



**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** GRACEY VAN DER MARK, MAYOR PRO TEM

**DATE:** DECEMBER 20, 2022

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS, ANTI-CAMPING AND ANTI-LOITERING LAWS**

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Around 2019, the City began to appreciate a proliferation of the homeless population in Huntington Beach as it was around Orange County. The increase in homeless individuals sleeping on public benches, public parks, and outdoor encampments in public spaces and near schools and playgrounds led to an increase in assaults on residents, degradation of the quality of the City's parks and other public spaces, and health and safety issues such as filth, human waste, drug paraphernalia, and other private property items left by homeless individuals strewn through the City in public spaces. Many of these public spaces were, and still are, the downtown area of Huntington Beach and beaches and parks, where children play.

In December 2020, the City responded to the homelessness proliferation in 2020 by building a homeless shelter in cooperation with the County of Orange here in Huntington Beach (17642 Beach Bl.). As this multi-million dollar Navigation Center was being built, former Police Chief Rob Handy had put together a 90-day plan centered on outreach to the homeless community to inform them of the resources available through the Navigation Center and the County, and that Huntington Beach would no longer allow homeless to remain camping and loitering in public spaces. After the 2020 election, new City Council leadership altered this course. As a result, the 90-day plan by Chief Handy was never implemented, and little to no enforcement of our laws left the Navigation Center unused in large part, and our public spaces are still occupied by homeless encampments and homeless loitering.

The City knows through many meetings with Federal Judge Carter, and by instruction from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal in the *Martin v. Boise* case, that having a homeless shelter, like the Navigation Center, allows cities like Huntington Beach to legally enforce their anti-camping and anti-loitering laws. There is no reason at this point, and going back to 2020, why the City has not been enforcing its laws to keep the streets and public spaces healthy and safe. The community knows this and is demanding that the City, once and for all, bring back law and order to our City by addressing the homeless issue once and for all with the resources we already have available to us.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Direct the City Manager and the Police Chief to return on January 17, 2023 to present the following:

1. A full report and accounting identifying all of the City's resources, including recently hired/appointed City personnel, County programs present in the City, and facilities like the Navigation Center, that have been employed or deployed to combat homelessness; and
2. A full report and accounting of the Navigation Center's use since it opened in December 2020, including the number of beds occupied over time (utilizing monthly data), where the clients/patrons are from (have they been Huntington Beach homeless or have they been brought in by the County or other cities), and average length of how long individuals stay and where they go once released (e.g., back on the streets, County facilities, or back home); and
3. A proposal that incorporates former Police Chief Handy's 90-day plan on how HBPD will enforce the City's and State's anti-camping and anti-loitering laws to get the City's public spaces free from the mentioned encampments, loitering, and their related health and safety concerns; and
4. A request for the Police Chief to give quarterly updates at City Council on enforcement of anti-camping and anti-loitering.

