

## **7. What does the City hope to achieve by declaring a local homelessness emergency?**

On August 9, 2016 the City Council formally declared a local homeless emergency in Santa Rosa. This move should give the City additional flexibility to address the homeless crisis. Furthermore, Council is hopeful that this action will rally community support for shared-based long-term solutions. More specifically, the declaration of a homeless emergency in Santa Rosa has three distinct features:

I.) Declaration of Shelter Crisis: A declaration of shelter crisis will make it easier to waive certain health and safety and zoning rules if the City decides to use public property to create additional shelter for the homeless.

II.) Declaration of Local Emergency: In declaring a local emergency, the City Council has proclaimed that the level of homelessness in Santa Rosa constitutes a local emergency, along the same lines as safety issues that could be created by a natural disaster. This step allows the City of Santa Rosa to potentially lift zoning or public safety restrictions on private property owners – such as churches or private property owners – seeking to serve the homeless.

III.) Request for Gubernatorial State of Emergency Proclamation: By writing a letter to Governor Jerry Brown requesting that he declare a state of emergency on homelessness in California, the City Council wishes to shed light on this issue not only locally, but also statewide. Furthermore, the City Council hopes this action will potentially open the door for state funding to help tackle this community health and safety concern.

On October 11, pursuant to the City's authority under the declaration of local homeless emergency, the Council approved an interim Community Homeless Assistance Program (CHAP), establishing guidelines for use of private property for safe parking, safe camping, the placement and maintenance of portable toilets and access to existing bathroom facilities, the provision of temporary overnight shelter, and storage for personal belongings. The intent of CHAP is to foster community solutions through cross sector collaborations with the goal of reducing the impacts of homelessness on the community and to better serve persons experiencing homelessness. The CHAP guidelines are available on the [City's Homeless Services page](#).