



## Q&A: Anaheim Shelter Plan

### What is Anaheim's shelter plan?

Anaheim is required to add **325 homeless shelter beds** for emergency and transitional housing with supportive services as part of a settlement of a federal lawsuit. More important, shelters allow us to help people in need and address the impacts of homelessness on our parks, streets, neighborhoods and businesses.

As of March 6, 2019, we have 326 beds spread between **two sites in industrial areas** of Anaheim, away from parks, schools and neighborhoods.

An **interim emergency shelter** opened in December 2018 on State College Boulevard has now **closed**, with the opening of the two temporary shelter sites, which will operate for the next few years.

### What and where are the shelters?

On Jan. 31, 2019, we opened the **Anaheim Emergency Shelter**, a 224-bed facility on Lewis Street south of Ball Road operated by **The Salvation Army Orange County**, one of the most experienced and proven names in addressing homelessness. The first residents arrived in early February, including from our interim emergency shelter.

The **La Mesa Emergency Shelter at 3035 E. La Mesa St.**, just across from the county-run Bridges at Kraemer Place shelter, was completed on Feb. 22, 2019 and accepted first residents on March 6, 2019.

**Orange-based Illumination Foundation**, operator of the now-closed interim emergency shelter, runs the La Mesa Emergency Shelter. Residents of the interim shelter have been transferred to La Mesa Emergency to ensure consistency for those working with Illumination Foundation case workers to permanently end homelessness.

Long term, The Salvation Army is set to build a care center known as **Center of Hope**, which will provide 325 shelter beds and some 300 supportive housing units to help those living in homelessness get into permanent housing. It is expected to open in 2021.

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When Center of Hope opens, we anticipate **winding down** the remaining two temporary homeless shelters.

## **Why do we need this?**

To help get people **out of homelessness** in Anaheim and to continue **addressing impacts** on our **parks, neighborhoods and streets**.

This plan is part of a Nov. 2, 2018, settlement agreement that resolved a lawsuit involving Anaheim over the February clearing of the Santa Ana River Trail.

The lawsuit carried the **risk of a court order** limiting Anaheim's ability to address public camping, property storage and other violations. That would only compound a situation we are trying to address, and one we know has had a big impact on our residents, businesses and public spaces.

**Residents have the right** to safe and secure enjoyment of their **parks, streets and neighborhoods**. Where appropriate, we need the ability to address those issues through enforcement and **respond to the many concerns** brought to our attention by the community.

There are also many people living in homelessness in Anaheim who need our **help**, and we want to do the right thing. Since January 2014, we have **helped 2,736 people off our streets** and into permanent housing with 90 percent of them staying housed. Enforcement helps deal with daily issues, but it can never be a long-term answer to homelessness. That is where our weekly outreach comes into play, and shelters support that.

## **Why are we adding 101 more beds to the Anaheim Emergency Shelter?**

In February 2020, the City Council approved adding 101 additional beds at the Anaheim Emergency Shelter, operated by The Salvation Army. The addition will help address lingering issues of homelessness across the city with a focus on women, couples and families, including pets.

With Anaheim's existing shelter beds at near capacity, the additional beds will allow the city's social workers and homeless outreach police to offer shelter to those still living in homelessness at bus stops, freeway ramps, railways and other public spaces.

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## How do these shelters work?

The facilities provide **immediate shelter** for someone living on the streets in Anaheim. The long-term goal is to get people out of homelessness for good. The shelters offer **transitional housing**, where people live in a stable setting for a few months with healthcare and other **services** as well as help finding a **job** and, ultimately, **permanent housing**.

All of the shelters operate or will operate will **clear rules and security** for the benefit of those staying there and to ensure shelters are **good neighbors**.

Most people don't even know our shelters exist, and it's **hard to tell they're shelters** if you happen to drive by. That's by design.

## What about those that have addiction or mental health issues?

Sadly, substance abuse and mental health issues are far too common among those who are homeless.

Studies show that the **first step** to helping anyone get back on their feet is to **get them housed**. Once they have a roof over their heads, we can focus on **deeper issues** that cause them to become homeless in the first place.

**Illumination Foundation** and **The Salvation Army** both offer comprehensive programs that connect people with services to help with addiction, mental health or any **other underlying factors** with the ultimate goal of getting them back on their feet and keeping them off the street.

For those struggling with these issues, shelters are, without a doubt, **a better option** to life on the streets.

## Anaheim already has Bridges at Kraemer Place shelter. Why do we need more beds?

Bridges has been an **incredible success** story. But it only holds around 200 people.

At any given time, there may not be space available at Bridges. We need **additional space** as our outreach workers and police officers work to **get people off our streets**. The beds are also part of our agreement to settle the federal lawsuit, and the number of beds are based on the homeless population in Anaheim.

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## **If this is to settle a lawsuit, why didn't you just fight the lawsuit?**

We fight lawsuits when necessary. In this case, we could have spent **millions of dollars on legal fees** and **years in court**. In the meantime, we could see our ability to address undue impacts on our community curtailed by a court order as we await an outcome. We know no one clamors for shelters, but they are in the **best interest of our city and residents**.

## **Many people on the street don't want help, so why add beds?**

It's true, there are **some who regularly turn down** our offers of help. But, looking at all those we have helped, we know **many people out there do want assistance**, and sometimes it takes a few times to get through. Plus, whether someone takes up our offer of shelter or not, we need to have a **viable option** for them before we can turn to **enforcement** in the cases where it may be **warranted**.

## **The real problem is the lack of affordable housing, won't these people just end up back on the street?**

It's true, **high housing costs** do contribute to homelessness in Orange County and **across California**. It is an issue that everyone from state leaders to local officials are grappling with.

In Anaheim, we do all we can to add affordable housing and other options for those who can't afford high rents. Through the Anaheim Housing Authority, we provide more than \$70 million in yearly rental assistance, support 6,300 households, provide 3,850 affordable apartments including at more than a dozen affordable communities where 100 percent of homes are affordable.

We are always looking at ways to add additional affordable housing in Anaheim.

## **Will these just become gathering places for transients?**

No. All of Anaheim's shelters have detailed operational plans and security **sign-off by Anaheim Police** to ensure neighboring businesses and streets are **not impacted**.

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## Security planning and oversight includes:

- Security plan approval by Anaheim Police
- Regular Anaheim Police patrols and presence at shelters
- 24-hour onsite security
- Security cameras
- No loitering
- Thorough admittance policies
- Contingency plans for those who may walk up and be turned away
- Cooperation and outreach with local businesses
- Security design including deterrent landscaping, fencing and lighting

## How is this being paid for?

**Salvation Army's extensive fundraising** would cover development and operational costs for Center of Hope.

For the interim and temporary shelters, the city is using state funding and other **resources available** to us to address homelessness.

This is a **significant commitment** we don't take lightly. But, given the impacts on our parks, neighborhoods, residents and businesses, we know this is vital and is money well-spent on behalf of those who live and work here.

## Why aren't other cities doing more to address homelessness?

Others are, including **Santa Ana, Orange, Buena Park and Costa Mesa**. These cities alone have pledged to add more than 1,000 beds in the coming year or so.

All Orange County cities face the same challenge by **federal Judge David Carter** to address homelessness in their communities and will have to **deal with the issue**.

Cities that have not yet committed to adding beds, including in **South County**, are now coming under federal court requirements to add shelter beds as part of a countywide response to homelessness.

Every city in California is **required to provide shelter beds** before they can enforce public camping, property storage and loitering laws. That is the result of a 2018 federal court decision from Boise, Idaho, that covers the entire western U.S., including all of California.

The decision was allowed to let stand in December 2019 when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the case.