

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

Seattle Human Services Department (HSD) staff and volunteers surveyed 177 clients of the North Helpline Food Bank in early December 2011. The survey is one component of a larger Community Assessment process that is intended to gauge needs for housing and human services of homeless individuals and families in the Lake City neighborhood, being conducted by the Mayor's Office, HSD, and the Seattle Office of Housing (OH). The results of the survey, as part of the Community Needs Assessment, will help shape the redevelopment planning for Old Fire Station #39. A summary of the data is found below, with detail found in the following pages. Notable comments from individuals surveyed are presented throughout the report, along with statistical data.

#### Basic Demographics

- One hundred and seventy-seven (177) individuals were interviewed, and included anyone who was interested in participating in the survey. **160** individuals (90%) were City of Seattle residents.
- **44** individuals (25%) grew up Native Seattle residents.
- **69** individuals (39%) were by themselves; **75** individuals (42%) had three or more people in their household (including themselves).
- **69** individuals (39%) had children less than 18 years of age.
- **108** individuals (61%) identified as female; **66** individuals (37%) identified as male.
- Average age of participants was 45, with a range from 18-81.
- **93** individuals (53%) identified as Caucasian; **31** (18%) identified as African American; **79** (45%) identified as a person of color.
- **17** individuals (10%) identified as being a veteran.

Multiple individuals stated that they were glad that the City was taking the time to speak with members of the community most affected by these issues.

#### Summary of Data Findings

When asked about perceived needs in Lake City:

- Majority stated a need for more affordable housing for families (**77%**) and for single individuals (**71%**);
- Many comments supported the need for affordable housing in *all* neighborhoods;
- Two-thirds of participants (**67%**) stated a need for more shelter in Lake City.

When asked about the best future use of Old Fire Station #39, **42%** of those surveyed chose "Some affordable housing, with space for a shelter."

Survey participants were asked to choose between developing more shelter or developing more affordable housing in Lake City, **101 individuals (57%) chose to develop more affordable housing in Lake City**, compared to 53 individuals (30%) who believe that funds should be spent on increasing shelter in the neighborhood.

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

When asked about current living situation:

- **115 (65%)** reported currently renting. Participants were not asked any specific rental questions; however, of the 115 individuals who self-reported as renters, some shared that they are currently living in Section 8 or other publically subsidized housing, and some shared that they were doubled up with friends or family.
- **26 (15%)** reported their current situation as “Other”; **16 (9%)** shared being currently homeless.

**102 individuals (58%)** reported a need for more services in Lake City, the most common being: dental; medical; housing/utility assistance; food assistance; and senior services/services for those with a disability.

### Survey Methodology

Survey participants were invited to answer 16 questions on general demographic (age, gender, etc.), perceived needs in Lake City, and potential future uses of Old Fire Station #39. Surveys took between 5-7 minutes, and were anonymous and voluntary. Participants were informed that they were free to skip a question or stop the survey at any time. Individuals who completed the survey were given a \$20 food coupon to Safeway, in appreciation of their time.

Some questions asked participants to “check all answers that apply”; therefore, the total number of answers may exceed the number of survey participants in some instances.

Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

North Helpline Food Bank

Detailed Data Findings

Current Address

160 (90%) of individuals surveyed reported currently living in Seattle.

Live in Seattle	N	Percentage
Yes	160	90%
No	17	10%
<i>Shoreline (12)</i>		
<i>Lake Forest Park (3)</i>		
<i>Bothell (1)</i>		
<i>Kenmore (1)</i>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

Length of Time in Seattle

115 (65%) of individuals surveyed reported having lived in Seattle for over 10 years. Relatively few individuals (10%) reported having been in Seattle less than two and a half years.

Years in Seattle	N	Percentage
1 Year or Less	8	5%
1.1-2.5 Years	8	5%
3 to 9 Years	33	19%
10 to 20 Years	56	32%
23+ Years	59	33%
Missing	13	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

Address Prior to Seattle

44 individuals (25%) reported being from Seattle their entire lives; however, compared to the chart above detailing amount of time in Seattle, it is clear that the majority of those interviewed could be categorized as “long-term residents” of the City of Seattle.

Where from before Seattle?	N	Percentage
Always from Seattle	44	25%
King County, Outside Seattle	12	7%
Washington State, outside King County	22	12%
Outside WA	67	38%
Outside US	20	11%
Missing	12	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

#### Number in Household

69 individuals (39%) reported being the only person in their household. 75 individuals (42%) reported having three or more individuals in their household, including themselves.

Number in Household	N	Percentage
1	69	39%
2	26	15%
3	21	12%
4	21	12%
5	14	8%
6+	19	11%
Missing	7	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Children Under 18 Years Old

69 individuals (39%) surveyed had children under the age of 18. It is important to remember that homelessness and poverty among families is often less visible than single adult homelessness and poverty; therefore, the actual need is likely greater among families in Lake City than it may initially be perceived to be.

Children under 18?	N	Percentage
Yes	69	39%
No	107	60%
Missing	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Gender

108 individuals (61%) identified as female; 66 individuals (37%) identified as male.

Gender	N	Percentage
Female	108	61%
Male	66	37%
Missing	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

#### Age

Average age of participants was 47, with a range of 18 year of age to 81 years of age. The majority of participants (41%) were between the ages of 41-55. 47 participants (27%) were over the age of 55.

Age	N	Percentage
18-25	14	8%
26-40	39	22%
41-55	73	41%
55+	47	27%
Refused/Missing	4	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Race/Ethnicity

93 individuals (53%) identified as being Caucasian. 79 individuals (45%) identified as a person of color. Several of the people surveyed spoke a language other than English, and a few surveys were unable to be completed due to language barriers.

Race/Ethnicity	N	Percentage
Caucasian	93	53%
African American/Black	31	18%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	17	10%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	6%
Asian	9	5%
Latino	8	5%
2+ races	4	2%
Missing	5	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Veteran Status

17 individuals (10%) reported being a Veteran of the US Military.

Veteran Status	N	Percentage
Yes	17	10%
No	154	87%
Missing	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

"I have a veteran friend who sleeps in her car. She came back from Iraq."

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

#### Current Living Situation

115 (65%) individuals reported that they currently rent; some of those who reported currently renting were living in Section 8 or other publically subsidized housing, and some reported being doubled up with friends or family. 26 individuals (15%) listed their currently living situation as “Other”, 16 of whom stated they were currently homeless.

Living Situation	N	Percentage
Rent	115	65%
Other	26	15%
<i>Homeless (16)</i>		
Living w/ friends or family	25	14%
Own	8	4%
Missing	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

Participants were not asked any other specific questions about their living situation, however some chose to share:

“My current living situation? Screwed.”

“I’m couch surfing with friends right now, wherever I can stay”

“My family and I are staying with friends, but we are facing very hard times. We are sleeping on the floor; we’re not homeless, but we are facing very hard times”

#### Housing Wait List

32 individuals (18%) reported currently being on a housing wait list. Of those who reported being on a housing wait list: 17 were renting; 7 were living with friends or family; 8 listed their current living situation as “Other”.

Housing Wait List	N	Percentage
Yes	32	18%
<i>Yes, currently Renting (17)</i>		
<i>Yes, currently own (0)</i>		
<i>Yes, currently living with friends/family (7)</i>		
<i>Yes, currently "Other" (8)</i>		
No	143	81%
Missing	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

### North Helpline Food Bank

#### Service and Housing Needs Identified for Lake City

The majority of participants identified a need for more affordable housing for families (77%) and for single individuals (71%), a need for more shelter (67%) and a need for more services (58%) in Lake City. Of those who identified a need for more services in Lake City, the most common services identified were: dental (11); medical (9); housing/utility assistance (6); food assistance (5); senior services/services for those with a disability (5).

Community Need for More:	Yes	Percentage
Affordable Housing for Single Individuals	125	71%
Affordable Housing for Families	136	77%
Shelter	118	67%
Services	102	58%

Participant comments included:

“We need more help for people with kids; more family centers, without required classes”

“We need health care; the only one in my family who has it is my wife, through her job. Also more food services, with the increased cost of food”

“We need job opportunities in Lake City. I’m going through training in Everett, but we need actual job opportunities”

“We need more services for women; there are so many women on the street, with no place to go. We need something that can help them get on their feet”

“Since GAU got cut, some people don’t have any money, and I’m one of them”

#### Benefit from Shelter and/or Affordable Housing

151 individuals (85%) stated that they or someone they knew could benefit from more affordable housing in Lake City. 105 individuals (59%) stated that either they or someone they knew could benefit from more shelter in Lake City.

Benefit From:	Yes	Percentage
More Affordable Housing in Lake City	151	85%
More Shelter in Lake City	105	59%

Additional participant comments included:

“I’ve seen lots of homeless, especially after Tent City left. Need a place for them to stay”

**Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey**

**North Helpline Food Bank**

“If I need shelter I have to go to downtown (Seattle)”

“My son may need shelter; he’s staying with me right now, but I can’t afford to support him. He falls through the cracks”

**Knowledge of Old Fire Station #39**

When asked what they knew about Old Fire Station #39, 88 individuals (50%) reported knowing nothing or “not much”; 50 individuals (28%) reported knowing something about the SUGM shelter currently sited there.

<b>Heard about Old Fire Station #39?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nothing/Not Much	88	50%
Is a Shelter/SUGM	50	28%
Former Food Bank Site	10	6%
Was a Tent City/Nickelsville	8	5%
Closed/Was Rebuilt	7	4%
Other	5	3%
Disruptive to Neighborhood	3	2%
Missing	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>

Additional Participant comments included:

“There’s a lot of controversy, but things are running smoothly”

“Nothing bad; business people would like to see it go away. More crime in the area, more vagrancy”

“It’s a great place; I’m staying there!”

“Great place, UGM doing a great job, not like the downtown shelters. More forgiving here, downtown you get crazy people, you’re sleeping on a mat on the floor six inches away from people that could roll over and stab you.”

**Proposed Future Uses of Old Fire Station #39**

74 individuals (42%) reported the best use for something permanent at Old Fire Station #39 as some affordable housing, with space for a shelter. Some participants identified multiple choices; therefore the total number of answers exceeds the number of survey participants.

<b>Fire Station #39 Best Use</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Some Affordable Housing, with space for a Shelter	74	42%
Affordable Housing for Families	45	25%
Affordable Housing for Singles	28	16%
Some Affordable Housing, with space for Services	33	19%
Other	11	6%

Participant comments included:

Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey

North Helpline Food Bank

“Should be used as a day care for working families, and a school to benefit the youth”

“Need Housing for kids; lots of kids out there have no guidance”

“We need temporary shelter, to help people transition; I don’t know of any shelter in the area”

“With what I’m seeing, there are a lot of people on the street that need shelter”

“Having housing and shelter together would help get rid of some of the stigma of a shelter in the neighborhood.”

“It should remain run by UGM, and people that know the community.”

**Choosing to Invest in Shelter or Affordable Housing**

Survey participants were posed the following question: “Given the fact that there is an increasing demand for services and assistance, but a limited amount of money for the City to spend on services for people in need, do you think the money should be spent on (1) developing more affordable housing for low-income and/or formerly homeless people or on (2) increasing shelter in the Lake City neighborhoods?”

Affordable Housing or Shelter?	N	Percentage
Affordable Housing	101	57%
Shelter	53	30%
Both	4	2%
Other	5	3%

When presented with this choice, **101 participants (57%) chose to devote limited resources to creating more affordable housing in Lake City:**

“There’s no affordable housing in the area, everything is expensive. People have to live in bad situations and that negatively impacts people; where they feel safe and have control over their lives.”

“We don’t need more shelters; we need to make it so people try and get out of their situation.”

“Shelters don’t really help; they shelter for the night and kick you out. Families are split up in shelter.”

“Need more restrictions in shelters; need to be a stepping stone. People are settling in shelters.”

**While 53 participants (30%) chose to devote limited resources to developing more shelter in Lake City:**

“Should be both, but shelter is needed more, for both men and women; lots of single individuals don’t get the same benefits that families get.”

“Need shelter before you can get on your feet to afford housing.”

“Help everyone.”

**Seattle Human Services Department Lake City Needs Assessment Survey**

**North Helpline Food Bank**

**Specific Population**

Survey participants were asked if there was a specific population that assistance such as services or housing should be for; 155 individuals provided 175 responses to this question; some participants identified more than one specific population group. Participants identified assistance should be for:

<b>Specific Population</b>	<b>N of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage (of those who answered)</b>
All/Anyone in Need	54	35%
Elderly	17	11%
Families	37	24%
Low Income/Below Poverty	14	9%
Homeless	14	9%
Veterans	12	8%
Single Adults	9	6%
Disabled	7	5%
Women	3	2%
People dealing with Substance Abuse	2	1%
For Winter	1	1%
Tough Question/Don't Know	1	1%
African Americans	1	1%
Felons	1	1%
Transgendered People	1	1%
Americans	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	

Additional participant comments included:

“Anyone who needs it, especially people with kids. Don’t lock people out from help because they’re a certain way.”

“Need assistance for working people. Services keep people down-if you work, you don't get any help. Both me and my wife work to pay our bills. We make too much to get help but not enough to survive.”

“Low income and homeless. Start with homeless and then go to low income. There are more homeless and hungry in the US than in India right now.”

“People who have a hard time finding a job, like people who are 50 years old and above.”

“Felons; hard to find shelters and housing without barriers.”

“Old guys and people with kids. I’m tired of seeing families living in trailers, trucks, cars; it’s heartbreaking.”

“We need a safe place for people who are transgendered and homeless.”