



City of Claremont

Quarterly Hotel/Motel City Interdepartmental Team (CIT) Report

Reporting Period: July 1 through September 30, 2023

Publish Date: November 2, 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

Matthew Guerrero, Community Improvement Coordinator

Jennifer Earl, Community Improvement Officer

Wendy Ramallo, Citizen Representative

Updates for July – September 2023

CIT Meeting of July 12, 2023

Members of the CIT met on July 12, 2023 to discuss feedback that was received on the July 2023 CIT Quarterly Report; upcoming voluntary inspections to be conducted by Community Improvement Division staff (Proactive Building & Safety Inspection Program for Hotels/Motels); and additional updates/information to be included in the October 2023 CIT Quarterly Report. Each member of the CIT also provided individual updates on their department/division's recent efforts related to the Hotel/Motel Ordinance (as described throughout this report).

Hotel/Motel Ordinance

The Ordinance 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 were required 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.

On **July 27, 2023**, City staff reached out to all hotel/motel operators to remind them that they must be in compliance with all operational modifications set forth in the Ordinance, unless they have a CUP for certain exceptions that has been approved by the City's Planning Commission.

Prostitution Enforcement Detail

On July 28, 2023, the Claremont Police Department along with the Monterey Park Police Department, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Bureau of Investigation, and with the assistance of Claremont Motel 6 conducted an undercover prostitution detail in the area of Indian Hill Boulevard and the IS-10 freeway. The Claremont Police Department had received multiple complaints from residents, business owners, and passersby regarding prostitution in the immediate area.

During the operation, seven 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 "Johns" were arrested by additional undercover officers in the area. During the enforcement detail, 16 subjects were arrested for soliciting a "prostitute" for sexual acts. A press release with this information was issued by the Claremont Police Department on July 31, 2023.

Hotel/Motel Complaint Form Submissions – July and August

In the CIT Quarterly Report that was published on July 27, 2023, it was noted that three complaints had been submitted using the online form. As of August 31, 2023, no additional complaints were submitted.

CIT Meeting of September 27, 2023

Members of the CIT met on September 27, 2023 to continue work on the October 2023 CIT Quarterly Report; provide updates on hotels/motels that applied for exceptions to the Hotel/Motel Ordinance through the CUP process; and discuss new comments that were received on the City's website form. Each member of the CIT also provided individual updates on their department/division's most recent efforts related to the Hotel/Motel Ordinance (as described throughout this report).

Hotel/Motel Complaint Form Submissions

As of September 30, 2023, two new submissions were received via the online form. One submission was a copy of a review from a hotel/motel guest that was publicly posted online. The second submission was a general comment that read, "I have been following the comments about these motels on Google, Booking.com, Yelp and Tripadvisor for a year and a half. The most recent reviews are encouraging. Even the one negative review does NOT mention dirt or insect infestations. Also missing is any mention of possible criminal activity or noise in the hallways or parking lot. The CIT needs to know this. However, the city needs to remain vigilant."

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). These are noted below as "officer initiated activity (welfare checks)" because they are reported as "welfare checks" when reported by officers to dispatch.
- Police calls for service (including criminal and nuisance activity that may be stemming from hotel/motel operations). While these are noted below as "police calls for service," it is important to know that not all of these calls are associated with problems related to hotel/motel operations. For example, these call numbers include traffic stops/hazards associated with a hotel/motel address. These call numbers also include instances where a hotel/motel operator calls Claremont Police because they see something suspicious, which is something that everyone is encouraged to do.
- 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.

Below is the data for this quarter (July – September, 2023)

Hotel Casa 425

- Officer initiated activity (welfare checks) – 0
- Police calls for service – 1

- Reported Code or Building violations – 0
- Reports of graffiti and other nuisance activity occurring at or adjacent to property – 1

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Claremont

- Officer initiated activity (welfare checks) – 2
- Police calls for service – 25
- Reported Code or Building violations – 0
- Reports of graffiti and other nuisance activity occurring at or adjacent to property – 0

Motel 6

- Officer initiated activity (welfare checks) – 56
- Police calls for service – 52
- Reported Code or Building violations – 0
- Reports of graffiti and other nuisance activity occurring at or adjacent to property – 9

Claremont Lodge

- Officer initiated activity (welfare checks) – 13
- Police calls for service – 20
- Reported Code or Building violations – 0
- Reports of graffiti and other nuisance activity occurring at or adjacent to property – 3

Other Updates and Information

Hotel/Motel Ordinance CUP Process

The City offered an expedited CUP process and a flat rate (\$1,250) for hotels/motel operators who applied for a conditional use permit (CUP) seeking certain Hotel/Motel Ordinance exceptions before October 27, 2023. Below is the status of each operator.

Casa 425

On October 17, 2023, the Planning Commission approved Hotel Casa 425 for the following exceptions to the Hotel/Motel Ordinance:

- Guest stays for longer than 30 days.
- Cumulative stays for more than 60 days in a 180 day period.
- Ability to utilize digital check-ins.
- Ability to re-rent vacant rooms before the minimum length of stay has elapsed.

- Exemption of video surveillance requirements in the hotel's parking areas. Since Hotel Casa 425's guest parking is in a public parking lot, video surveillance and related enforcement is operated by the Claremont Police Department.

Claremont Lodge

To date, a complete application has not been received.

Double Tree

An application was received in late October for several CUP exceptions. It is anticipated that these items will be considered by the Planning Commission in late November or December.

Motel 6

To date, a complete application has not been received.

Residence Inn (former University Inn/Knights Inn)

On March 21, 2023, the Planning Commission approved the Residence Inn (not yet constructed and in operation) for the following exceptions to the Hotel/Motel Ordinance:

- Guest stays for longer than 30 days.
- Cumulative stays for more than 60 days in a 180 day period.
- Ability to operate a "day use" program.
- Ability to utilize digital check-ins.
- Parking permits.

It should be noted that the Planning Commission supported these exceptions because:

- The applicant (Ashok Patel, owner) explained that Marriott corporate may require concepts like digital check-ins for all of their locations in the future, and explained in detail how Marriott currently utilizes digital check-in ("mobile key") at some of their hotel locations and how they verify/approve guests to use such a program.
- Based on the definitions in the Claremont Municipal Code (CMC), the Residence Inn is considered a "long-term stay business hotel," and is subject to additional requirements set forth by the CMC.
- As a "long-term stay business hotel," Residence Inns are specifically designed with business travelers in mind, and such travelers (i.e., adjunct professors) may require longer consecutive and cumulative stays than non-business travelers. Further, business travelers are also more likely to utilize a "day use" program (i.e., if they are in town for an interview or meeting).
- The Residence Inn in Claremont will have secured (gated) parking, and the applicant agreed to utilize a parking permit system if the gates are ever removed. As such, a parking permit system would be redundant so long as the gated parking exists.

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 conducted an additional round of voluntary inspections in September-October 2023. The goal of secondary inspections was 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.

Update on Status of Residence Inn (formerly Knights Inn)

Earlier this year, the City Council approved a new 120-room hotel (Residence Inn by Marriott) to replace the now vacant Knights Inn Motel, located at 721 S. Indian Hill Boulevard near the I-10 freeway. On October 30th, the City issued the developer, Sagemont Hotels, a demolition permit for the existing motel. Demolition of the existing motel is anticipated to begin within the next 1-2 weeks. The developer's second plans submittal for the new construction is currently in plan review. In preparation for the new development, the City planted 25 new street trees on both sides of San Jose Avenue and in the center median to help provide additional shade and privacy screening for nearby residences. More information can be found on the City's [website](#).

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. Please reference the [July 2023 CIT Quarterly Report](#) for additional information.

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

- 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 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. 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 Pages 3-4.

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

- See “Proactive Building & Safety Inspection Program for Hotels/Motels” Section on Page 6.
- Copies of Quarterly CIT Reports are sent via email to hotel/motel operators.

Goal # 5 – COMPLETED Assist interested hotels/motels with the streamlined CUP process.

- See “Hotel/Motel Ordinance CUP Process” Section on Pages 4-5.

Goal # 6 – ON-GOING 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.

Goals for Next Reporting Period

- Continue work on Goals 3, 4, and 6 (listed above).

CIT Next Steps

Next Reporting Period: October 1 – December 31, 2023

Estimated Publish Date for Next Report: As directed by the City Council, an annual report will be presented to the City Council and the community each year in January. As such, it is anticipated that the next CIT Quarterly Report will be presented at the January 23, 2024 City Council meeting. Meeting material will be made publicly available on January 18, 2024.