

Hermosa Beach camping ban is extended to all public areas

By Anthony Solorzano

Following the lead of several other Southern California cities, the Hermosa Beach City Council has voted to adopt an anti-camping policy for all public areas in an attempt to keep the city a “safe and sanitary environment for all.”

The policy repeals the previous code, which banned camping only at parks and the beach. To address the homeless crisis, cities around Southern California recently adopted policies banning camping in all public areas after last year’s U.S. Supreme Court decision that gives cities more authority to regulate homeless encampments.

Since the decision, Long Beach, Indio, Palm Springs and other Southern California cities have adopted similar rules.

The ordinance in Hermosa Beach will work with a program implemented by the city meant to help anyone who is experiencing homelessness find shelter instead of sleeping at the beach or in parks, according to the city.

Breaking the new policy will result in a fine not exceeding \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for the second and \$500 for any additional violation.

Homeless advocates say that such policies drain city resources and that fines against camping on the streets make it harder for homeless people to afford housing.

“No community in the country has enough resources to serve everybody

who's experiencing homelessness," Ann Oliva, chief executive of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, told NPR last year.

Across most of Los Angeles County, the unsheltered homeless population is projected to continue declining for a second consecutive year, according to a recent report by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. The agency expects a decrease of 5% to 10% when a statistical analysis is finished in the coming months.

"The resulting final ordinance not only prohibits camping in all public places but also has more enforcement options to ensure Hermosa Beach remains a safe and sanitary environment for all," Mayor Dean Francois said.

Under the new law, the city manager may dismiss a citation upon the offender's completion of a diversion program.