

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

February 13, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager's Department
Prepared by: Kristen Nelson, Administrative Services Manager
Subject: **Discussion regarding the adoption of a model resolution establishing a good neighbor policy focused on homelessness**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **DISCUSSES** the adoption of a model resolution establishing a good neighbor policy on homelessness solutions for Coachella Valley Association of Government's (CVAG's) participating agencies; and

FINDS the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060.

BACKGROUND:

Current Engagement

The Community Behavioral Health Assessment Team (CBAT) is a collaborative initiative between the Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health Department and local law enforcement agencies, including the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (RSO). CBAT pairs specially trained law enforcement officers with clinical therapists to respond to calls involving individuals experiencing mental health crises. The therapist leads the behavioral health assessment, while the officer ensures safety and provides law enforcement support.

CBAT units are deployed in various regions within Riverside County. Their response areas are not strictly limited to specific city boundaries. The deployment strategy aims to provide coverage across multiple jurisdictions, enhancing the capacity to address mental health crises throughout the county.

In situations where an individual requests mental health services during an encounter with law enforcement, RSO deputies are trained to assess the situation and can facilitate transportation to appropriate facilities, such as the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission

(CVRM) or mental health treatment centers, without CBAT involvement. However, if a CBAT unit is available, their specialized expertise is utilized to ensure comprehensive care.

When CBAT responds and successfully engages an individual to accept services, the transportation protocol may vary. Depending on the circumstances, either the CBAT unit or RSO deputies may provide transportation to the designated facility, ensuring the individual's safety and continuity of care.

Regarding RSO's engagement with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) concerning individuals on the CV 200 list, specific protocols and collaborative efforts are in place to address the needs of these individuals. RSO works in conjunction with CVAG and other stakeholders to provide appropriate interventions and support services, aiming to improve outcomes for individuals identified on the CV 200 list.

In summary, CBAT represents a multidisciplinary approach to mental health crises, integrating law enforcement and behavioral health services to provide effective and compassionate responses across Riverside County.

CVAG's Request

At its November 20, 2024 meeting, the CVAG Homelessness Committee discussed direction on a model resolution aimed to reinforce the commitment to regional homelessness solutions, establishing a "good neighbor policy" among CVAG member jurisdictions. At that meeting, Indian Wells representatives spoke out to recommend the resolution "encourage" rather than "require" its agencies, including law enforcement, and all homeless service providers receiving its funding support to notify neighboring public safety partners or another city agency whenever a homeless individual from this jurisdiction is transported to another jurisdiction for temporary housing, emergency shelter, and/or a permanent relocation within their jurisdiction.

At its December 2, 2024 meeting, the CVAG Executive Committee endorsed a model resolution that reinforces a shared commitment to regional homelessness solutions and establishes a good neighbor policy across the region (**Attachment 1**). The recommended change from "require" to "encourage" was included in the model resolution presented at the meeting (**Attachment 2**).

CVAG leadership is now asking each of their member jurisdictions to take the model resolution up with their Council/ Board for adoption. The goal, says Executive Director Tom Kirk, is to "[remind] our communities, including our new elected officials, that we are a region that works collaboratively and that we do not condone solving homelessness by just dumping homeless individuals off in another community."

Committee Recommendations: The Public Safety Committee considered this item at their special meeting on Monday, January 27, 2025 and did not provide a recommendation, instead asking that the City Council take up the item to make a collective decision.

Staff ask Council to review current engagement protocol described above, discuss the model resolution recommended by CVAG, and provide direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (14 CCR 15061(b)(3).)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. CVAG's Executive Committee Staff Report
2. CVAG's Model Resolution