



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Parks & Community Services
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Lynn Zwaagstra, Director
Michael Cogle, Deputy Director
Leslie R. Miller, Human Services Coordinator

Date: November 3, 2016

Subject: HUMAN SERVICES FOCUS STRATEGIES REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

That City Council receive a presentation outlining the recent review of King County's system to address homelessness.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The homelessness crisis has continued to grow despite the best efforts of the King County Continuum of Care.¹ On the Eastside, for example, the number of people counted outdoors during the One Night Count increased by over 80% between 2015 and 2016. In addition to making system changes based on national best practices mandated by HUD, the United Way of King County, the City of Seattle and King County commissioned Focus Strategies to assess the community's response to homelessness with special attention to the single adult homeless population. Focused Strategies began their work in July 2015 and released their report in September 2016.

Here is the link to the report: <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/pathwayshome/FS.pdf>

The presentation will include the following:

1. A summary of findings and recommendations by Focus Strategies

Focus Strategies found a patchwork of agencies providing services of which only some have a successful track record in housing people. In response to the increasing crisis of homelessness, Focus Strategies recommends urgent and bold action that focuses on safely housing people, not ending poverty. In order to make the needed changes to the system, the governance structure must be action-orientated, funder driven and data informed. Finally, Focus Strategies laid out a series of best practice system recommendations including (1) Use outreach and coordinated entry to target and prioritize unsheltered people; (2) Expand shelter diversion and target prevention resources more effectively; (3) improve effectiveness of shelter in exiting people to permanent housing; (4) invest in more effective interventions.

2. A summary of the responses of local providers to the recommendations

A number of local agencies have agreed to provide feedback. This feedback is expected in time for the presentation.

3. Possible implications to the City of Kirkland and other suburban jurisdictions

Suburban jurisdictions will have a decreased voice in the governing structure of All Home. In response, it is important that cities such as Kirkland stay engaged in the process of transformation of the homeless system to make sure the needs of our residents are met. In addition, the City of Kirkland and other suburban cities will need to decide if their dollars are best invested in programs that meet the new All Home directives or if their dollars would be best invested in programs that are meeting the needs of the local community in an alternative way and/or who are committed to following their anti-poverty missions.

¹A Continuum of Care is the regional planning body that coordinates services and housing for people experiencing homelessness. All Home coordinates the work of the King County Continuum of Care.