate 24/7 with expanded service capacity.

"The Salvation Army works to assure that all Santa Cruz County residents have a place to access food and lodging, and we are pleased to extend our partnership with the HAP. The Salvation Army has been serving the local community for more than 130 years and we greatly appreciate the support of our volunteers, donors and especially our clients," Salvation Army Capt. Harold Laubach said.

The Homeless Action Partnership plan includes funding assuring the continued availability of the Paul Lee Loft emergency shelter at the Homeless Services Center,

which provides beds for up to 40 adults along with hygiene, client assessment, advocacy and other services.

The Housing First model is a recognition that substance use disorder and mental health treatment are most effective when clients first have stable housing, which increases the likelihood that clients remain housed. The model has been endorsed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and numerous federal, state and local agencies. The HAP expects to begin providing housing navigation and related services at the River Street property by August 1.

A City of Santa Cruz Water Department project expected to commence in July at the 1220 River Street property is being delayed due to construction schedule changes, allowing the temporary encampment to extend operations under the standard operating procedures previously adopted by the Santa Cruz City Council. With community support, the successful managed camp model could be replicated in other locations.

Funding for the plan is being provided through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). Through its members, the Homeless Action Partnership continues working to identify additional appropriate sites for future navigation and shelter services. No sites have been identified at this time.

ABOUT THE HOMELESS ACTION PARTNERSHIP

The Homeless Action Partnership is a collaboration of the County and each city within Santa Cruz County, along with local homelessness service providers. It acts as the federally-designated continuum of care for Santa Cruz County and helps allocate State and federal funding to address homelessness. The County of Santa Cruz serves as lead agency for the HAP.

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