

Trailers planned for homeless

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SANTA CRUZ — The homeless encampment along Highway 1 will be replaced by trailers, despite pleas by its residents.

"We'll be left out in the cold. What are we going to do?" asked Anne Curry, whose tent is pitched at the open-air shelter.

Curry and other campground residents protested plans to replace the campground with 10 trailers which, beginning next spring, are to provide transitional housing for about 45 people.

The campground, as yet, has nowhere else to go.

Curry and others tried to get the Santa Cruz City Council to hold off on the trailer plans until a new campground site is found.

"That isn't reasonable," said Councilman Mike Rotkin, noting that the campground was always intended as a temporary use.

At the same time, Rotkin and other council members agreed to look for another location for the campground within walking distance of the present site.

Two possible locations, both in the Harvey West Park area, have been found but no money to buy the land is available, Mayor Katherine Beiers said. She didn't identify the locations.

The field now occupied by homeless campers was

Campground must go, SC council decides

bought several years ago by Citizens Committee for the Homeless with the idea of building transitional housing, said the committee's Darrell Darling.

They agreed to use the field temporarily as an "open-air" summer shelter for homeless people, Darling said.

The field is behind the Homeless Resource Day Center, which provides showers, lockers, phones and other services.

The field was supposed to provide a place for up to 75 people to sleep. No tents were to be put up.

Instead, it has become a nine-month home to up to 200 people who have erected dozens of tents. That's about one-half to one-third of the city's estimated homeless population, according to Karen Gillette, director of the Homeless Resource Day Center.

The tents are scheduled to come down permanently beginning Dec. 1, when the National Guard armories open for the winter.

Then, the trailers go in.

Stanford University has given the Citizens Commit-

tee for the Homeless 10 double-wide mobile homes that once housed graduate students.

The plan is to use eight of them for homes for single adults, and the others for dining and counseling, Darling said.

The trailers should be moved in January and ready to use by May or June.

However, pulling the stakes on the tents has been hard. Campers resisted an earlier order to take down the tents by Nov. 1 and have continued to protest the trailer homes.

"We knew we would confront this dilemma," said Councilman Scott Kennedy.

Curry said that the trailers will house fewer people.

Putting them up without replacing the campground pits groups of homeless people against each other, she said.

The trailers will also house people who are newly sober and drug-free. Putting them next to the Homeless Resource Day Center, where drunks and addicts obtain services, is a bad mix, she said.

Council members agreed that the mix might be bad.

"How will you run a transitional program at the same site where people are dropping in for the first time for emergency food or to take a shower?" Rotkin asked Darling.