



## HOMELESS SERVICES PANEL OF EXPERTS REVISED REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**September 2, 2026 – 7:00 PM**  
North Berkeley Senior Center, Dining Room  
1901 Hearst Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709

**Mayor Ishii:**  
Carole Marasovic, Chair

**Ben Bartlett:**  
Paul Kealoha-Blake

**Brent Blackaby:**  
Steven Segal

**Rashi Kesarwani:**  
Jessee Espinosa

**Igor Tregub:**  
Jerome Solberg

**Cecilia Lunaparra:**  
Anais Shergill

**Terry Taplin:**  
Denah S. Bookstein

**Shoshana O'Keefe:**  
Vacant

**Mark Humbert:**  
Alan Levy, Vice Chair

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid model with both in-person and virtual attendance. Attend this meeting remotely using **Zoom** <https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1653300956?pwd=0FTuZBDR6Zckkcl3HNIKz54I1F2BvN.1>. To request to speak, use the “raise hand” function in Zoom. To join by phone: Dial **1-669-254-5252** or **1-833-568-8864 (Toll Free)** and enter **Meeting ID: 165 330 0956**. To provide public comment, Press \*9 and wait to be recognized by the Chair. To submit a written communication for the public record, email [hspe@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:hspe@berkeleyca.gov).

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting, however, if you are feeling sick, please do not attend the meeting in person. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to Josh Jacobs, [jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov).

***Public comment for items not on the agenda limited to 2 minutes. No exchange with commission permitted.***

***Public comment for items on the agenda taken as items arise.***

1. Roll call.
2. Reading of the land acknowledgment.
3. Public comment for items not on the agenda (limited to 2 minutes).

### **Action Items:**

4. Approval of the agenda. Discussion and possible action.
5. Presentation (virtual) with Q and A from Spokane PD Sgt. Arthur “Richie” Plunkett on “Bridging the Gap of Homelessness with a Co-Response Unit, Spokane, Washington model”. Discussion only.

*A Vibrant and Healthy Berkeley for All*

2180 Milvia Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704 Tel: 510.225.8035 TDD: 510.981.6903 Fax: 510.981.5450  
E-mail: [hspe@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:hspe@cityofberkeley.info) | [Homeless Services Panel of Experts](#)

6. Leslie Berkler, director of Women's Daytime Drop-In Center and Bridget House, on changes, and evolving needs, in women's and family's homeless services.  
Discussion only.
7. Approval of the minutes from the July 2, 2026 meeting. Discussion and possible action.
8. Chair report. Discussion only.
9. Adjustments in Measure P revenue and allocations; staff report on adjustments since last HSPE funding recommendations and HSPE role in adjustments. Discussion only.
10. Adjourn.

### **Attachments:**

1. Land acknowledgment.
2. July 1, 2026 minutes.
3. The Spokesman Review: Spokane Police Sargent Richie Plunkett.
4. Draft Home Together 2030 Plan ([alamedacountyca.gov](http://alamedacountyca.gov) link).
5. Court Sides with Coalition Challenging Latest Efforts to Politicize Homelessness Funding Grants.
6. KPIX: Harrison Street Public Notice (YouTube link).

## **Notices**

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Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at City Manager's Office located at 2180 Milvia Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704.



### **Communication Access Information**

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**Certification of public posting**

I hereby certify that the agenda for this meeting of the Berkeley City Commission was posted at the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, as well as on the City's website, on 6/24/2026.

Josh Jacobs, Homeless Services Coordinator, Homeless Services Panel of Experts  
Staff Secretary, [jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:jjacobs@berkeleyca.gov), 510.225.8035

## Land Acknowledgement Statement

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.





Berkeley Homeless  
Services Panel of Experts

## MEETING MINUTES

July 1, 2026

1. **Roll Call:** 7:09 PM

**Present:** Marasovic, Bookstein, Shergill, Levy, & Kealoha-Blake.

**Absent:** Solberg and Segal (Leave of Absence).

**Staff:** Jacobs.

**Council:** None.

**Public:** 2.

2. Reading of the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Public Comment: 0.

**Action Items:**

4. Approval of the Agenda.

**Action:** M/S/C Bookstein/Shergill move to approve the agenda as written.

**Vote:** Ayes: Marasovic, Shergill, Kealoha-Blake, Bookstein, Levy, & Solberg.

Noes: None. *Abstain:* None. *Absent:* Solberg & Segal.

5. Approval of minutes from June 3, 2026 meeting.

**Action:** M/S/C Shergill/Kealoha-Blake move to approve the minutes as written.

**Vote:** Ayes: Marasovic, Shergill, Kealoha-Blake, Bookstein, & Levy.

Noes: None. *Abstain:* None. *Absent:* Segal & Solberg.

6. Presentation on street homelessness from Ari Neulight, Homeless Outreach Coordinator, UC Berkeley.

Discussion. No action taken.

7. Chair report. Discussion only.

Discussion. No action taken.

*A Vibrant and Healthy Berkeley for All*

*Homeless Services Panel of Experts*  
*June 3, 2026*

8. Proposed recommendation regarding amending encampment policy and procedure to provide repeated and timely notice prior to encampment and property removal and coordination with clients' known resources.

Discussion. No action taken.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

.

Minutes Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_

Josh Jacobs, Commission Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Washington Idaho Business Education Photos Further Review

NEWS > CRIME/PUBLIC SAFETY

## People remember the officers who treat them with compassion. Spokane Police Sgt. Richie Plunkett is one of them

Sun., Oct. 20, 2024



1 of 2

Spokane Police Sgt. Richie Plunkett, a former behavioral health officer known throughout the streets of Spokane for his compassion while policing, stands next to his department car outside the Spokane County Courthouse Oct. 19, 2024. (James Hanlon/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW)

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**By Alexandra Duggan**   
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(509) 459-5469

When Spokane Police Sgt. Arthur “Richie” Plunkett is attempting to coax someone off the Monroe Street Bridge just before they plan to jump, he might start out with a joke.

He’ll point to the nine or 10 other officers blocking the bridge – all are standing there watching Plunkett do what he knows best – connecting with people at their lowest point.

“Look at these ‘jamokes’ all standing around!” he’ll say, using slang to jokingly call his colleagues ordinary and unimpressive. He does it to build rapport and make the scene less intimidating. “They’re not even doing anything!”



The person sitting on the bridge's guardrail, letting their feet dangle 100 feet above the crashing water of the Spokane Falls, might let out a small laugh. When they do, they avert their eyes from the danger down below and turn around to see a 6-foot-6 bearded man in uniform smiling back at them.

Richie Plunkett quickly became a known name on the streets of Spokane. Those who answer the phone at the Spokane Regional Stabilization Center, where police can refer people who are in crisis or struggling with substance abuse, recognize Plunkett's name immediately. It's why before he left the behavioral health unit in August, his phone would ring all day from service providers asking for his help.

Other times, it would ring from people whose lives he's touched.

"I got a guy in prison that calls me once a month and tells everyone I'm his best friend," Plunkett said. "This guy is my size, and he always threatened to kill cops. Him and I duked it out in 2021, and he lost. It's not like I came out of it unscathed, either. But I worked with him a lot after that. We kept trying different things."

The man's father still calls Plunkett, too.

"He still remembers the cops who treated him well," he said. "I think that went a long way with him."

Plunkett, 38, wasn't always a member of law enforcement. He obtained a degree in cultural anthropology, but then went back to school to get his masters in mental health counseling, where he started a career counseling LGBTQ+ people and people who were recently released from prison. He also became a social worker and investigator for Child Protective Services.

But sitting at a desk wasn't where he wanted to be. He wanted to be out in the community and reaching people who would otherwise never be able to get help. It's why he first became a police officer in Kent, but then moved to Spokane, where he joined the city's force in 2018. It's also why he became a foster parent to two children.

The in-depth connection with the community really began when he was assigned to the Spokane Police Department's downtown precinct as a neighborhood resource officer. Plunkett was contacting nearly the same people every week as part of a plan to be more proactive, rather than reactive, he said. At first, Compassion Addiction Treatment reached out. Then the Salvation Army, the Trent Resource and Assistance Center and Catholic Charities.

The employees at the housing and treatment centers knew Plunkett had a rapport with homeless people, so much so that they would call him and say, "We need you to find this person who is living on the street as soon as possible."

Plunkett didn't mind, though. "Give me 30 minutes," he would reply.

"It's a lot better for them to have someone with mental health experience to come," he said. "And I'm not the tiniest guy, so it can be a little intimidating when a 6-foot-6 cop shows up at your apartment. But, I said, 'We're here to help. We don't want you to get in trouble. And we don't want you to get evicted.'"

Most of Plunkett's tactics revolve around listening. He doesn't tell people what they should do or how they should feel, but guides them through their thoughts instead. It's how he's gotten people into detox management, into shelters or off of a city bridge.

Plunkett recalled a time when he was dispatched to a downtown parking garage. He made his way to the top floor, where he found a man who had climbed outside the garage's barrier.

"I moved here from Florida," the man told him, as he hung off the garage's fence in the pouring rain, ready to jump. "I'm gay and I'm Black."

Rather than a joke this time, Plunkett decided on a new tactic – honesty.

"I'm not even going to try and say I understand how you feel," Plunkett responded. "I'm a straight white guy."

Being a listener and using compassion goes a long way, he said, and it's a big reason why he hasn't felt the need to shoot at anyone in a high-stress situation during his time as a police officer.

It's a trait he tries to instill in others by teaching officers de-escalation and crisis management. Obviously, he said, the academy does a lot of firearms training, "but officers seem to forget talking is what they have to be good at."

## Through the eyes of an officer

Spokane is facing a fentanyl crisis in the middle of a housing crisis. The city of Spokane can afford 100 emergency-weather shelter beds through next year. Meanwhile, drug deaths in the county are increasing, fentanyl foils still litter the downtown streets and the county jail has frequent periods of overcrowding.

According to local health district data, 262 people in Spokane County died due to drug use from April 2023 to April 2024. That's an 18% rise from a year earlier. And, as of Oct. 3, at least 19 organizations that receive funding from the Spokane Housing Authority will no longer be able to connect people to homes through the federally funded housing choice voucher program. More than 2,000 people in the city are homeless.

"We were clearing out some campers along the river near No-Li. We don't have enough North Side officers to do it, so we have to send south side officers. And then, as we're doing that, we have an in-progress (domestic violence call) happen," Plunkett said. "We had someone die on the South Hill. We're just getting overwhelmed by calls. It's hard for us to be proactive on these things."

It's also difficult if an officer sees open drug use and wants to make a stop, Plunkett said, but is outnumbered by a large group on the street. It's too dangerous to pick that fight if your team is busy on other calls.

At the same time, officers are getting burned out by the constant cycle of arrest-and-repeat, he added. Washington law says everyone arrested and accused of a crime is presumed innocent and subject to release, meaning if there are no other glaring, dangerous factors attributed to that person and the alleged crime, they will be let out of jail pending trial.

That consideration is subjective and up to the discretion of the individual judge.

"They're in and out within five minutes. We don't have enough jail space, we don't have enough resources and we don't have enough officers," Plunkett said. "I just don't think there's enough money for all of it."

The Spokane Regional Stabilization Center has 15 withdrawal management beds, he said, which isn't enough. There are days when people call him to get someone into one of those detox beds, but he has to tell them, "I'm sorry."

"Some of the people that are on fentanyl, there's a window of time where they're ready to go to treatment," Plunkett said. "If they don't have it available, then they just go right back to using."

There is a man with whom Plunkett has frequent contact who is often in crisis and is no longer allowed back in certain shelters for assaulting the staff. There are people Plunkett runs into who he has tried to help for three years who just can't get clean from methamphetamine because they have schizophrenia and use drugs to cope.

Others he kept working with until they finally got help.

"I don't give up on people," Plunkett said. "We have got to help people, even at their worst. I'm not going to say I know what it's like to be homeless or use drugs. I don't. But I try to keep the open mind because I have kids of my own, and I hope that if they were in that predicament one day, that they'd have compassionate people around them."

Since leaving the behavioral health unit, Plunkett has had some time to reflect, he told The Spokesman-Review on Thursday. When he teaches classes, he'll play a slide of a professional wrestler who wears a mask. It's a gimmick, he'd say to his class.

"When I throw on my uniform, this is my gimmick. I'm a completely different guy as a cop than I am off duty. And when I take my uniform off, the gimmick is over. I get to go home, and it's not supposed to transition," he said. "But the longer I do this job the more I realize stuff does carry over."

Stuff like seeing things no one else should have to see. Plunkett recalled a time he was dispatched to a child's home where there was no food or water. The boy's father was mentally ill and believed the child had to be sacrificed because he was a "plant" from the U.S. government.

"It was the night before I adopted my son," Plunkett said, "And I t~~x~~ught, how many foster kids are in this type of situation?"

## A 'local hero'

Plunkett received the "Community Impact Award" for "local heroes" on Thursday night from Light a Lamp, a local nonprofit, for his role in the behavioral health unit. The ceremony is the nonprofit's first annual community impact award night meant to honor people who have made significant contributions to inspire and uplift others.

His award came in between two standing ovations by the audience.

Alyssa Ecklind, the health and resource coordination manager at Spokane Regional Stabilization Center, sang Plunkett's praises to the crowd. But for her, the accolades were also personal.

Ecklind told the story of when a relative was in a mental health crisis at her home and she had to call for help, she said. But she was afraid to call 911. And she was afraid of what the police officers might do if the situation got out of hand.

"Here came Officer Plunkett with four other guys," Ecklind said. "I looked at him and said, 'Boy, am I glad to see you.' "

Darla Hall, who also works at the stabilization center, sent in a surprise video for him where she joked to the crowd that so many people on the streets love Plunkett so much, they're always seeking his approval. If they get in trouble, they'll tell the staff, "Please don't tell Officer Plunkett I'm here!"

As he accepted the award, he acknowledged to the attendees that he's really only great at talking to people who are in crisis. But as his friend, Officer Daniel Strassenberg; the police chief, Kevin Hall; other officers and his wife proudly looked on from the crowd, he gave a speech anyway.

"Drug use isn't just about, 'I wanted to try it.' They're dealing with their trauma. They're trying to not feel pain anymore. They're trying not to deal with emotions. Dealing with mental health is about the same thing," Plunkett said. "A lot of these people don't have control over what's going on in their lives. It's not all criminal."

During Plunkett's interview with The Spokesman-Review, his young foster daughter crawled around his feet and his legs. She played with a police coin and spooned Goldfish crackers into her mouth.

"We're not going to fix the world," he said as he gave her a toy police car. "But we make the little differences, and I think that goes a long way."

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### **MORE FROM THIS SECTION**



**7-Eleven on Division Street declared a 'chronic nuisance' by city officials: a look into the people who gather at the convenience store, homelessness in downtown**



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7/9

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- 2 Hotelier Walt Worthy announces \$10,000 gifts to those who lost homes in Spokane fires
- 3 Spokane Housing Authority opens its largest project: 240 affordable apartments in Spokane Valley
- 4 Other cities burned when the water ran out. Spokane's water didn't
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CRIME/PUBLIC SAFETY



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# **DRAFT** **Home** **Together** **2030 Plan**

A 5-Year Strategic Plan for Alameda County's  
Homelessness Response System



## NEWS

AUG 7, 2026

## Court Sides With Coalition Challenging Latest Efforts to Politicize Homelessness Funding Grants

*Court Blocks Latest Unlawful Homelessness Funding Announcement*

**Contact:** [press@democracyforward.org](mailto:press@democracyforward.org)

**Providence, R.I., August 7, 2026** — A broad coalition of local governments and nonprofit organizations has triumphed in its challenge to the Trump-Vance administration's most recent attempt to disrupt federal funding for people trying to exit homelessness. Although a court had already halted unlawful restrictions on federal homelessness funding, the administration once again attempted to make changes that will kick people out of permanent housing and back onto the streets. The court today ordered the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development's (HUD) to vacate the issuance of its 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), effectively blocking the unlawful weaponization of government funding.

In a filing, in *National Alliance to End Homelessness et al v. HUD et al*, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), Crossroads Rhode Island, Youth Pride, Inc., as well as the County of Santa Clara, Calif., King County, Wash., Boston, Mass., Cambridge, Mass., Nashville, Tenn., and Tucson, Ariz. asked the court to stop the implementation of the HUD NOFO for FY 2026 Continuum of Care (CoC) grants – the nation's more than \$4 billion program to support efforts to end homelessness.

The court granted the request today, writing, "The Court's review of the record and the parties' arguments reveal that HUD's issuance of the 2026 NOFO violates the [Administrative Procedure Act] based on HUD's failure to engage in the notice-and-comment process required by the [law]."

"Communities across this nation — in states both red and blue — rely on the federal government to support smart, strategic, lawful, and evidence-based funding opportunities to support their efforts to end homelessness. This decision further reinforces that this administration has repeatedly failed to meet that responsibility," said **Ann Oliva, CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness**. "On behalf of the providers, system leaders, and people experiencing homelessness that we represent, we applaud the Court's decision."

Today's decision continues a saga that has seen nonprofit organizations triumph repeatedly as they have challenged Trump-Vance administration efforts to unlawfully weaponize federal funding. For years and through multiple presidential administrations, the CoC Program has helped provide the necessary resources for local governments and organizations to fund permanent housing projects for veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals and families with children experiencing homelessness. It has always been HUD's obligation to release these resources in a timely manner through a lawful CoC Program competition NOFO. However, HUD attempted to radically upend this critical program with a FY 2025 NOFO that threatened to push nearly 200,000 Americans into homelessness.

The coalition behind today's successful judicial intervention took legal action to stop the NOFO issued in 2025, and in December 2025, a federal judge granted preliminary relief, which temporarily blocked the administration's attempts to implement the unlawful and unreasonable restrictions that sought to shift funding away from proven solutions to homelessness. Eventually, Congress stepped in and required HUD to renew all existing grants for FY 2025. HUD still has not finalized all of those FY 2025 awards that by now are long overdue, leaving projects without funding and further disrupting the nation's flagship homelessness response program. The court ultimately issued a final decision concluding that last year's NOFOs were invalid.

The 2026 NOFO bears many similarities to the versions the court already determined were unlawful. Without authorization, the FY 2026 NOFO set aside a whopping \$1.3 billion – nearly one-third of available funds – for new projects only, despite Congress's command that appropriated funds be available to renew existing projects, and despite the fact that this set-aside guarantees that significant numbers of existing projects will be ineligible for renewal, no matter how effective. Worse, this massive set-aside is earmarked principally for unproven strategies, to the detriment of permanent housing that Congress directed HUD to prioritize. The NOFO additionally attempted to force grantees to agree to comply with requirements that have little to nothing to do with the CoC program – including by committing to adhere to executive orders that, among other things, seek to eradicate lawful diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; reject transgender and nonbinary individuals' identities; and coerce jurisdictions to help with federal immigration enforcement.

Democracy Forward and the ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island represent the coalition of nonprofit organizations in the matter; the National Homelessness Law Center represents NAEH and NLIHC; Public Rights Project represents the cities of Boston and Cambridge, King County, Nashville, and Tucson; and Santa Clara County represents itself. The Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island represents all plaintiffs. The legal team at Democracy Forward on this matter includes Kristin Bateman, Madeline Gitomer, Christine Coogle, Carrie Flaxman, and Robin Thurston.

Plaintiff and co-counsel quotes regarding today's decision are available [here](#).

## About the Democracy Forward Foundation

*Democracy Forward Foundation is a national legal organization that advances democracy and social progress through litigation, policy, public education, and regulatory engagement. For more information, please visit [www.democracyforward.org](http://www.democracyforward.org).*

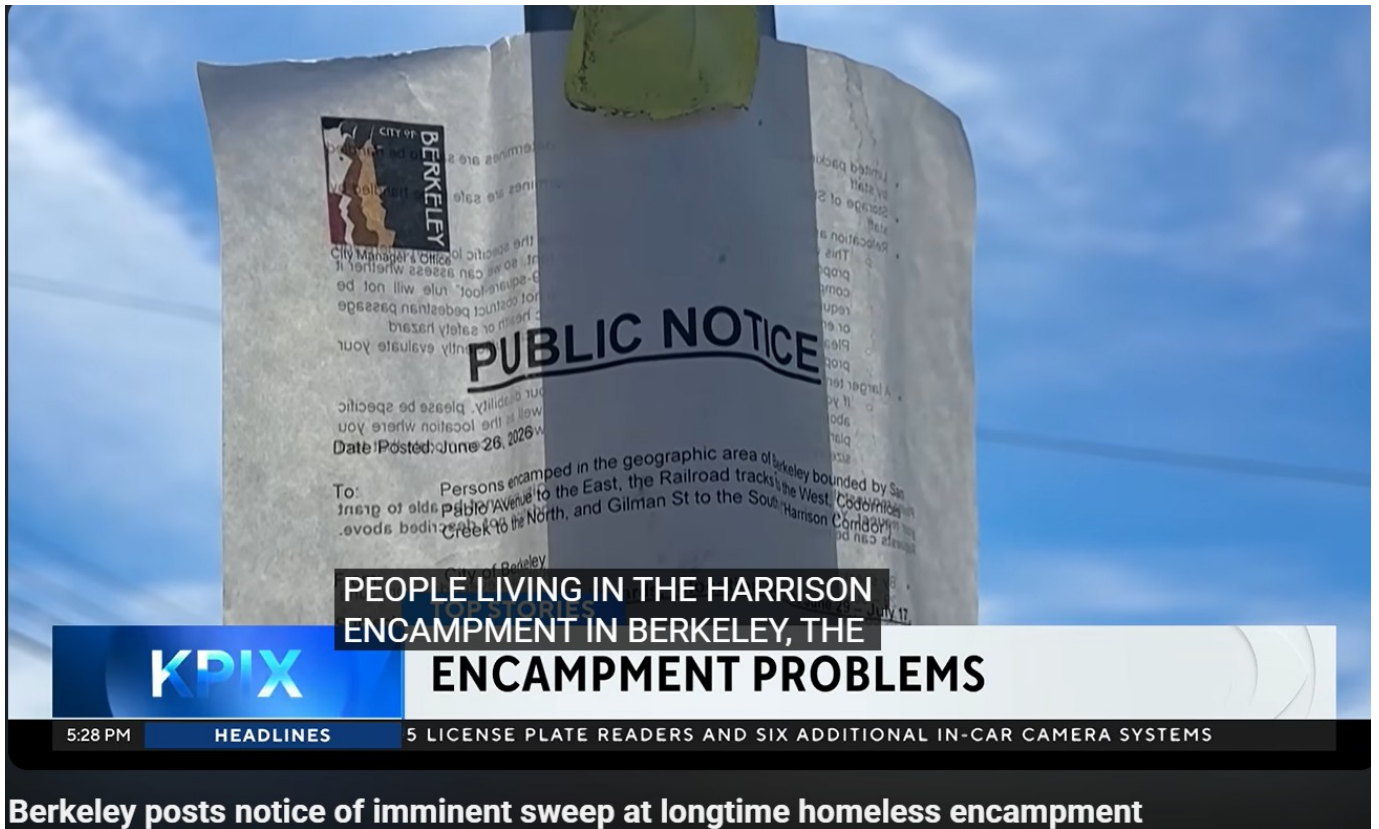
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## PEOPLE LIVING IN THE HARRISON ENCAMPMENT IN BERKELEY, THE ENCAMPMENT PROBLEMS

5:28 PM

HEADLINES

5 LICENSE PLATE READERS AND SIX ADDITIONAL IN-CAR CAMERA SYSTEMS

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