



City of Claremont

Quarterly Hotel/Motel City Interdepartmental Team (CIT) Report

Reporting Period: April 1 through June 30, 2023

Publish Date: July 27, 2023

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Purpose of the CIT

The City Interdepartmental Team (CIT) was established to proactively address criminal and nuisance activity at hotels and motels, particularly at freeway motels.

Team Members

Katie Wand, Assistant to the City Manager (CIT Team Lead)

Alisha Patterson, City Attorney

Detective Michael Snyder, Claremont PD

Detective William Livingston, Claremont PD

Bradley Fliehm, Building Official

Please note that Jason Barber, Community Improvement Coordinator, no longer works for the City of Claremont and as such, he will be replaced on the CIT by Jennifer Earl, Community Improvement Officer.

Wendy Ramallo, Citizen Representative

April 2023

Undercover Police Detail

On April 26, 2023, the Claremont Police Department along with the Pomona Police Department conducted an undercover prostitution detail in the area of Indian Hill Blvd. and IS-10 freeway. During the operation, four undercover officers posed as prostitutes and solicited subjects, “Johns” who sought to engage in commercial sexual acts. After the undercover officers were solicited for sex acts, the “John” was arrested by additional undercover officers in the area. During the enforcement detail, 12 subjects were arrested for soliciting a “Prostitute” for sexual acts. The 12 subjects arrested were booked and later released on citations with a pending court appearance at the Pomona Superior Court.

Hotel/Motel Ordinance

The City's Hotel/Motel Ordinance became effective on April 27, 2023. The Ordinance is a new, stand-alone chapter in the City's Zoning Code and imposes several new requirements for hotel/motel operators citywide:

- A hotel/motel operator may not re-rent rooms when guests check out before their minimum length of stay has elapsed (i.e., 18 hours for motels; overnight for hotels)
- The Ordinance will require guests to provide a valid credit/debit card as a way to verify their identity (even if they are paying for their room with cash)
- All hotels and motels are required to maintain a guest register that contains guest information specified in the Ordinance, and employees are required to sign an attestation stating that a guest matches the photo on their Identification Document (ID)
- All hotels and motels are required to scan images of a guest's ID
- Permit parking is required for all hotels/motels
- CCTV recording cameras are required in a hotel/motel's common areas, entry points, and parking areas
- The Ordinance explicitly outlines site and operational requirements, like security, cleanliness, room furnishings, and the condition of the exterior of the property and common areas
- The Ordinance reflects the strictest possible inspection requirements that are permitted under current law

Several "exceptions" to these requirements will only be granted to a hotel/motel operator if they are approved for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Changes in hotel/motel operations imposed by the Ordinance will need to be completed within three months (July 27, 2023) of Ordinance adoption and changes that require physical improvements to the property will need to be completed within one year (April 27, 2024) of Ordinance adoption. The City will also offer an expedited CUP process and a flat rate (\$1,250) for hotels/motel operators who apply for exceptions before October 27, 2023.

May 2023

CIT Meeting of May 9, 2023

Members of the CIT met at City Hall on May 9, 2023. During the meeting, the following topics were discussed:

- **Outreach to Hotels/Motels** – Staff emailed all hotel/motel operators on April 27, 2023 reminding them of the ordinance requirements and effective dates, including the requirement that operators may apply for a conditional use permit (CUP) if they wish to be exempt from certain specific ordinance requirements. It was also agreed upon that staff would email all hotel/motel operators and ask them to participate in "meet and greets" CIT members at their respective business locations.

- **Outreach to Impacted Community Members** – Members of the CIT agreed that there are opportunities to educate the community on City processes (i.e., code enforcement) and to include “hard to reach” residents who may be impacted by hotel/motel operators in Claremont. For example, there may be language barriers preventing some residents from participating in the public process and/or they may not be able to attend meetings/participate due to childcare needs, scheduling conflicts, etc. The CIT will continue to work to identify ways to conduct outreach in a way that effectively reaches people who are directly impacted by hotel/motel operations.

June 2023

CIT Meeting with Double Tree on June 1, 2023

Andrew Behnke, General Manager/VP of the Double Tree by Hilton Claremont, met with CIT members on Thursday, June 1, 2023. Mr. Behnke gave CIT members a tour of the property, including one vacant guest room, the pool area, the on-site restaurant, and the check-in desk.

CIT Meeting with Claremont Lodge on June 14, 2023

Hines Cannon Pardiwala, owner of the Claremont Lodge, met with CIT members on Wednesday, June 14, 2023. Mr. Pardiwala gave CIT members a tour of the property, including some vacant guest rooms, the pool area, the lobby, the parking lots, and the check-in area, including the property’s surveillance cameras.

Other Updates and Information

Data Tracking

Members of the CIT have discussed compiling and tracking the following for each hotel/motel:

- Frequency of police presence (proactive monitoring/not in response to a call for service)
- Police calls for service (including criminal and nuisance activity that may be stemming from hotel/motel operations)
- Reported Code or Building violations
- Reports of graffiti and other nuisance activity occurring at or adjacent to property

Moving forward, the CIT will explore comparing year-to-year calls/reports for service to monitor the effectiveness of the Hotel/Motel Ordinance and the perception of safety in the areas nearby hotels/motels.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) Lodging and Institutions Program conducts routine inspections of hotels, motels, and other housing facilities within their purview on an annual basis. They also conduct complaint investigations. The total number of health department inspections each year is dependent upon complaints received. As a reminder, any resident who has concerns related to health and/or cleanliness of a hotel or motel may independently report their concerns to the LACDPH using their online Complaint Form:

<https://ehservices.publichealth.lacounty.gov/servlet/guest?service=0&formId=4&saveAction=5>.

Inspection results (i.e. full reports including inspection criteria) are publicly available on LACDPH's website: <https://ehservices.publichealth.lacounty.gov/>. Any member of the public may use this link to search for a facility name, click "Inspections," and then click "Details" next to each listed inspection.

Proactive Building & Safety Inspection Program for Hotels/Motels

To ensure the safety and satisfaction of those who are visiting our Claremont hotels and motels, the Claremont Building Division initiated a proactive building and safety inspection program, which consists of periodic inspections of all hotels and motels by Building Inspection and Community Improvement staff. The goal is to visit 5-10 unoccupied guest rooms and accessible common areas at each of the five hotels/motels in Claremont to ensure that building and safety standards are being met.

Initial inspections were conducted at all five hotels/motels in January 2023, and Building Division/Community Improvement staff plans to reach out to hotel/motel operators in the next 1-2 months to schedule an additional round of voluntary inspections. The goal of this next round of inspections will be to ensure that hotel/motels are in compliance with required operational changes set forth in the Hotel/Motel Ordinance. The City is appreciative of this opportunity to work with all hotels and motels to improve our community and further support a vibrant local economy.

Status of Motel 6 Landscaping

As of July 25, 2023, 62 - 36" Ficus trees have been planted along the east property line between American Avenue and the Tennis Court area. The remainder of the Ficus screening trees are on site and will be installed in the coming days.

On July 5, 2023, mulch was installed along American Avenue and areas surrounding the tennis courts and on July 7, 2023, the existing trash enclosure was demolished and will be reconstructed along the western edge of the property. A landscaping crew has been on site continuously since June 29, 2023 prepping all landscape areas for landscape replacement.

Expansion of the east property line planter has been negotiated and direction has been provided to Motel 6. This expansion work should occur based on a new two-month time extension, which was granted by Community Development Department staff on July 25, 2023. The time extension granted sets progress target dates for the remaining tasks to be completed by September 22, 2023. Motel 6 has agreed to meet these target dates:

- Secure all remaining required permits for drainage, irrigation, and electrical no later than August 11, 2023.
- Complete the planting of Ficus trees along the eastern property line no later than August 18, 2023, including completing the expansion of the planter area as directed by Staff.
- Complete the installation of lighting elements under the plan no later than September 14, 2023.
- Complete all remaining landscaping/irrigation elements and new trash enclosure no later than September 22, 2023.
- Secure all final inspections no later than September 22, 2023 (Planning, Engineering, and Building).

The City of Claremont reserves the right to revoke this extension if the progress target dates outlined above are not fulfilled as expected, or if the project is delayed in any manner.

Status of University Inn (formerly Knights Inn)

Staff is in frequent contact with property owner Ashok Patel. Mr. Patel has advised staff that he is actively working with his engineers and contractors to finalize demolition plans (University Inn), which is typically a several month long process (including City review and approval, which largely depends on how thorough and complete the plans are when they are submitted to the City). Mr. Patel is also actively working on the financing component of the Residence Inn development as well to ensure that work takes place in a timely and efficient manner. At this time, City staff estimates that the demolition will be completed in 2-4 months.

The University Inn is currently not operating as a motel or any other business; it is closed to the public. Based on what Mr. Patel has shared with City staff, there are no plans to operate University Inn prior to demolition; however, the City cannot guarantee this. Should the University Inn re-open, it would need to be in compliance with all of the health and safety protocols described in the new Hotel/Motel Ordinance.

Community Feedback and Participation

Members of the CIT request that if community members have feedback on this report (i.e., format, content, etc.); please let us know by emailing Katie Wand kwand@ci.claremont.ca.us or informing citizen representative, Wendy Ramallo. Members of the CIT want to ensure that interested residents are receiving information by way of these quarterly reports that is useful and relevant.

Status of Goals for Current Reporting Period

Goal # 1 COMPLETED – Establish CIT meeting schedule.

- The CIT will meet at least once per quarter, and may schedule additional meetings as needed.
- The CIT will regularly communicate via email, telephone calls, etc. to share important information in real time, rather than waiting to share at their quarterly meetings.

Goal # 2 COMPLETED – Establish comment form on the City’s website (to allow members of the public to provide feedback on hotels and motels).

- A stand-alone Hotel/Motel Complaint Form is available on the City’s website: <https://www.ci.claremont.ca.us/living/hotel-motel-ordinance/hotel-motel-complaint-form>. It should be noted that this form was initially on the City’s existing Hotel/Motel Ordinance webpage, but after receiving feedback from residents and in discussion with CIT members, it was determined that to make it easier for residents to locate the form, that the form should be found on a stand-alone page on the City’s website.
- To date, three complaints have been submitted using the online form. The complaints that were submitted to the City were copies of reviews from guests that were publicly posted online. Upon receiving these complaints, staff notified the hotel/motel that was subject to the complaints and forwarded the complaints to our representative at the LACDPH. The hotel/motel operator advised that they were already aware of the negative reviews that were posted online and that they had taken measures to ensure that the issues would not continue to occur. The CIT will provide updates in future reports regarding complaints that are submitted via the form on the City’s website.

Goal # 3 – ON-GOING Determine the most effective way to document relevant calls for service at hotels/motels (specifically, criminal and nuisance activity that may be stemming from hotel/motel operations) so that this information can be shared in future reports.

- See “Data Tracking” update on Page 3.

Goal # 4 – ON-GOING Continue to conduct outreach and offer support to all hotels/motels regarding the requirements imposed by the new Ordinance.

- See “CIT Meeting with Double Tree on June 1, 2023” and “CIT Meeting with Claremont Lodge on June 14, 2023” Sections on Page 3.
- See “Proactive Building & Safety Inspection Program for Hotels/Motels” Section on Page 4.
- Copies of Quarterly CIT Reports are sent via email to hotel/motel operators.

Goal # 5 – ON-GOING Assist interested hotels/motels with the streamlined CUP process.

- As of July 27, 2023, the only application that has been received **and** subsequently approved was for the new Residence Inn. Representatives from Casa 425 and the Claremont Lodge have reached out to staff and/or have submitted some application material, which is still being reviewed by the City’s Planning Division staff.

Goals for Next Reporting Period

- Continue work on Goals 3, 4, and 5 (listed above).
- Goal # 6 – Identify ways to contact “hard to reach” residents (i.e., those who have been impacted by criminal/nuisance activity but have not attended City/community meetings) as well as nearby businesses who live/operate near the freeway motels and may have useful feedback for staff/neighboring motel operators.

CIT Next Steps

Next Reporting Period: July 1 – September 30, 2023

Estimated Publish Date for Next Report: October 26, 2023