



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager of External Affairs
Luana Hancock, Communications Program Coordinator
David Wolbrecht, Communications Program Manager
Jen Boone, Human Services Manager
Juliana da Cruz, Management Analyst, Parks and Community Services

Date: April 3, 2025

Subject: **Extend Homelessness Action Plan Timeline, Review Initial Findings from Community Engagement Efforts and Next Steps**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Council approves Resolution R-5680 extending the April 30, 2025, deadline for transmitting the draft Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan with a more flexible timeline to allow continued community engagement and staff analysis. The resolution sets a transmittal date of “in 2025,” and staff intends to submit the draft plan to Council by June. Staff also recommends the City Council receives an update on the community engagement related to the development of the Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan (“Action Plan”).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Resolution R-5680 replaces the April 30 transmittal deadline for the draft Action Plan with “in 2025” to enable the additional engagement and staff analysis necessary to achieve the Action Plan’s long-term success.
- This memo includes a short overview of the structure of the draft Action Plan for Council feedback and describes the remaining engagement process.
- Staff has conducted extensive community outreach in support of Resolutions R-5631 and R-5641, including 125 community members and nearly 30 faith leaders through community forums, focus groups, and faith community convenings. Much more is planned. This memo summarizes the community engagement process and feedback to date.
- After conducting the remaining community outreach, staff will return in the second quarter of 2025 with the draft Action Plan. Following Council review, staff propose to present the draft Action Plan to relevant boards, commissions, broader community—including initial audiences—and return to present the final Action Plan for Council consideration later this year.
- Initial findings show the community is generally supportive of the City’s response to homelessness and the need for the City to do more. Key concerns remain about public

safety and law enforcement; siting of services; transparency, localization of funding and resources; and the need for ongoing education, conversation and data to assuage concerns.

BACKGROUND:

Over a series of Council meetings in April,¹ May,^{2 3} and June 2024,⁴ the Council deliberated on and ultimately adopted Resolution R-5631, declaring the City's commitment to addressing homelessness and authorizing the City Manager to develop a Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan ("Action Plan") to be presented to the Council by December 31, 2024.⁵

Thereafter, staff began implementing the authorized community engagement process, but staff determined that more time and resources than originally planned were needed to ensure ample community focus. As a result, at staff's recommendation, City Council adopted Resolution R-5641, deferring the community outreach and transmittal of the Action Plan until April 30, 2025.⁶

Staff has started drafting the Action Plan and completed significant community engagement which is detailed more fully below. Additional phases of engagement are needed to best inform development of the comprehensive Action Plan. Staff recommends that the City Council approves the proposed resolution, providing a more flexible timeline to transmit a draft plan to Council in 2025. Details on a revised project timeline are provided below.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Given the complexity of the issue and the expansive scope of the stakeholder outreach, staff is taking an iterative, phased approach to engagement. Phase One, Plan Development is still in-process. This memo summarizes the intended Action Plan approach, the completed and remaining process, and feedback themes as of early April.

Summary of Action Plan Process

If Council approves the resolution and grants additional time for Action Plan development, staff proposes the following timeline for the project work:

- Phase 1: Plan Development. Educate and Gather Feedback to Inform the Plan
 - Outreach to the general public and faith-based communities (*Completed*)

¹ The materials related to this topic in the April 16, 2024 Council packet are available at https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/april-16-2024/3a_study-session.pdf

² The materials related to this topic in the May 7, 2024 Council packet are available at https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/may-7-2024/3b_study-session.pdf

³ The materials related to this topic in the May 21, 2024 Council packet are available at https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/may-21-2024/9c_business.pdf

⁴ The materials related to this topic in the June 4, 2024 Council packet are available at https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/june-4-2024/060424_full-packet.pdf

⁵ Resolution R-5631 is available at <https://docs.cityofkirkland.net/CMWebDrawer/RecordHtml/576668>

⁶ Resolution R-5641 is available at <https://docs.cityofkirkland.net/CMWebDrawer/RecordHtml/586281>

- Targeted stakeholder outreach (*In progress*)
- Transmittal of Draft Action Plan to Council: June 2025
- Phase 2: Plan Review. Broadly Share and Discuss the Draft Action Plan
 - Presentations to relevant commissions and stakeholder groups
 - Community engagement with Phase 1 stakeholders and the general public
- Transmittal of proposed Final Action Plan to Council: Q4 2025

I. The Action Plan: What to Expect

The Action Plan is under development. The Plan will be tactical in nature and will outline proposed and ongoing actions addressing homelessness in Kirkland. These actions will be consistent with the Council direction provided in Resolution R-5631 and incorporate community feedback. These actions will be sorted by the five policy goal areas of the continuum of care:

- Prevention
- Outreach
- Emergency Shelter Services
- Temporary Shelter & Housing
- Permanent Housing.

Additional actions may be identified under Administration and “All Goal Areas” categories. Staff will also indicate the relative financial impact of the action’s investment.

For example:

Policy Goal Area	Action	Primary strategy	Status	Investment
Prevention	Partner with Kirkland Community Foundation to create a dedicated homelessness action fund to act as a centralized donation hub for community members instead of each faith community raising and dispersing their own funds. • These funds will support the Flex Fund to provide basic human needs like food, clothing, diapers, car repair, hotel vouchers	Timely Communication & Collaboration	Proposed	\$
Outreach	Continue Pilot programs to reduce barriers for people working with Homeless Outreach Coordinator • Launch Mail Services Program • Launch Flex Funds Program	Person-centered Approach	On-going	\$

	• Launch Showers and Laundry Program • Launch Property Safekeeping Program • Launch Property Storage Partnership with LWUMC • Launch Temporary Sanitation Services on 128th			
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Staff will be seeking Council feedback on the initial structure of the Plan at the April 15 Council meeting.

II. Phase One Community Engagement – (Plan Development)

Below is a summary of staff's education and outreach to date in support of the Action Plan, led by the Deputy City Manager of External Affairs and supported by the Communications and Human Services teams:

- Refreshed the City's homelessness website⁷ to support background education and pre-reading heading into community engagement and updates based on community feedback.
- Promoted community forums and focus groups through press releases, podcast mentions, newsletter updates, and social media posts.
- Enlisted the support and participation of Kirkland's faith leaders to gather feedback from their faith communities on the topic of homelessness and to help promote community engagement opportunities. Several faith leaders also attended the community forums and focus groups.
- Engaged more than 150 residents/stakeholders to begin educating about the homelessness continuum of care in Kirkland, informing about the City's current response, and to gather feedback on the current continuum of care to help shape the Action Plan. This engagement was conducted in several formats:
 - Conducted two Community Forums (~70 participants) featuring an overview presentation about the City's current response and facilitated small group discussions with Council about the continuum of care.⁸
 - Included real-time audience polling. The polling questions and results are provided in Attachment 1.
 - Conducted follow-up survey to provide additional opportunity for feedback.

⁷ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/City-Managers-Office/Homelessness-in-Kirkland>

⁸ The Homelessness Community Forums used this handout as an educational guide: <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-managers-office/pdfs/2025-02-25-forums-cards-for-web.pdf>

- Raw notes from the community forum small-group discussions on recommended investments across the continuum of care are available on the City's homelessness website.⁹
- Conducted three Focus Groups (~30 people) providing background on the City's current response and soliciting feedback about the continuum of care:
 - Broadly publicized through City channels & available on a first come, first served basis (staff capped participation to enable feedback/dialogue).
 - Conducted follow-up survey to provide additional opportunity for feedback.
 - Staff-captured feedback from participants' recommended investments on the continuum of care.
- Conducted four Kirkland Faith Leader Convenings since July 2024 (attended by ~30 faith leaders). More specifics on the faith leader list for this outreach is detailed in Attachment 2.
- Attended one Neighborhood Association as requested (Moss Bay, ~25 participants) and collected feedback from participants' recommended investments on the continuum of care.

Health Through Housing Initiative

Staff is also continuing community engagement and education efforts under the Health Through Housing initiative. While this work is part of a separate project, permanent supportive housing remains a core strategy within the broader continuum of care. Community input shows that many do not distinguish between the two efforts. Related to the Health Through Housing initiative, the City, King County, and Plymouth Housing continue to host monthly meetings with stakeholders located near the new facility, including local businesses, schools, and a neighborhood association. To further support community understanding and address community confusion about the permanent supportive housing project, the City Manager recently published an op-ed in *MyNorthwest*.¹⁰

Phase One Update: Initial Findings & Community Sentiment

Who Participated: Polling Insights from the Community Forums

Community engagement efforts drew strong participation, primarily from Kirkland residents who self-reported as homeowners. Participants frequently encounter homelessness downtown, at transit centers, in parks, or in mobile residencies. While some attendees were surprised by the level of need described in City materials, most expressed existing awareness and concern, believing the City should take an active role in addressing homelessness. While perspectives on solutions varied, the prevailing view was that the City's approach should balance compassionate outreach, accountability, and public safety. Prevention and outreach were identified as top priorities, though there was also acknowledgment that emergency response remains a necessary function.

⁹ The notes that were captured by each table's designated notetaker are located under the "Early Feedback" section located at this webpage: <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/City-Managers-Office/Homelessness-in-Kirkland/Community-Engagement-for-the-Homelessness-Action-Plan>

¹⁰ The City Manager's op-ed can be accessed here: <https://mynorthwest.com/mynorthwest-opinion/city-of-kirkland-8-facts-everyone-needs-to-know-about-our-permanent-supportive-housing-project/4065516>

Overarching Themes

The following themes have emerged from public outreach to date. As targeted stakeholder outreach is still in progress, these findings should not be interpreted as comprehensive or prescriptive policy recommendations but rather as an early read on broad constituent sentiment.

- **Coordinated, Transparent, and Data-Driven Response.** Community members want a strategic, measurable approach to homelessness, with the City focusing on policy, enforcement, targeted funding, and improved collaboration with regional partners. Many called for a public dashboard to track efforts, outcomes, and accountability. Concerns were raised about service redundancy across agencies and the need for streamlined, efficient responses. Some emphasized tracking individuals by name to reduce gaps in service and improve long-term outcomes. While community members requested extensive data on root causes, service reach, public safety impacts, and success metrics, there was ambiguity about whether the demand for data was driven by a need for better decision-making or to validate existing beliefs. One participant characterized data as “helping alleviate fear of the unknown.”
- **Housing Affordability and Tenant/Small Landlord Protections.** Affordable housing is widely recognized as a key factor in addressing homelessness. While outreach sessions did not delve deeply into A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) or Kirkland-specific development policies, participants universally cited housing costs as a driver of homelessness. Many emphasized simplifying access to rental assistance, and some questioned why existing developer incentives have not resulted in more or truly affordable units. There was discussion about creating a community housing trust to pool funding from businesses and nonprofits for eviction prevention, landlord incentives, and rental mediation services.
- **Prevention as the Priority, with Tailored Solutions.** There was broad recognition that many individuals become homeless simply due to an inability to afford rent. Preventing homelessness before it escalates reduces trauma and the long-term costs of care. Participants suggested addressing “low-hanging fruit” such as rent assistance and creative solutions like roommate networks, real-time visibility into available rooms, and increased Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) utilization. They also prompted discussion of distinct homeless sub-populations with different needs, such as the following:
 - *Those facing emergency setbacks (e.g., job loss):* Solutions could include temporary financial/rental assistance and networking support.
 - *Low- to moderate-income households facing housing instability:* Solutions could include permanent supportive housing and long-term rental assistance.
 - *Quietly housed/unhoused individuals displaced locally or relocating:* Solutions may include shelters, temporary housing, safe parking, or permanent supportive housing.
 - *Chronically homeless individuals with complex needs (e.g., behavioral health, substance use, long-term homelessness):* High-need cases may require specialized interventions to prevent disproportionate strain on resources or diminished outcomes for others actively seeking stability.

- **Outreach and Public Safety as Top Priorities.** Residents strongly emphasized the need for safe, quiet neighborhoods where laws and codes are enforced while balancing human rights and accountability. Many praised the co-responder model, where law enforcement and social workers collaborate, and supported expanding this approach for 24/7 integrated response teams. Some called for clearer sanctioned encampment policies, more flexible codes, and stronger enforcement against repeat behavioral violations (e.g., illegally parked vehicles, sleeping in public spaces). Increased mental health and addiction treatment resources were also widely supported. Concerns were raised about how best to reach those who avoid engagement due to fear of deportation or distrust in government services.
- **Regional Collaboration with a Local Focus.** Residents acknowledged homelessness as a national issue stemming from historical policy failures and expressed concerns that conditions may worsen. While many support action, there is strong skepticism about Kirkland shouldering a disproportionate regional burden. Some fear that over-investment could attract more unhoused individuals from outside the city. A regional coalition to equitably distribute services was suggested, along with advocacy for increased state and county funding. Given economic uncertainties, there was notable resistance to new local taxes, as many feel Kirkland has already made significant regional contributions.
- **King County's Health Through Housing (HTH) Project Under Scrutiny.** While permanent supportive housing is generally recognized as a necessary model, the HTH facility at the former La Quinta site remains a concern for some community members. Primary issues include its location near schools and businesses, concerns about lack of clear safety requirements, and a demand for accountability measures. Community members acknowledged the need for supportive housing but expressed skepticism about its placement in Kirkland and the City's ability to enforce operational guidelines.
- **Polarization Over Emergency Shelters and Temporary Housing.** While there is broad recognition of the need for more emergency shelter capacity and response budget (i.e., hotel vouchers for extreme weather events), there is some resistance to concentrating too many facilities and people in Kirkland. Temporary housing solutions (e.g., sanctioned tent cities, mobile residency, tiny home villages) also received deviating support. Considerations include:
 - *Equitable distribution* across Kirkland, with a preference for siting away from schools and daycares. Community members noted being more receptive to shelters for women and children.
 - *Stability for temporary housing residents*, with calls to amend City codes so frequent relocations aren't necessary.
 - *Wraparound services* (e.g., case management, job training) to enhance shelter effectiveness.
 - *Barriers to siting on public land*, while some faith leaders propose tiny home villages.
 - *Expand flexible funding*, possibly with faith communities, to supplement ARCH for growing emergency housing needs.
 - *Reducing frequent barriers to access* for LGBTQIA+ individuals, the elderly, disabled residents, families, couples, and pet owners.

- **Ongoing Education and Community Input.** There is strong demand for public education campaigns to improve understanding of homelessness, its root causes, and available services. Building trust requires continuous opportunities for public input. The faith community was highlighted as an important partner to providing frontline perspectives, education, and storytelling. Residents also expressed interest in service guides, volunteer opportunities, and dialogue, including:
 - *A one-stop digital and print resource hub* to connect people with services.
 - *Interactive events* such as tours of housing facilities and Q&A sessions with response teams.
 - *Outreach led by individuals with lived experience*, particularly to engage those hesitant to accept services.
 - *Facilitating conversations between housed and unhoused neighbors* to foster mutual understanding.

NEXT STEPS:

Phase One (Plan Development) – Next Steps & Approach

Phase One (Plan Development) is anticipated to continue through May 2025. The current focus is on targeted stakeholder discussions to identify specific needs and concerns among key audiences previously identified by Council as essential to ongoing conversations about homelessness and potential solutions. In parallel, Communications and Human Services staff will continue updating core informational resources—such as the homelessness website and the field/services map—based on community feedback. Where feasible, staff will coordinate group discussions to maximize the efficiency of engagement efforts.

Targeted stakeholder engagement (April/May):

- Homeless Assistance and Response Team (HART)
- Lived Experience (including active/past participants of Kirkland homelessness programs)
- Service Providers
- Neighboring Cities
- Regional Housing / Homelessness Groups
- Evergreen Hospital
- Landlords
- Kirkland Downtown Association
- Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
- Business Community (Park Lane, Kingsgate)
- King County Library System
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Northwest University
- Lake Washington School District
- Faith-Based Community (ongoing, monthly meetings)
- Neighborhood and Community groups (ongoing, as requested)

Phase One (Plan Development) feedback will be aggregated to shape and deliver a DRAFT Action Plan for transmittal and discussion at a Council study session, likely in mid-June in advance of the Health Through Housing project opening anticipated in July.

III. Phase Two Community Outreach Preview – (Plan Review)

Following feedback from Council on the draft Plan, staff will present the updated draft Action Plan to relevant Boards and Commissions, including the Human Services Commission and the Senior Council. After gathering any additional input, staff will recommend broad community engagement opportunities to further shape the plan. This engagement will include reconnecting with participants from Phase One outreach but more specifics are yet to be determined, depending on future outreach needs and the evolving homelessness landscape. Input from these forums will be incorporated into the final Action Plan, which will be submitted to Council for consideration and adoption in the 4th quarter of 2025.

Conclusion

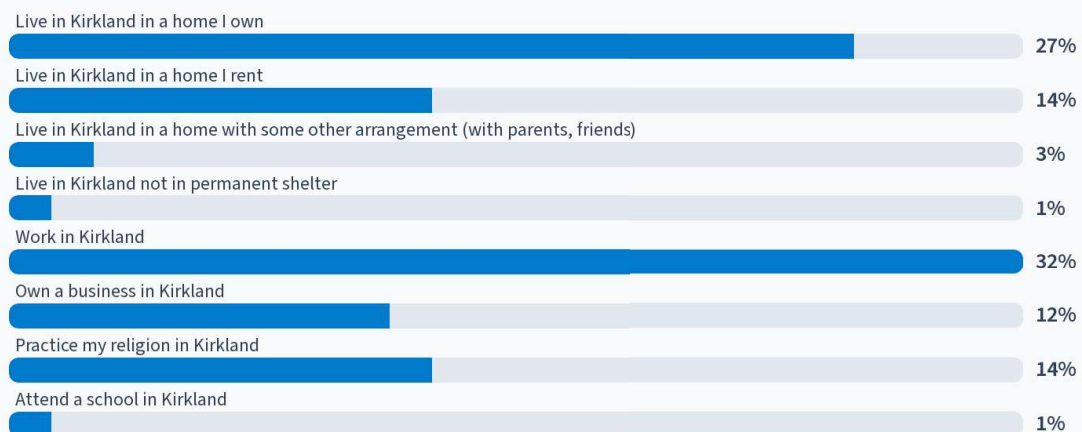
By adopting proposed Resolution R-5680, City Council will provide staff flexibility on the transmittal date of the Action Plan, deferring it to no later than the end of 2025. Staff intends to present a draft Action Plan to Council mid-year. Then, after receiving Council feedback on the draft Action Plan, staff would then present a timeline for additional engagement, with the goal of returning with a final version of the plan before the end of the year.

ATTACHMENTS:

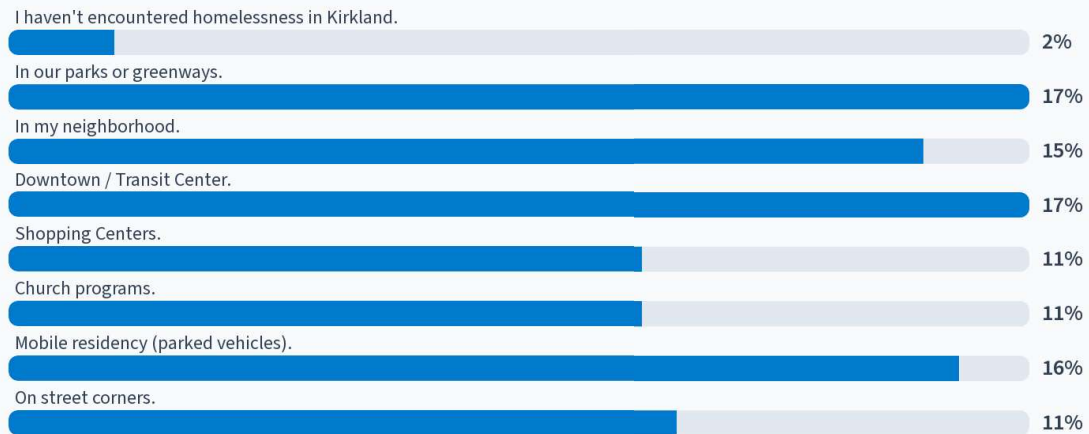
Proposed Resolution R-5680

Attachment 1 – Community Forum Audience Polling

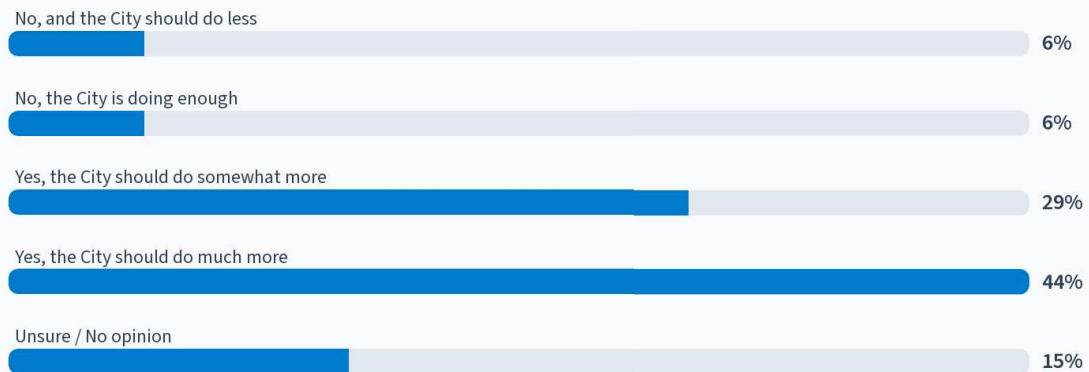
Attachment 2 – List of Faith-Based Community Outreach

AUDIENCE POLL RESULTS: FEB. 24, 2025 COMMUNITY FORUM**How concerned are you about homelessness in Kirkland?****How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply)**

How have you encountered homelessness in Kirkland? (Check any that apply)



Do you think the City of Kirkland should do more to address homelessness?



QUESTIONS REVISITED AFTER STAFF PRESENTATION

How concerned are you about homelessness in Kirkland?



Do you think the City of Kirkland should do more to address homelessness?

26

No, and the City should do less

No, the City is doing enough

Yes, the City should do somewhat more

Yes, the City should do much more

Unsure / No opinion

Rank the following areas of the homelessness continuum of care from most to least important for the City to prioritize.

Prevention



Outreach



Emergency Shelter Services



Temporary Shelter & Housing

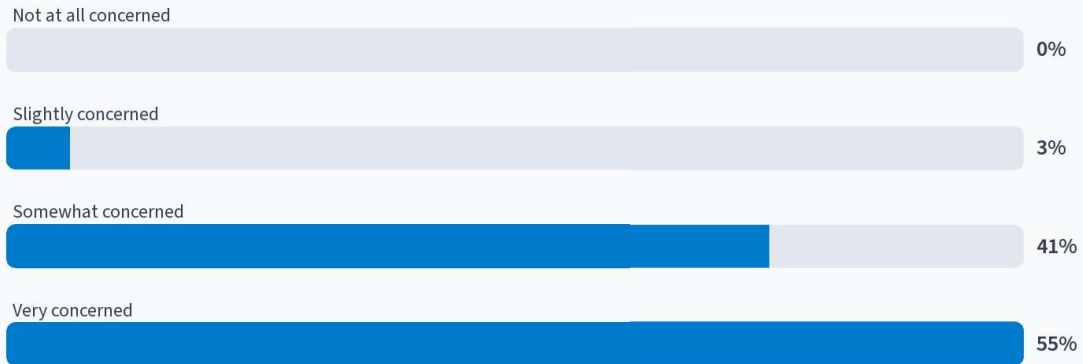


Subsidized Permanent Housing

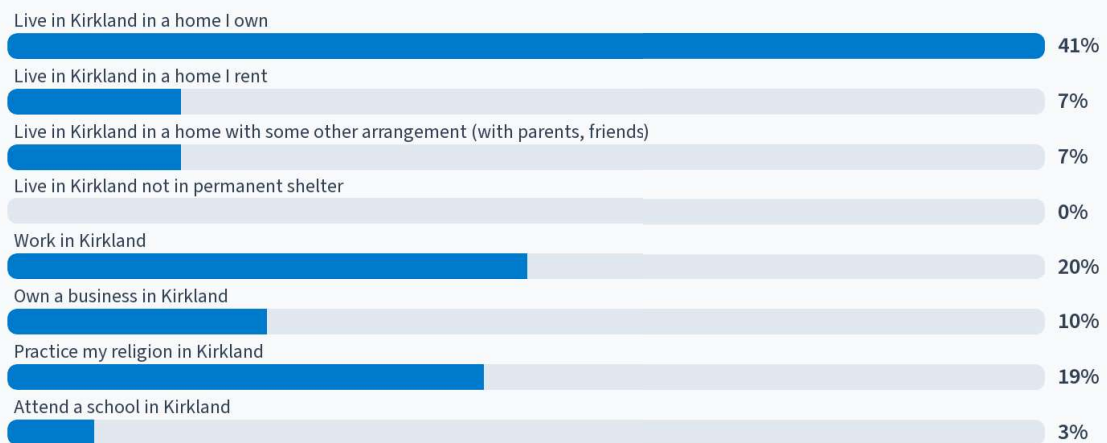


AUDIENCE POLL RESULTS: FEB. 26, 2025 COMMUNITY FORUM

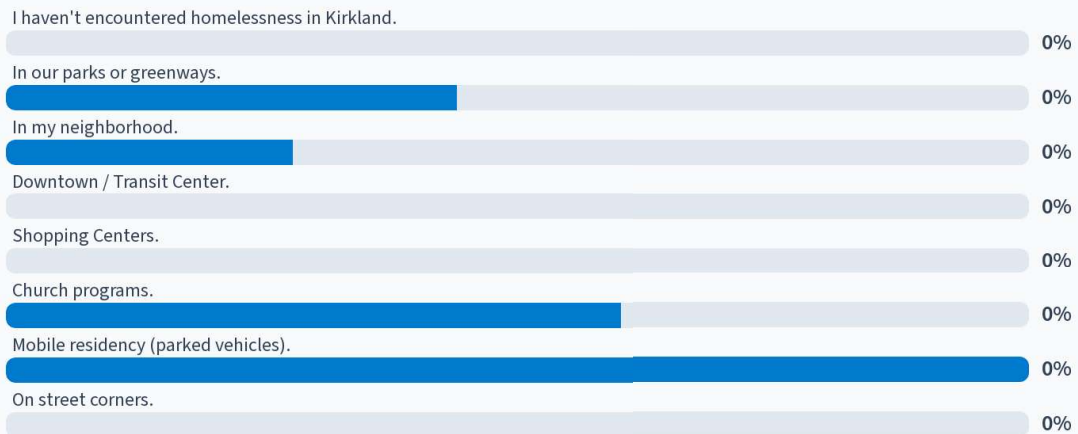
How concerned are you about homelessness in Kirkland?



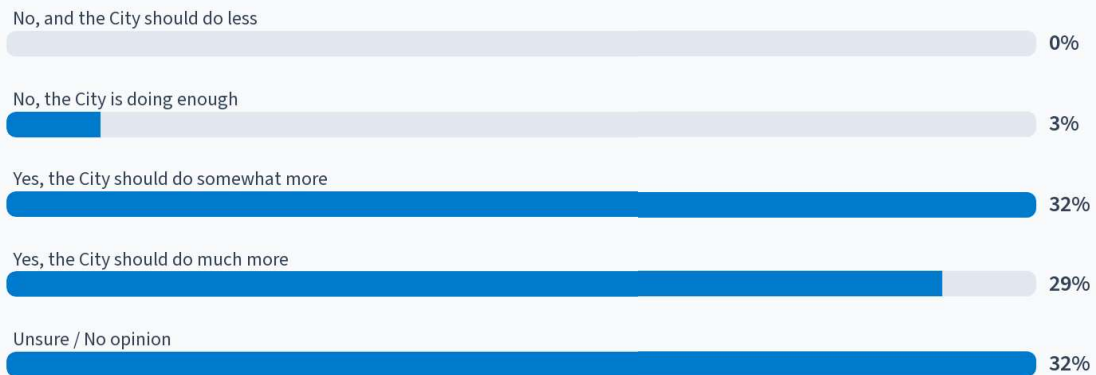
How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply)



How have you encountered homelessness in Kirkland? (Check any that apply)

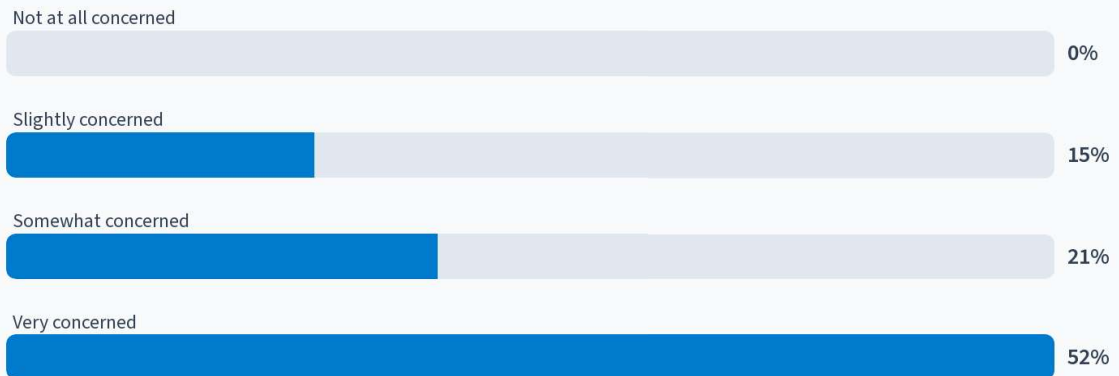


Do you think the City of Kirkland should do more to address homelessness?



QUESTIONS REVISITED AFTER STAFF PRESENTATION

How concerned are you about homelessness in Kirkland?



Do you think the City of Kirkland should do more to address homelessness?



Faith-Based Organizations Staff Contacted Since July 2024	Representative(s) Attended One or More Convenings
Antioch Bible Church	
Awakening Church	
Bellevue Presbyterian Church	x
Chabad of Kirkland - Center for Jewish Life	x
Christian Congregation in the United States - Seattle	
Churchome	
COR Church	
Eastside Insight Meditation	
Evergreen Menonite Church	x
First Baptist Church of Kirkland	
Holy Family Catholic Church	x
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church - Kirkland	x
IMAN Center of Kirkland	x
Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses	
King's Cross Church	
Kirkland Church of Christ	x
Kirkland Congregational United Church of Christ	x
Kirkland Family Church	x
Kirkland SDA Church	
Kol Ami: A Center for Jewish Life	x
Lake Washington Christian Church	x
Lake Washington United Methodist Church	x
Lakeside Christian Church	
Life Community Church	x
Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church	x
Northshore Church	x
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church	
Pursuit Kirkland	
Queensgate Baptist Church	
Reach Church	
Rose Hill Church	
Salt House Church	x
Seattle's Union Gospel Mission	
St John's Episcopal Church	x
St. George Coptic Orthodox Church	
St. John Vianney Catholic Church	x
St. Katherine Orthodox Church	
Tacoma Rescue Mission	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Bothell Stake)	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Sammamish Valley Stake)	x
Trellis Church	
Trinity Reformed Baptist Church	
Woodmark Church	x