




MEMORANDUM

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Date: February 17, 2023

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Update on County Initiatives to Address Homelessness and Public Safety**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Supervisors (BOS) with an update on the progress we have made in placing signs on the medians to dissuade panhandling, the streamlining of the process for businesses requesting permits for security lighting, and the development of a collaborative strategic blueprint with the City of Tucson.

Panhandling Signs

The Pima County Communications Department has developed a no panhandling sign design to be posted at 32 signalized intersections in the unincorporated areas of Pima County. Those intersections are the same intersections where “no trespassing” decals were placed in accordance with ordinance no. 2016-30 approved by the BOS in 2016.

Our Pima County Transportation Department is in the process of verifying the number of intersections with available poles to post signs and will be placing an order for the development of the signs the week of February 20th. Once the signs arrive, the Transportation Department will set a schedule to install. We will provide that schedule to the Board once it is established.

Lighting Permits

Tucson Electric Power (TEP) has a lighting program available to businesses called “Dusk to Dawn Lights.” Although we are working with TEP on having a direct contact for businesses seeking these light fixtures to expedite requests, they can currently request the lights via the submission of an application available online through the TEP website or through TEP’s customer service line. Once the application is submitted, a TEP Field Technician is assigned to the project. The Field Technician meets with the business to determine appropriate location and wattage needed. Rates are based on the wattage of the lights.

Once the application is approved, the business has to request a permit from the appropriate municipality. Since these lights are pole mounted, some of the lighting requests may be in the “right of way.” If this is the case, the permit request needs to be approved by the Department of Transportation within the local municipality. We have confirmed that our Development Services Department’s permitting process generally takes 5 business days. Right of Way permits will generally take an additional 5 days to approve. Our Departments are aware of the importance of making sure our local businesses have a good customer service experience through the permitting request process.

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Currently, the City of Tucson's (CoT) permitting process generally takes 20 business days with Right of Way permits running longer. For this reason, Deputy Director Lynne Birkinbine from the City's Department of Planning and Development Services has agreed to be the point of contact for local small businesses and will work to expedite these lighting requests moving forward.

Strategic Blueprint

A steering committee made up of key staff from the County and CoT will begin working collaboratively on a strategic blueprint to address homelessness. As a precursor to beginning this process, Deputy County Administrator Holmes and CoT staff met with the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) Chairperson and Vice-chairperson to clarify their role in developing a countywide strategy.

The TPCH is the regional U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) entity. HUD assigns responsibility for regional coordination of homeless services to the Continuum of Care, an activity that must be conducted in concert with local jurisdictions and community stakeholders. This includes development and implementation of written standards for the Emergency Solutions Grant program administered by local jurisdictions as well as oversight of the federal Continuum of Care Program, which supports street outreach, Coordinated Entry, data management, and transitional/permanent housing programs. The CoC's role in the delivery of Emergency Shelter services is limited to coordination, regional implementation standards (written standards), data management, and system reporting. Considering the interconnected policy-making rules of jurisdictions and the CoC, it is important that we collaborate with them through the development process of the strategic blueprint to ensure systemic alignment with regional priorities and federal funding opportunities.

Next Steps

The above mentioned steering committee will hold an initial meeting within the next couple of weeks to establish an outline for the blueprint that will drive our collaborative efforts. Iterations of this blueprint will be shared periodically with the Board of Supervisors.

JKL/dym

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco Garcia, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator