



City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

☒ CITY COUNCIL ☐ NPUA

☒ Regular ☐ Special

Meeting Date: April 8, 2025

Title: Ordinance to Update and Enforce Anti-Camping Rules in Response to Public Health and Legal Mandates

Background: On March 25, 2025, the City Council directed staff to address unauthorized camping at the El Garces. This action follows recent legal and executive developments that have reshaped how municipalities can manage public spaces impacted by homeless encampments.

Notably, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* (2024) affirmed that cities may enforce camping ordinances, provided basic shelter options are available. In response, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order on July 25, 2024, mandating that local governments adopt and enforce policies to address the increasing public health and safety concerns related to encampments across California.

Since then, numerous cities have adopted updated anti-camping ordinances—some as recently as last week—restricting camping in all public areas. The City of Needles currently has a camping ordinance on the books, but it is outdated and does not reflect the authority or expectations set forth in the Governor's order or recent case law.

In recent months, City staff have coordinated with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department to respond to several incidents requiring intervention. These efforts have highlighted the need for a clear, enforceable ordinance that both protects public spaces and connects unsheltered individuals with available resources.

This ordinance is intended to protect the integrity of our public spaces while ensuring humane engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Fiscal Impact: Drafting the updated ordinance will incur minimal costs, limited to signage and legal review by the City Attorney's Office. No new staff or additional funding is anticipated, as the ordinance will enhance current efforts using existing resources.

Recommended Action: Provide Staff Direction

Submitted By: Bernard Hatz II, Senior Code Enforcement Officer

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez

Date: 4/3/2025

Other Department Approval (when required): _____

Date: _____

Approved: ☐

Not Approved: ☐

Tabled: ☐

Other: ☐

Agenda Item: _____