

Alternatives for Homeless Services Response to Resolution #31292

Introduction

The following report provides analysis of financial, legal and policy issues related to a number of approaches to addressing homelessness in the City of Seattle. The report was prepared in response to Resolution 31292, was adopted by the Council in May 2011. This resolution stated the Council's intent to review different approaches to addressing the long term housing and immediate survival and safety needs of homeless people who do not have access to safe shelter, as alternatives to the Mayor's proposal to locate a homeless encampment at the City-owned Sunny Jim site. The approaches identified in Resolution 31292 included the following:

- 1) Renovating Fire Station 39 as a possible long-term shelter or low-income housing facility;
- 2) Working with faith-based communities to support the creation of shelter space on their properties or on City land leased by churches;
- 3) Purchasing and renovating a hotel/motel property for use as transitional or permanent housing;
- 4) Providing additional funding for direct housing assistance, such as rent assistance and/or vouchers;
- 5) Locating an encampment at a site other than the Sunny Jim property that, preferably, would not require any Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Code amendments; and
- 6) Modifying the City's existing shelter services contracts to incorporate new best practices and address any shortcomings identified by the Human Services Department (HSD) and the Council.

With the adoption of Resolution 31292, the Council also committed to begin reviewing these approaches on or after July 31, 2011. This report is intended to provide Councilmembers with some of the background and analysis necessary to complete that review. The Council's efforts are intended to result in the identification of recommended actions that will help to meet the long-term housing and immediate survival and safety needs of homeless people in Seattle who do not have access to safe shelter. Generally, the alternatives reviewed are not mutually exclusive; Several of the alternatives, however, would require City resources to implement. As a result, the Council will likely need to prioritize which alternatives it wants to pursue given the limited City resources available.

1. Renovate Fire Station 39 for long-term shelter or low-income housing development

Community members and the Mayor and Council recognize there are homeless people in Lake City who need assistance. As a result, the Mayor and Council are currently considering a proposal to repurpose the old Fire Station 39 in the Lake City neighborhood as a shelter for homeless individuals and families. The proposal that is currently being discussed would require the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) to expend up to \$950,000 to complete renovations at the former fire station to allow it to be used as a shelter facility. FAS would enter into a lease agreement with Seattle's Union Gospel Mission (SUGM) to operate a homeless shelter at the Fire Station 39 site for up to three years.

Fire Station 39 ceased use as a fire station in April 2010 and was recently used as a temporary shelter for homeless individuals who have since vacated the premises. As the station house is no longer needed for the provision of fire services, it could be renovated to provide space in which shelter and associated services for the homeless could be accommodated. However, to comply with the City's Land Use Code, certain life and safety improvements would first need to be made to the building.

SUGM has submitted a proposal to operate a shelter at Fire Station 39. Under the terms of their proposal, SUGM would commit the needed resources and services to assist all clients to access shelter, addiction treatment, education, employment and other services that will lead to placement in housing. The services offered at Fire Station 39 would be provided using SUGM's own resources; no City funds would be required to operate the shelter. SUGM would agree to comply with other City requirements, including providing assistance to clients without requiring participation in religious activities, tracking outcomes for the individuals and families served by the shelter, and convening a Community Advisory Committee to provide input on the operation of the facility. These and other specific provisions could be included in a lease agreement between SUGM and FAS.

The SUGM proposed shelter would serve single adults, families, and medically-fragile homeless individuals recently discharged from a hospital. Separate sleeping areas would be provided for each group served. Families and medically-fragile individuals would be assigned specific beds and be permitted to stay at the facility 24 hours per day. Other clients would be provided overnight shelter but would not have specific bed assignments. These clients would be permitted to access services in designated areas of the building during the day. The services provided either on-site or off-site via referral would include: case management, medical and dental care, substance abuse treatment, legal assistance, and housing placement services. Meals, showers, laundry, and storage facilities would be available on-site. Resident-empowerment activities would also be operated at the facility. Fire Station 39 could accommodate shelter and services for a maximum of 100 people.

City staff are also exploring Fire Station 39's potential as a development site for low-income housing, all or a portion of which, could serve homeless individuals or families. Staff have had preliminary discussions about this proposal.

Financial Implications:

Repurposing Fire Station 39 as a shelter facility for up to three years and bringing it up to health and safety standards appropriate for residential use will necessitate a program of building improvements estimated at a maximum of \$950,000. Given the possibility that the

Fire Station 39 site could be fully redeveloped later, this estimate includes only the minimum amount of improvements required for health and safety. The proposed source of funding for the improvements is a portion of the insurance settlement funds the City received after a fire broke out on the Sunny Jim site in 2010. Shelter operations and other services provided at Fire Station 39 would be supported with SUGM's own resources at an approximate cost of \$300,000 per year; *no City funds would be required to operate the shelter*, only funding necessary to bring the facility into compliance with appropriate health and safety standards.

FAS estimates an open market sale of the former Fire Station 39 site could generate between \$800,000 to \$1 million to assist with the implementation of the Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy Program (FFERL Program). If the property is redeveloped for low-income housing, it is possible that a portion of the lower sales amount could be realized. If the property is not sold on the open market, it is likely that other City resources will need to be used to replace or augment Fire Station 39's expected contribution to the FFERL Program.

If the property is redeveloped as low-income housing, the City's Housing Levy could provide some of the required funding, in addition to the other typical federal, state and local funding sources. The Housing Levy provides over \$14 million annually for the development of low-income rental housing in the City and creating housing for homeless individuals and families is one of several priority uses for Levy funds. However, given recent cuts to Federal funding, as well as the State Housing Trust Fund and other reductions at the county level, funding for housing projects is more constrained than in previous years. Service dollars, which provide needed funding for many homeless housing projects, are also facing reductions. Locally, service funding for permanent supportive housing is administered through a joint Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) that is offered by the City of Seattle, King County, United Way, the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities, ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) and Building Changes.

Legal/Policy Issues:

Legislation to authorize FAS and SUGM to enter into a lease agreement for the Fire Station 39 site would be required to allow SUGM to operate a homeless shelter at this facility. FAS would also need authority to expend funds to make the health and safety improvements required to use the facility as a shelter. Seattle's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) believes existing zoning at Fire Station 39 allows use of the facility as a shelter. Thus, no land use legislation would be needed for the facility to be used as a shelter. Existing zoning would also permit the development of low-income housing at this site.

The Region's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness (The Plan to End Homelessness) gives priority to actions that prevent or end homelessness, including key goals related to the development of permanent, affordable housing and/or provision of rental assistance. The expansion of shelter facilities is not a priority action identified in the Plan to End Homelessness because such actions do not provide permanent housing for the homeless people. The City of Seattle currently expends \$4.8 million a year to provide 1,048 year round shelter beds for single adults. The City funds an additional 134 Winter Response shelter beds. The Mid-Plan (5 year) Review Report for the Plan to End Homelessness (Mid-Plan Review) recommends that in areas that have a high number of shelter beds, the focus of investment should be on helping people leave shelter, not on creating new shelter beds (see Attachment 1).

The HSD's Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) response "City of Seattle Investments in Shelter Programs, May 2011" (available at <http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/documents/SeattleInvestmentReportHSDEmergencyShelterPrograms05202011Final.pdf>) highlights the need for more affordable housing and/or rental assistance in order to continue to successfully move people out of shelter and into housing. The SUGM proposal would provide shelter and services for individuals or families who do not have access to such services. The proposal would also provide linkages to services, including housing that could assist individuals or families secure permanent housing.

The possible redevelopment of Fire Station 39 site as low-income housing serving the homeless would provide long term housing for the homeless and would therefore be consistent with the Plan to End Homelessness and the Mid Plan Review and HSD SLI response. The Plan to End Homelessness has a goal of creating over 9,500 additional units of housing for the homeless over ten years. Such units can be developed via new construction, the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing, or through the provision rental assistance. If the project is targeted to assist homeless people, it would provide housing for those who do not have access to shelter or housing.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

The SUGM shelter proposal is being reviewed. Low-income housing proposal – Undetermined. General timeline for development of housing is three years.

2. Work with faith-based communities to support the creation of homeless shelters and services on their properties

On a daily basis, faith-based communities throughout the region are providing food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities to families and individuals in need. At least 14 churches, in collaboration with non-profit organizations (e.g. Catholic Community Services, Salvation Army, SHARE/WHEEL), currently provide indoor shelter for homeless individuals in the City of Seattle. Numerous local churches have also hosted tent encampments in their parking lots in recent years. A number of efforts are currently underway or being explored that would increase the participation of Seattle's faith-based communities in providing shelter and services for the homeless. These efforts are described below.

A. Increase support of faith-based communities that are working to end homelessness

The City of Seattle participates in the Committee to End Homelessness, a collaborative that includes United Way, King County, suburban cities and private organizations that are working together on implementing the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. In the fall of 2010, the Committee hired Catholic Community Services (CCS) to spend two years working with the region's faith communities to achieve the following: 1) raise the number of faith-based groups that adopt addressing homelessness as one of their social justice goals; and, more specifically, 2) increase the number of faith communities that are taking concrete actions to assist individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

As part of its efforts, CCS has helped establish partnerships between individual congregations and various shelter, housing and service programs. CCS has also created a variety of workshops and presentations to suit the needs and interests of individual

congregations. CCS's goal over the next two years is to provide one-on-one technical assistance to at least ten faith communities and to help those groups undertake new activities that support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including both emergency support services and services that promote re-housing. CCS will hold several events in the Fall to bring churches and service providers together to explore partnerships for addressing the needs of the homeless people. CCS is working with several churches in Seattle on the development of day services and overnight shelter for families.

Financial Implications:

None

Legal/Policy Issues:

Case law affirms the First Amendment right of religious organizations to utilize the property they own to provide shelter and other aid to the homeless. The City, in turn, has the ability to impose health and safety requirements that do not impair the First Amendment rights of such organizations when they are providing services to the homeless.

The Plan to End Homelessness envisions the involvement of faith communities, government organizations, businesses, civic groups, charitable institutions and other partners in the effort to prevent homelessness and provide more affordable housing. As many religious organizations have financial resources, facilities, and members that could be utilized to help achieve these goals, targeted efforts that encourage faith-based groups to support the provision of housing and services for our region's homeless could be extremely valuable. These efforts could result in the provision of shelter or long-term housing for individuals or families who do not have access to such services.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

Project underway and will continue through 2012.

B. Car camping in church parking lots.

A church in Ballard is exploring implementation of a Safe Parking Pilot Program. This program would allow 3-5 homeless individuals or families to live in their vehicles in the church parking lot 24-hours a day. Participants would have access to rest room facilities in the church. Case management services would be provided to assist clients access resources or services needed to help them secure and maintain permanent housing. Participants would be chosen based on their desire to move into permanent housing. Participants would be expected to contribute in some way for the parking either through a small financial contribution or helping with church clean-up or maintenance or other activities identified by the client or church. Approximately \$20,000 in funding is needed to implement the proposal. State funding may be available to cover some of the costs of this pilot program but this is being explored further.

New Beginnings Counseling Center operates the City of Santa Barbara's Safe Parking Program for individuals and families. This program allows people to sleep overnight in their vehicles in designated parking lots that belong to the County, City, churches, non-profit agencies and businesses. Each lot can serve three to ten vehicles, depending on location. Each lot has either porta potties or toilets available for use by program participants. Clients

are permitted to be at the site only in the evening. There is no time limit on participation in the program. Currently, there are 110 parking spaces available in twenty-three lots. A maximum of 150 people can be served by the program at a time. The program provides case management services to clients to help them access services that include: job search, medical care, psychiatric care and housing. The goal of the program is to move people into housing. Each program participant is required to receive an intake assessment intended to identify immediate service needs and establishment of long term goals for stability. The case manager continues to work with the client to achieve his or her goals. The program has been in operation for 8 years and costs approximately \$100,000 a year. Two staff operate the program. Funding is provided by numerous sources including, the City, County, private foundations, fund-raising and donation. No detailed data are kept on those served although it is believed that 800 – 850 people are assisted annually by the program. In 2010, forty-two people moved to housing and fifteen to twenty people secured employment.

Kitsap County Community Resources (KCCR), a non-profit social service agency, also operates a Safe Park Program. This program serves only families with children. It allows people to live in their cars in a parking lot owned by Kitsap County for up to ninety days. Bathrooms and shower facilities are available for use at the site. Clients are permitted to be at the site only in the evenings and not during the day. Background checks are performed on all applicants to the program. The program operates in one parking lot, serving a maximum of eight vehicles at one time. Case management services are provided to families in the program. Services provided include: job search, access to benefits, housing placement and assistance. The goal of the program is to work with families to help them move into either temporary or permanent housing. Costs of the program are covered by other existing programs operated by KCCR. Start-up funding of approximately \$8,000 was provided by Kitsap County. The program started in 2009. From 2009 (partial year) to 2011 (to date), the program has served fifty-nine families. Thirteen families moved to emergency shelter, eleven moved into housing, six moved in with friends or family, sixteen left to unknown location, and eleven were still in the program at report time. In 2011, the number of families served decreased due to the opening of a shelter by the Salvation Army. This shelter operated for six months and has now closed.

St. Vincent de Paul in Eugene, Oregon has operated an Overnight Parking Program since the late 1990s. This program allows people in cars, campers or trailers to park in the parking lot of a religious institution, business or public facility with permission from the property owner. No more than three vehicles may be parked in an individual lot at one time. Individuals staying on publicly-owned parking lots are permitted to stay up to 90 days per year. No other restrictions on length of stay apply to parking lots owned by other entities. The program currently operates at twenty-three sites, providing one to three parking spaces for vehicles at each site. Eight of the sites are owned by the City and fifteen are owned by private businesses or faith communities. The City of Eugene provides portable toilets and garbage disposal services free of charge to property owners who participate in the program. In addition, it provides \$89,000 a year to St. Vincent de Paul to cover these and other costs, including staffing, cell phones, and other associated expenses. Property owners cannot charge program participants any fees for using their parking lots. Applications for Eugene's Overnight Parking Program are available through family and single adult day center programs operated by St. Vincent de Paul. Data on past and current program participants is limited.

Financial Implications:

The annual cost of the proposed Safe Parking program in Ballard is \$20,000. Funding would be used for case management services. There is potentially \$10,000 in State funding available to implement this program.

Legal/Policy Issues:

Car camping in parking lots owned by religious organizations or other entities is not currently addressed in the City’s Land Use Code. However, as noted in 2A above, case law affirms the right of religious organizations to provide shelter facilities on their property as a First Amendment right. The City’s role includes its authority to impose specific health and safety requirements for such facilities.

As noted above, the Plan to End Homelessness gives priority to actions that prevent or end homelessness, including key goals related to the development of more permanent, affordable housing. Car camping provides temporary shelter only, not permanent housing. Religious organizations can, however, choose to support a car camping program with their own financial resources, without assistance from the City. This would allow the City to focus its resources on prevention activities and the development of additional affordable housing, both of which are consistent with the priorities of the Plan to End Homelessness. The City of Chicago has taken a similar policy path as it relates to funding of homeless services. There, faith- based communities now provide shelter beds without City assistance and the City focuses its funding on interim, transitional, and permanent housing consistent with the priorities of their Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Safe Parking proposal would meet the shelter needs of individuals or families who do not have access to such services. If appropriate linkages are made to services, including housing, this program could also provide access to long term housing for such individuals or families.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

In progress.

C. Proposed encampment guidelines for properties owned or occupied by religious organizations

The Executive has proposed legislation that would amend the Land Use Code to provide a definition for “transitional encampments” and authorize the location of such encampments on sites that are owned or occupied by religious organizations. The legislation would apply to properties owned by faith-based groups in all areas of the City, including industrial zones.

The proposal defines a “transitional encampment” as a use having tents or similar structures that provide temporary quarters for sleeping and shelter. A transitional encampment could also include a common food preparation area, showers and/or other shared facilities that are separate from the sleeping shelters. The proposed legislation provides specific standards for operating an encampment that address site management and operations, maintenance, health, safety, and hygiene. Under the terms of the proposal, a maximum of 100 individuals could be served at a transitional encampment site.

Financial Implications:

None

Legal/Policy Issues:

Currently, the City's existing Land Use Code does not permit transitional encampments in any zoning district except through the issuance of a temporary use permit.

The Executive's proposed legislation would authorize transitional encampments in all zoning districts in the City, including industrial zones, so long as an encampment is located on a site where the principal use is as a religious facility.

As noted in 2A above, case law affirms the First Amendment right of religious organizations to provide shelter and other assistance to the homeless. The City, in turn, has the authority to impose basic health and safety requirements that do not impair the First Amendment rights of such organizations. As it relates to zoning, the City currently allows religious facilities in all land use zones in the City. As a result, encampments located on church-owned properties would also be permitted, regardless of the zoning.

A Consent Decree entered into between SHARE/WHEEL, El Centro De La Raza, and the City in 2002 currently restricts the number of encampments SHARE/WHEEL can operate in the City at any given time. It also establishes a maximum encampment population of 100 people; limits the amount of time that an encampment can be located at a particular site to three consecutive months and no more than six total months over a two-year period; and imposes community notification, buffer, parking, and code of conduct requirements. The Consent Decree binds only SHARE/WHEEL and El Centro De La Raza and applies to encampments located on property owned by faith-based groups, schools, and public and private entities. SHARE/WHEEL is one of only several organizations that currently operate tent encampments in the City of Seattle. The Consent Decree provisions do not bind any other organizations.

The Consent Decree will expire in March 2012 unless it is superseded by an ordinance, in which case it will terminate 180 days after the effective date of the ordinance. The Executive's proposed legislation would eliminate conditions included in the existing Consent Decree that restrict the number of days an encampment can locate at a site and limit the number of encampments that SHARE/WHEEL can operate in the City at one time. The proposal also removes "code of conduct" language that governs resident behavior at encampments, including prohibitions on drugs, alcohol, weapons, violence, and loitering in neighborhoods.

As noted above, the Plan to End Homelessness and the Mid-Plan Review give priority to actions that result in the development of additional affordable housing for homeless individuals and families. The Mid-Plan Review Report recommends that in areas that have a high number of shelter beds, the focus of investment should be on helping people leave shelter, not on creating new shelter beds.

As noted in 2B above, this does not preclude religious organizations from funding encampments at their own expense, without financial assistance from the City. These facilities meet the immediate need for shelter for individuals or families who do not have access to such services. If appropriate linkages are made to services, including housing,

these facilities could also provide access to long term housing for such individuals or families.

In addition, the hosting of “self-managed” encampments by faith communities has the added benefit of providing a form of oversight of behavior and management. If the encampment creates internal or external troubles, it will be unable to find its next host. It is much more difficult for a government to close or stop hosting an encampment. The self-managed encampment on government-owned property in Portland, called “Dignity Village”, has experienced significant management issues. To date, Dignity Village is the only encampment program in the country that has been evaluated. According to the evaluation report, it faces numerous challenges, including: Lack of financial and organizational stability; inconsistent adherence to City codes; inadequate transition to permanent housing for residents; and lack of timely, accurate data on the people living at the encampment. Changes to the program are currently being considered by the City of Portland in order to correct a number of these deficiencies.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

Proposed legislation on encampments is scheduled for a public hearing in the Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee at the end of September with possible Council vote thereafter.

3. Purchase and renovate a hotel/motel property for use as transitional or permanent housing

Office of Housing (OH) staff and the Housing Development Consortium (HDC) are regularly contacted by owners of hotels, motels and other real estate that are interested in selling or leasing properties that they believe could be appropriate for low-income housing development. HDC shares information about the availability of such properties with nonprofit developers who, in some cases, choose to pursue a purchase. Frequently, the developers first consult with OH to determine the feasibility of moving forward with a project at an available site.

Over the last year, OH staff and Central Staff have toured four such hotel/motel properties along Aurora Avenue North. The presence of derelict buildings on small lots can make old roadside motel sites challenging locations for renovation projects. However, in some cases, redevelopment can still be an option. A local nonprofit developer is currently negotiating the purchase of an Aurora Avenue motel property that they hope to redevelop into low-income housing for homeless people. The developer has submitted a proposal via the City’s Housing Levy Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process. Although the project proposal is very preliminary at this point, the populations most likely to be served at the site include homeless individuals and/or formerly homeless individuals ready to transition to permanent housing. Details on the support services that would be provided to residents of this project are not yet available.

Financial Implications:

As noted above, the City’s Housing Levy provides over \$14 million per year to support the development of low-income rental housing, including housing for homeless individuals and families. Thus, Housing Levy dollars would be an eligible source of project funding for nonprofit developers interested in acquiring and redeveloping hotel/motel properties to

create affordable housing. Additional funding support from federal, state, and local government sources would also be necessary to make such a redevelopment project financially feasible; however as mentioned above, many of these housing finance programs are currently facing reductions. The amount of City capital funding that will be requested to support the specific Aurora Avenue project described above is yet to be determined.

Legal/Policy Issues:

As noted above, the Plan to End Homelessness gives priority to the development of permanent housing. Redeveloping a hotel/motel property to create additional affordable housing for homeless individuals and families is consistent with this priority. If the proposed housing project is targeted to assist homeless people who are currently living on the streets, it would meet the need for shelter or housing for individuals or families who do not have access to such services.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

A funding proposal has been submitted to OH as part of the Fall Notice of Funding Availability process. Funding decisions will be made in October or November 2011. General timeline for completion of a new housing project is approximately 3 years.

4. Provide additional funding for direct housing assistance, such as rent assistance and/or vouchers

In 2009, the City was awarded \$4.9 million in Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funding from the federal government as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This funding supports two programs: The Homeless Prevention Program which prevents families and individuals from becoming homeless; and the Rapid Re-Housing program which places homeless individuals or families who are already homeless into housing. Funding for both programs can be used for 1) case management services including assistance with housing searches, landlord negotiations, and accessing benefits; and/or 2) direct housing assistance including rent payments, move-in costs, security or utility deposits, payment of past due rent and/or utility payments. The Homeless Prevention Program provides financial assistance and case management for up to six months. The Rapid Re-Housing Program provides financial assistance and case management for up to twelve months.

The Homeless Prevention Program is supported by HPRP funding, General Fund, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Levy funds. Program funding was \$1.6 million in 2009, \$2.8 million in 2010, \$2.7 million in 2011 and is estimated at \$2.1 million in 2012. HPRP funds will expire at the end of 2011. The Homeless Prevention Program will continue to be funded in 2012 and beyond with Housing Levy funds and likely General Fund and CDBG funds.

The Rapid Re-Housing Program, almost entirely supported by the federal HPRP funding, received \$587,898 dollars in 2010, \$1.1 million dollars in 2011, and \$101,000 in 2012. This program will not operate after the federal HPRP funding expires in 2012 unless additional resources are provided.

As of March 31, 2011, the Rapid Re-Housing program assisted 160 households. Of those households, forty-seven moved into housing and exited the program. 121 households are

still in the program and being assisted. Households with children that had exited the program received an average of \$7,650 in assistance. Single individuals who had exited the program received an average of \$6,025 in assistance.

As of March 31, 2011, The Homelessness Prevention program assisted close to 1,000 households with 789 exiting the program. Of those exiting the program, 714 households were in permanent housing at reporting date. 211 are still in the program and receiving assistance. The average total financial assistance per household was \$2,450.

The City's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs developed and supported with HPRP funds appear to be successful at keeping people housed who were at risk of becoming homeless, and placing and keeping homeless households in stable housing. Seattle's programs were modeled after similar initiatives operating in other jurisdictions across the country. If additional funds are available, the City may want to consider increasing the amount of funding for these programs. For example, \$250,000 in direct financial assistance could prevent a minimum of 102 households from becoming homeless or re-house a minimum of thirty-two to forty-one families or individuals. Providing additional funding for these programs may not be feasible at this time due to reductions in CDBG funding and pressures on the City's General Fund.

Financial Implications:

\$250,000 could prevent a minimum of 102 households from becoming homeless or potentially re-house a minimum of 32 - 41 individuals or families.

Legal/Policy Issues:

The Mid- Plan Review and HSD's SLI response identified the local need for more affordable housing, including rental assistance that helps people access housing. The SLI response highlights how the City successfully moved over 1,000 people from shelter to transitional or permanent housing in 2010. The ability to maintain this success is contingent upon the continued availability of affordable housing, including housing developed by non-profit developers, and the Seattle Housing Authority, and the provision of rental assistance that can be used to secure affordable housing units owned by private entities and nonprofit groups. In addition, the Crisis Clinic's 2-1-1 information and referral line continues to receive large numbers of calls every year from Seattle residents requesting rental assistance. In 2008, 4,119 calls were received; in 2009, 5,604 calls were received; and in 2010, 5,612 calls were received. If additional funding is targeted to assist those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness it would meet the immediate need for housing for such individuals or families.

Additional funding for the City's Homeless Prevention or Rapid Re-Housing programs may be the fastest way to meet the housing needs of homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness. Once authorized, funding could be allocated immediately to existing non-profits who implement the City's programs. Such funding could be one-time or on-going depending on the City's budget situation.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

Funding could be allocated quickly.

5. Locate an encampment at a site other than the Sunny Jim property

A. Mayor's Proposed Encampment Program

In November 2010, the Mayor proposed that the city-owned Sunny Jim site, located on Airport Way and South Adams Street, serve as a location for a transitional encampment program for up to two years. This site is currently zoned for industrial uses; thus, changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Official Land Use Map would be required to permit the residential use envisioned by the Mayor's proposal.

Under the Mayor's proposal, an agency would be selected to operate the encampment and provide case management and other services to residents. These services would be designed to build independent living skills, increase resident income, and help people to move to self-sufficiency and stable housing. The operator of the encampment would be required to enter client and program data into HIMS. The operator would also provide residents with opportunities to participate in the development of policy and programming at the encampment and assist with the day-to-day management of the site. The population served would include up to 100 adults aged 18 years and older. Visits by children to the encampment could not exceed 24 hours. Vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and individuals with severe disabilities or chronic health conditions would not be permitted at the site and instead would be placed at appropriate indoor shelter facilities. Proposed outcomes include moving an estimated 30 households per year into stable housing.

B. Mayor's Citizen Review Panel on Housing and Services Recommendation

In the fall of 2010, the Mayor convened a Citizen Review Panel on Housing and Services for Seattle's Unsheltered Homeless Population. On October 18, 2010, the Panel issued its final recommendations on encampments and Seattle's unsheltered homeless population (see Attachment 2). The Panel recommended that the City sanction and offer available property for a self-governed, semi-permanent encampment to meet the immediate survival and safety needs of individuals in the community who do not have safe shelter.

The Panel felt the encampment should be placed at a location with reasonable access to key services such as transportation. A semi-industrial area would be acceptable if the neighbors were "friendly" to the encampment. The Panel identified three potential sites for the location of an encampment. The Sunny Jim site was not one of the three. The sites identified by the Panel were located in Interbay, at Smith Cove, and along Stone Way. The first two sites are zoned General Industrial and the third site is zoned Commercial. All of these sites would require the same zoning and Comprehensive Plan changes that would be needed for the Sunny Jim site. The Nicklesville encampment is currently located at 7126 West Marginal Way. This site is zoned General Industrial 2 and would require the same zoning and Comprehensive Plan changes the other proposed sites in order to legally permit a semi-permanent encampment. The Marginal Way property also has potential contamination, which was preliminarily identified in a 2009 Phase I Environmental Review Study.

The Citizen Review Panel's report also stated that an encampment should have access to adequate hygiene facilities but did not specifically define what constitutes "adequate facilities." The availability of trash removal and appropriate facilities for food preparation was also advised. Other recommendations included access to electricity, running water and a sewage hook-up. Additionally, the Panel recommended that semi-permanent structures be allowed as alternatives to tents, as such structures offer encampment residents more protection from rain and wind and provide more privacy and comfort.

The Panel recommended a maximum encampment size of no more than 150 individuals. Populations that could be served would include adult individuals, couples, and pet owners. The Panel advised that the encampment be self-managed by its inhabitants in order to create opportunities for resident empowerment and to lower the cost of operating the encampment. Contracting with agencies that provide outreach and engagement services, and providing space for service providers to offer services on-site was also suggested. It was strongly recommended that encampment managers provide residents with information on how to access support services that would aid them in obtaining jobs, housing, and health care. In addition, the operator of the encampment should comply with data reporting requirements mandated by the City or any other public or private funder. No specific outcomes other than the provision of safe shelter were suggested by the Panel.

Consistent with Panel recommendations, Councilmember Licata has proposed an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that would establish the policy framework for authorizing encampments as an allowable land use in zones throughout the City, including industrial and commercial zones. The Council included the proposed amendment in Resolution 31313, which was approved on August 1, 2011. Resolution 31313 sets the dockets of amendments the Council will consider the following spring. If Council amends the Comprehensive Plan to include Councilmember Licata's proposed amendment, future regulatory changes would be required to implement the proposed policy.

For a comparison of Mayor's proposal and the Citizen Review Panel's recommendations, see Attachment 3.

Financial Implications:

Mayor's Proposed Encampment Program:

One-time costs: Approximately \$920,366 for site preparation, trailer installation, and utility hook-ups.

Ongoing costs (annualized): \$273,282 operating contract, including case management services and utility costs.

Mayor's Citizen's Review Panel Recommendation:

One-time costs: Unknown

Ongoing costs (annualized): Could range from \$36,000 (excludes staffing costs and bus tickets) to \$57,600 (includes staffing costs and bus tickets). Information included in Citizen's panel report. Information based on Tent City and Nicklesville costs.

Legal/Policy Issues:

Changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code would be required to legally permit encampments on industrially and commercially-zoned land in Seattle. The City's existing Land Use Code does not permit transitional encampments except through the issuance of a temporary use permit. Additionally, the City's zoning rules preclude most residential uses on industrially-zoned land. Historically, the City has severely limited the use of industrial property for most residential uses. This is due to the limited amount of property available for industrial purposes.

As noted above, The Plan to End Homelessness and the Mid-Plan Review give priority to actions that result in the development of additional permanent housing for homeless individuals and families. Expanding indoor or outdoor shelter facilities is not identified as a priority because such actions do not provide permanent housing for the homeless people. It should be noted that the Mayor's Citizen Review Panel on Encampments specifically urged the City "to weigh the costs of encampments against other potential investments that may have equal or greater positive impact in the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness". In addition, the Panel stated that "an encampment should never be considered a long-term solution to homelessness" and urged the City "to continue to pursue real, lasting and permanent solutions to homelessness ." Encampments meet the immediate need for shelter for individuals or families who do not have access to such services. If appropriate linkages are made to services, including housing, such programs could also provide access to long-term housing for these individuals or families.

Nationally, the suggestion that Seattle would fund a permanent encampment on public property created concern for several reasons. Encampments are not considered a national "best practice" for ending homelessness and the suggestion of a government-funded encampment was viewed as an abandonment of the goal of creating more permanent housing, as opposed to allowing faith communities to host an encampment without government assistance.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

Council consideration of possible changes to the Comprehensive Plan amendment authorizing encampments in all zones throughout the City will occur at the end of March 2012.

6. Consider modifying the City's existing shelter service contracts to incorporate best practices and address any opportunities for strengthening investment outcomes

In May 2011, at the request of the Council, HSD submitted the SLI response "City of Seattle Investments in Shelter Programs". The SLI called on HSD to examine the City's current shelter system in order to determine how effectively it is meeting the needs of various homeless populations, including working adults, couples, single parents with older children, families, victims of domestic violence, and the chronically homeless. HSD was also asked to examine whether (1) shelters are providing needed services and linkages to move individuals into stable housing; (2) shelter operators should be required to enter client information into HMIS and create a real time shelter bed reservation system using Safe Harbors; and (3) shelters are operating consistently with nationally-recognized best practices.

In its response to the SLI, HSD stopped short of recommending specific operational changes for City-supported shelters, desiring to complete HSD's community engagement and planning process for its investments to prevent and end homelessness. HSD launched a series of meetings with community stakeholders, including homeless service providers in May, continuing through October. The purpose of these meetings is to inform HSD's development of a plan for investments in shelter, transitional housing, day/hygiene centers, and other supports for homeless individuals and families. The investment plan will create the framework for HSD's 2012 Request for Proposals (RFP) for shelter and transitional services and incorporate any new requirements for bidding and contracting for these services.

Additionally, similar to HSD's SLI response, the Mid-Plan Review Report discusses possible improvements that could potentially enhance the City-funded shelter system to enable more people to move from shelter to housing. Every such move to housing, frees up a shelter bed, and has the effect of funding a new shelter bed in a system where there is no movement. Most of the cited improvements are being successfully utilized in other jurisdictions around the country. Some of the recommendations included in the SLI response and/or Mid-Plan Review are summarized as follows:

- a) **City funded shelters must help clients move from homelessness to housing. Establishing performance-based contracts that make this and other important outcomes an explicit priority and requirement should be examined.** The City needs to explore how shelter providers can strengthen linkages to housing resources and the scope of services they provide to their clients. Contractual outcomes could also be strengthened and include more specific language about housing placement and the provision of required services.
- b) **The City and region need to explore the development of a coordinated assessment, referral, and entry program for single adults.** An effective coordinated entry system provides an individual with information and referral at a central or coordinated point of entry for shelter and housing. At the central intake location, an individual is able to receive an assessment and be referred to appropriate services, shelter, and housing. Utilization of a universal intake form is necessary and a vast network of partners must be established that includes service providers, eviction defense, government agencies, corrections agencies, mainstream child welfare agencies, and landlords. Effective shelter diversion programs are an important strategy that can be tied to coordinated entry to help prevent homelessness. An emphasis on establishing discharge policies along with a system of coordinated entry prevents individuals exiting institutions from entering homelessness in the first place. Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Columbus, Ohio, operate coordinated entry systems for single adults. Seattle/King County is implementing such a system for families. Our region should learn from this experience and the experiences of other jurisdictions and consider developing a similar system for single adults. The feasibility of using a system like Safe Harbors HMIS to provide an online bed inventory for shelter and housing facilities should also be explored.
- c) **The City needs to explore requiring all shelter providers to enter data directly into Safe Harbors HMIS.** The City of Seattle allows a subset of providers to submit data collected using their own proprietary computer systems. As a result, data

quality is poor and a great deal of City staff time is needed to deal with data quality and submittal issues. Requiring direct entry of data would likely improve data quality and timeliness and may reduce the staff time required to support the data integration process.

- d) **The City should collect and analyze additional data on the needs of persons experiencing homelessness in order to gauge the level of demand for 24-hour shelter beds among specific homeless subpopulations, including working homeless, the medically-fragile, frail and elderly individuals.** Limited shelter operating hours may restrict the ability of providers to deliver holistic services that support individuals in achieving greater stability. The capacity to provide 24-hour shelter and on-site services varies from program to program.

- e) **Resources need to continue to be invested in development of affordable housing, rental assistance programs, and services to allow people to transition from homelessness to housing.** Individuals have successfully moved from shelter to stable housing. To continue this success, there is need for more affordable housing, as well as, employment, transportation and other services, that can help individuals move out of homelessness.

Financial Implications:

To Be Determined. Some options would have additional costs to implement.

Legal/Policy Issues:

The proposed actions are consistent with the Plan to End Homelessness and/or Mid-Plan Review. HSD will explore these ideas further with stakeholders as they discuss development of a plan for investments in shelter, transitional housing, day/hygiene centers, and other supports for homeless individuals and families. Several of the options under consideration could meet the need for shelter or housing for individuals or families who do not have access to such services.

Timeline for Action/Implementation:

HSD's plan for investments in shelter, transitional housing, day/hygiene centers and other supports for homeless individuals and families is expected in November 2011.

Attachments

- 1. King County Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness – Mid-Plan Review Report, “Revising the Emergency Shelter System for Single Adults”**
- 2. Citizen Review Panel Recommendations on Encampments and Seattle’s Unsheltered Homeless Population**
- 3. Comparison of Mayor’s Encampment Proposal and Citizen Review Panel Recommendations**

Attachment 1

King County Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness Mid-Plan Review Report

B. Revising the Emergency Shelter System for Single Adults

Solutions to homelessness have historically focused on emergency shelter and/or transitional housing, which alone have neither ended homelessness nor prevented a recurrence of homelessness for a significant segment of the homeless population. The Homeless Families Initiative will revise the current “emergency shelter to transitional housing to permanent housing” system into one that is “housing first” focused, designed to get families rapidly into housing and focus on housing stabilization within the real-time supports of permanent housing. This will transform existing family emergency shelter and transitional housing.

We have not yet done the same system transformation work with single adult emergency shelter. We have 1,508 shelter beds for single adults, only 101 of which are outside of Seattle. Additionally, there are 560 winter shelter beds, with 200 outside of Seattle, although a number of the winter shelter beds are severe weather only. We fund some shelters to provide case management. There are a limited number of shelter beds that have performance incentives for housing placement rates, but the vast majority do not. Shelters are required to track housing outcomes (the majority of shelters report in HMIS, and the rest will be required to do so in 2012) with movement to both transitional and permanent housing considered positive outcomes, but HMIS exit data for single adult shelter, particularly night-only shelter, is extremely limited.

One panel of the Mid-Plan Review charrette focused specifically on emergency shelter for single adults. The charrette recommendations concluded that, particularly in areas with high numbers of existing shelter beds, strategies that help people move from shelter to housing create good results for them while also freeing up shelter beds for people on the street. King County’s various cities have diverse responses to crisis among adults who experience homelessness. As in many counties with urban centers, the response in Seattle will be different than in cities in South or East King County. Safety and basic services are an important component in the overall systems that house and serve homeless adults, and emergency shelter is most successful when tied to the other systems responding to and helping to end homelessness among adults.

During the next several years of King County’s implementation of its Ten Year Plan, support for new models of shelter provision that promote individual and agency success through increased housing placement, diversion, and rapid re-housing will advance the overall goal of ending homelessness in King County.

Moving forward, it is critical to support shelters as they refine their focus on housing placement and rapid re-housing. King County, and particularly Seattle, has an opportunity to reorient the business and program model of the emergency shelter system as a whole, and to provide access to flexible housing and service assistance dollars to move people out of shelter and into housing. Targeting new resources and pilots for creating the ‘back door’ for the system, or a pathway out of shelter, is the most critical component of success for this strategy. With many adults “caught” in shelter, a shelter cycle, or not even turning to shelter as an option, it is vital that new investments focus on opening up the back-end to allow more exits out of emergency housing.

The charrette on emergency shelter for single adults generated several recommendations:

Create a task force (or repurpose an existing group) of emergency housing providers and funders to support and provide advice on the following work:

1. Conduct a data analysis of the people staying in shelter to determine overall percentages of long-term stayers and frequent users. Also, use data to determine if people are cycling from shelter to shelter. Check data analysis against how programs are entering data into system to help ensure accuracy.
2. Conduct an audit of the emergency and transitional beds inventory for single adults and make sure the beds are being used to their best capacity. For example, some transitional units could be converted to permanent supportive housing and others may be able to be converted to a more streamlined model that ensures throughput.
3. Include long-term stayers and frequent users with disabilities in targeting of resources. Currently, there is a supportive housing placement priority focusing on frequent users of other systems, but the supports for moving a frequent user of shelter, or long-term shelter stayer, are less available. Including frequent use and long stays as a factor in prioritization can ensure greater access.
4. Line up a supply of short-term rental supports and assistance targeted to non-disabled single adults (see Systems Level Prevention). With an understanding that King County needs ongoing crisis response and capacity to provide a safe place for shelter, many single individuals are stuck in the current shelter system or unable to access it at all. Meeting the needs of any household is best done in permanent housing, not while housed in shelter.
5. Invest additional resources in getting people out of shelter. There will always be a need for a strong and responsive crisis response in King County, with the capacity to provide someone immediate shelter and services. Particularly in areas with a high number of shelter beds, investment and creative partnerships may be more effective in creating opportunities for people to leave the street if focused on getting people out of existing shelter (thus freeing up beds) rather than creating new shelter beds.
6. Break down administrative barriers that contribute to longer length of stays including lengthy and uncoordinated applications. Work with housing providers and/or county agencies to streamline and reduce paperwork required for housing options so that shelter and triage staff can quickly complete the necessary information for all housing options and consumers do not need to be asked for the same information on multiple occasions. Develop shelter protocols that support rapid re-housing approaches enabling families & individuals to move quickly into permanent housing options.
7. Implement performance-based contracts with consistent measures. The measures should follow HEARTH and the National Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and focus on placement into stable housing, reduced length of stay in shelter, reduced recidivism in shelter, and fewer new entries into shelter (see Performance Measures and Accountability section).

8. Draw from examples of other jurisdictions that have made creative changes to their shelter and housing systems including Columbus, OH, Chicago, IL, and New York City, NY. For suburban cities that are exploring methods to formalize the structure of their emergency beds, moving from 12-hour shelter to 24-hour shelter can also solve the issue of not having day space for people to manage and organize their day. This might also be a consideration for some Seattle beds if the structure makes sense.
9. Explore using learning collaboratives as a process for working through the system changes. Develop a series of in-person and webinar trainings to support and educate staff.

Attachment 2

FINAL DRAFT (October 18, 2010)

Citizen Review Panel Recommendations on Encampments and Seattle's Unsheltered Homeless Population

The Citizen Review Panel on Housing and Services for Seattle's Unsheltered Homeless Population recommends the City of Seattle sanction and offer available property to a self-governed encampment to help meet the immediate survival and safety needs of individuals in our community who have no access to safe shelter.

While the Citizen Panel endorses the establishment of an encampment, panel members also strongly urge the City of Seattle to continue to aggressively develop permanent, affordable housing options for individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness. Encampments, along with other forms of substandard housing, should not become a substitute for safe, affordable permanent housing.

BACKGROUND

The 2010 One-Night Count of people without shelter found 1,986 people outside in Seattle. The community's shelter system simply does not have the capacity to shelter all these in need. Currently Seattle is home to SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City 3, which operates under a Consent Decree with the City, and is also home to Nickelsville, a more informal operation run by Veterans for Peace, a 501 (c) 3 organization.

At a time when there are many unsheltered individuals on the streets, encampments can provide a viable housing option. An encampment can provide privacy, community and the freedom to come and go for very low-income individuals at a low cost. The appeal of encampment traditions in Seattle is that they provide 24-hour access, can accommodate couples and pets, and offer other benefits of self-governance. Well-managed encampments here and across the country have demonstrated they can provide community, safety and dignity in people's lives.

While encampments may be a low-cost, stop-gap alternative to more permanent housing options, moving any type of shelter every three months makes focusing on acquiring permanent housing more difficult. Encampment situations, legal arrangements and land use issues have to date required Tent Cities to move at least every 90 days. Seattle has a number of potential sites for a semi-permanent encampment, but establishing access may be difficult. Finding a suitable site for a long-term encampment may be challenging but it should lead to better outcomes for its residents.

CONSIDERATIONS

Location and facilities:

The location for an encampment should provide reasonable access to key services such as transportation. A measure of this is proximity to a bus stop. Nickelsville residents have told us they don't mind a semi-industrial area, as long as the neighbors are "friendly." Members of the Mayor's committee worry, however, about the message of "marginalization" signaled by an isolated location.

An encampment should have access to adequate hygiene facilities, ensure for the timely removal of trash, and provide appropriate facilities for food preparation. We strongly recommend the site have access to electricity and running water. Access to a sewage hook up would reduce ongoing costs for removing waste.

In addition, the Review Panel recommends the City of Seattle allow alternatives to tents for residents. In particular, semi-permanent built structures that offer shelter from wind and rain would increase privacy and comfort.

The location of an encampment should also take into consideration the possible impact to the surrounding community. The City of Seattle should ensure that neighbors are provided appropriate notice of and have an opportunity to comment.

Cost:

Encampments have proven to be short-term alternatives to more costly permanent housing options. There are both fixed and variable costs. Nickelsville reports its variable costs to shelter 100 people are about \$3000 per month, including honey buckets, sink, garbage removal, cell phones, printing, food for meetings, and occasional moves. This does not include bus tickets, estimated at \$1200 per month, nor does it include salary costs for staff (regular leadership and communication people.) Tent City 3 reports costs of \$6,000 per month, which includes bus tickets and salary costs for staff.

While encampments are generally low-cost, the Review Panel strongly urges the City of Seattle to weigh these costs against other potential investments that may have equal or greater positive impact in the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness. A 2005 City Council study suggests that encampments cost less than the cost of a professionally managed shelter. However, encampments should not be considered an alternative for professionally managed shelters that serve individuals who are not able to succeed in a self-managed environment.

Organizations operating encampments must set budgets that are sustainable and that emphasize new funding resources. Encampments cannot expect operating expenses to come from the City of Seattle. Encampments are expected to raise some portion of their own expenses. The City and County should consider contributing the public services they are in the business of providing, such as bus tickets and utilities.

Various alternatives to the low-cost, self-managed model were considered. These alternatives were rejected due to increased costs of implementation. These additional costs might make encampments more costly than more permanent solutions.

Size:

It is recommended that the initial size of an encampment not exceed 100 – 150 individuals. The Panel recognizes that a single encampment will not meet the need of all unsheltered people. The population for whom a self-managed encampment is appropriate may, however, be limited.

A larger encampment may be divided into 2 or 3 “neighborhoods,” where most of the day-to-day self management of the community would occur. If Seattle continues to have large numbers of unsheltered individuals with no other recourse to shelter, and if no other cost effective solutions have become available, consideration should be given to either increasing the size or number of semi-permanent encampments.

It is recommended that consideration of increasing the number or size of encampments only be considered once agreed upon benchmarks are met. These benchmarks could include encampment governance, maintenance of encampment site and encampment structures, funding capacity, and accessibility of services.

If benchmarks are met, the City of Seattle should consider increasing capacity at that site (if physically possible) or another encampment begun.

Management:

The current self-management of encampments provides a number of benefits including resident empowerment and low cost. These reasons suggest a continuation of facilitated self-management is desirable.

A renewable lease agreement negotiated with the sponsoring non-profit is recommended. Renewal would be conditioned on the meeting of City-defined expectations in a written agreement. If renewal is not offered, the Encampment would have to close or go find private property on which to continue its operations, such as a church. It would be expected that the encampment operator fully honor all contract provisions, including those addressing the end of the encampments tenancy.

The Review Panel recommends that the City of Seattle work with the present encampment manager of Nickelsville (Veterans for Peace - Chapter 92) to establish a semi-permanent encampment. The city of Seattle should also consider contracting the Veterans for Peace for the on-going management of a semi-permanent encampment.

Please note that at the present time the Review Panel cannot recommend contracting directly with SHARE/WHEEL. The City of Seattle’s consent agreement with SHARE/WHEEL would make it difficult for SHARE/WHEEL to manage an encampment under the conditions set forth in this recommendation. However, once the consent agreement expires it may be advisable for the City of Seattle to work with both Veterans for Peace and SHARE/WHEEL to create the strongest possible management system for an encampment.

Regardless of the management arrangement the encampment should work with the City of Seattle to ensure that all pertinent insurance coverage is up-to-date and provides appropriate coverage to encampment residents.

Rules:

The rules for a sanctioned encampment need to be similar to those currently upheld by the self-governed Nickelsville encampment, including no drugs, no weapons, required ID, and no housing for sex offenders. Encampment governance can establish rules on pets, children, medications, and duties.

We recommend the self-governed structure include a process to conduct impartial hearings for rule violations, and for an appeals process.

Support Services:

The Review Panel strongly recommends that encampment managers provide residents access to information on how to access support services for finding jobs, housing, health care and the like. The Review Panel recommends that the encampment provide facilities suitable for other service providers to use on-site. Further, contracting with agencies providing outreach and engagement services may be useful as a way to link encampment residents to critical support services.

Eco Village:

Ideally, we envision the encampment as a place that empowers residents to organize collective enhancements to their site. Perhaps an organic garden or a central building to serve as a kitchen and gathering place. Architects and engineers might offer to showcase their green energy designs or other design concepts, while transferring skills to encampment residents. Universities and schools could also partner with the village to create learning opportunities for students and residents.

Data Reporting Requirements:

We recognize the need to monitor our progress towards the goal of eliminating homelessness. It is reasonable to expect the entity selected to provide management and oversight to an encampment to comply with any data reporting requirements mandated by the City of Seattle or any other public or private funder.

Alternatives to Encampments:

Encampments provide a viable, low-cost alternative to individuals who are unsheltered. However, there are other possible alternatives the City of Seattle may want to consider in addition to encampments. With some additional funding it may be possible to expand the availability of faith-based shelters, although we acknowledge those may not meet the needs of all people. The City should also consider opening public spaces (e.g. City Hall) for the use of individuals seeking shelter.

Evaluation:

The City of Seattle shall conduct regular evaluations of encampment management.

Final note:

While the Review Panel does recommend the creation of a City of Seattle sanctioned semi-permanent encampment, it does so knowing that an encampment should never be considered a long-term solution to homelessness. The Review Panel urges the City of Seattle to continue to pursue real, lasting and permanent solutions to homelessness. The Review Panel recognizes that providing unsheltered individuals access to a safe alternative is humane and important. The Review Panel also recognizes that once established, an encampment is likely not to close until the level of shelter and housing in this community is sufficient to meet the demand.

Group 2 Citizens Advisory Panel

Question to be answered: How the policies or actions of the City could be improved to accommodate people who do not have an identified place to be; either during the day, or during the night?

The Panel's meeting began with a general discussion of homelessness and the need for a declaration that there is a health and public safety emergency inherent in having 1800 people living on the streets. We talked about our Community's response to the needs of people who are homeless, reviewed how the 10 Year Plan (Plan) came to be, and the commitment that is required to pursue implementation of the Plan. There was a strong consensus that the core element of the Plan, "ending homelessness by obtaining or building permanent supportive housing units" remains the strongly preferred strategy; and resources should not be diverted from the Community's effort to obtain, build, and operate more supportive housing units.

The City's policy regarding people on City property should be built on the principle that: people should be allowed to remain where they have chosen to be, as long as they are not disturbing the peace, or interfering with the rights of others. There needs to be education that promotes understanding that "downtown residents and businesses" should not object to the presence of homeless people on the street simply because they are not comfortable around homeless people, or they believe that the presence of homeless people may impair business activity.

The City policy regarding people sleeping on public property should be modified to reflect what Panel members understand to be the City's current practice that: all outdoor sleepers are treated similarly; people are not forced to move from a location unless there is an available shelter space for them to move into.

The Panel recommends that the City establish "Safe Zones" for campers, car campers and outdoor sleepers. This might be in designated parks or other City owned property. It would be advantageous if a portion of the "Safe Zone had a covered area. The people staying in the safe zones should be contacted by the outreach teams currently providing outreach to homeless people.

The Panel recommends that the City pursue and take advantage of any opportunity to expand shelter capacity in City or other government owned buildings or structures that are not normally used during the 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM time period. Many models of self and professionally managed shelters are currently in use in the community and could be adapted to space in public buildings. When prioritizing limited resources, new nighttime shelter should take priority over additional day time services.

When discussing shelter opportunities the Panel reviewed the operating numbers for the "Bunk House", a program operated by SHARE. Panel members are impressed with the efficiency of this shelter alternative. This facility/program houses a large number of people for a very modest cost. This alternative should be considered as part of the effort to develop additional shelter capacity.

Attachment 3

Comparison of Mayor’s Encampment Proposal and Citizen Review Panel Recommendations

	Mayor’s Proposal	Citizen Review Panel Proposal
Location	Sunny Jim Site	Three sites identified; two industrial, one commercial. Goal was to locate sites that are accessible to key services and transportation.
Size of Encampment / # of Individuals Served	Maximum of 100	100 – 150
Duration	Two year pilot phase that would expire on August 31, 2013.	Not specified
Operator	Conduct a Request for Information (RFI) process to select a qualified provider.	Work with Veterans for Peace – Chapter 92
Facilities	Trailers with showers, laundry facilities, cooking facilities, office for life-coaching staff.	Hygiene facilities, food preparation facilities. Electricity and running water strongly recommended along with a sewer hook-up to reduce costs.
Social Services	Staff would be provided to assist each resident in developing a plan for moving to housing or other suitable shelter.	Residents to be given information on how to access support services that would aid them in obtaining jobs, housing, and health care. Space should be provided at encampment to allow service providers to offer services on-site.
Measurable Outcomes	Thirty households per year will move into stable housing.	Not included
One-time costs:	\$970,386	Not included
Ongoing costs:	\$273,282 per year	\$36,000 (excluding staff costs and bus tickets) - \$57,600 (including staff costs and bus tickets) per year. Estimates based on Nicklesville and Tent City costs.