

1st Day - Community Forum on Homelessness - 2025

At our Homelessness Community Forums in February 2025, we committed to sharing the raw notes coming out of the event's small group discussions. Using the City's [homelessness continuum of care overview](#) and this [handout](#) as a guide, each group contemplated: "What are your thoughts or concerns on the city's approach to each element of the continuum of care?" These are the unaltered notes captured by each table's designated notetaker.

1. Prevention

Prevention is a good thing – just not at someone else's expense.

Cheaper/more affordable housing to prevent homelessness

Unsure how far resources can go

Appreciative of programs that can support those who are struggling

Costs are rising across the board, especially food – hard to come by at times

Concern that landlords [single-family] have no legal representation against renters due to low-cost or free attorneys representing tenants.

Legislation creates barriers for landlords

ADUs are sitting vacant because families don't want to absorb risk.

Behavior health – people fall through the cracks. All ages experiencing mental health issues ex. Schizophrenia.

Drug abuse – people sometimes do drugs after meeting others that do drugs.

Is the city looking at affordable housing? Mixed use with transportation nearby.

Need wrap-around services; financial education; executive function need for life-management skills including financial. Funding availability in support programs.

I personally see a need for more prevention assistance. Denser housing; more transit, more frequent. Mixed zoning. More diverse housing.

I think that if there was higher funding, then there would be a faster prevention of homelessness.

Squatters – attorney assistance not supported. Support more balance landlord/tenant

How do you identify those needing assistance? What qualifies someone as needing assistance? How often is that evaluated?

What does the Community Wellbeing coordinator do? Can that be marketed?

Market – how to reach the resources.

DV – Support after DV; first/last rent.

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“Cheaper” to fix before it breaks; prevent the trauma that occurs w/homelessness – physical and mental damage; the system is difficult, cumbersome. More economic – reduces harm.

Plenty to do; saves resources by investing in prevention; housing at every price point is prevention; funding is critical, but our regressive tax structure makes this challenging

Prevention – lessen damage mental & physical.

In big picture, these costs are minor. How do we help? - guide people where to go who need help. Hard to know how to guide those who need assistance.

Need more ways to educate about how to connect people but also to directly connect them.

Need more units. Regressive tax system makes it difficult to adequately build safety nets.

How to ID someone who needs assistance – monitor & eval.

Prevention needed – not at someone else’s expense. Educate people who want to help/give; & where resources. Behavior health ...? How?

Prevention as a system. Financial/housing stock. Solutions

1 – economic 2 – mental health 3 – drug addiction/rehabilitation Cheaper housing keeps people housed no matter what their circumstance

Availability of affordable housing & rents – don’t know where to start – e.g. to car – work, easier financing vs housing; employment opportunities.

Financial literacy; maintain employment

People who want services vs. don’t

No place to discharge to; who are we helping and how?

Surprised at how many neighbors in need

It is natural to think about prevention and subsidized housing at the same time

Didn’t realize how much of a need there is in Kirkland

More resources to the City as additional housing and resources are set up

Prevention has focused on individual instead of CAUSES of homelessness – continuum almost starts too late

Need to build more community awareness of prevention resources

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2. Subsidized Permanent Shelter

Necessary; one of the weakest links; hidden importance; the goal is permanent housing;

Application process is confusing – needs more communication

Many people earn less than the average local income.

Need more units, but new developments are not as dense as zoning allows.

Let people have a planned life with stable, affordable housing

Necessary service; hidden importance; our weakest link; people can have a life again; helps with stability; critical to those with lower incomes; need more.

How long is permanent? -with exceptions but strict qualifications.

Goal is to be able to support themselves or group homes.

Why am I paying for poor choices BUT recognize that mental issues need help.

Allocation of \$ to different people. Fixed income.

There is so available 30% of income units – the ARCH units don't do this but are also unavailable [there aren't enough]

Behavioral health – person/parent must allow the BH process and Dx. Receptive to Tx.

Concerns/questions about sustainability. Is the \$ being spent sustainable as home prices go up?

NO HOUSING FIRST!!

Not working; they erode the behavior health [sic], hand-cut meth pipes

May be goal for individuals case-by-case basis

Multiple levels of sub. perm. housing

Look forward to seeing PSH to come online to see good it will do

Need one phone number for housing services

3. Outreach

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1 person isn't enough; 1 personality or style can't fit everyone's need. How do isolated people know about outreach? Relationship based

population vs person/family. Relationship-based

Love the improvements in the 5 years I've been involved in homelessness. Mobile crisis is great but can use improvement. Big [heart] for the HART team.

Good experiences reporting observed homelessness neighborhood. City is responsive; bus/transit increases number of experiences.

Engaged w/non-emergency #; observed in building & bus.

Day to day education about how to notify

Service provider perspective: hands-on engagement, empathy, provide resources on safe places to go; most effective: lived experience outreach from people who have lived in their shoes.

What will [how?] will KC transit enforcement of ORCA impact those experiencing homelessness.

If [a phone] call goes to 911, that gets counted in data, but not in [if it goes through] Our Kirkland.

Emergency: more shelters; more accessible resources for all cultures, families, minors, transgender

What if they refuse resources? More shelters

Call where you can actually get services – visibility issue

We have what we need - place to call & place to go

Funding there but volatile

Folks desperately want services but don't get them – e.g. vouchers to get inside to people frustrated w/system.

Educate community on access challenges; good coordination, police. Need for data

Outreach team – must have resources to tap to help emergency situations

Emergency shelter – right size # based on community needs

Relations w/neighboring city

HART – is there data on why someone is experiencing homelessness – do you want to be homeless?

Can the city market HART? Coordinated the orgs.

What is the difference between emergency and subsidized permanent housing?

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What is the capacity for services and what is the need? Ticker of beds [?]

Big needs – crisis response agency – appreciative of efforts, but crises happen all the time. How? How are they being reached? Identified? Can't rely only on self-identification.

Increased coordination – not enough in the way of assistance funding. City budget not enough.

More nuance in our efforts to convene faith-based communities. Churches also cross city boundaries. Some doing a lot, others not doing much. Educate & connect, coordinate.

How do we know if shopping cart person is getting help? Should we call the city to check?

Are there fewer encampments than there used to be?

Panhandling education – who to call to report – educate people not to give?

Have a heart – give smart.

Where is the outreach to people new to the vulnerability risk? [e.g., single mom, tech worker, at risk of being homeless]

The city can do a better job educating the community on what they can do if/when they see someone who needs help. [ex - #211 for services]

In Utah, metered booths where people can deposit coins that go to those services

Who do you call if you see someone sleeping at a park?

4. Emergency Shelter

Day center – survey – what do we need to focus on? Outreach

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- Languages access – not just common
- Outreach at the schools
- Collaborate in our hubs & services
- Employment
- Lean on our strength

No one option is perfect – 1-style, 1 option is not sufficient

From experience – serving a population variables about no pre-checked boxes; one person supporting should be able to establish relationships.

Isolation – a place for people that are isolated from friends & families. Story-sharing from a person who knows a homeless person.

Being able to share – sharing a hobby or experience with people

There are reasons people decline shelters – shelters are very imperfect and very important.

We don't have enough shelter space.

Accommodating pets at shelters

Resource constraint + communication

More real-time info – e.g., call to different places; age, demographics have different needs.

24/7 case management; full every single night e.g., 60 families + woman needs a bed [health care] to complete surgery

Hotel vouched filled up

Create outreach app to create community [?] to understand outreach challenges.

Limited supply – demand for emergency shelter is greater XXXX[?]

Goal is 90 days - tension – want people to move out for more space. Need exits from shelter into housing to keep availability

People who call went to through [sic] all options. Example – women's senior shelter in Kenmore.

Not enough beds; need is greater than people realize.

Difficult to access funding – grants have process, reporting; unknown what you will get each year

Fragmented system – within Kirkland, # people who work w/homelessness; city to city to county

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Too many agencies w/overlapping mission, lack of coordination. Streamline funding, organizations, processes

Hotel voucher system needs some improvement – who qualifies? How do they get them?

Congregate shelter does not work – no-congregate much more effective. Need more

KCRHA role? Coordination? Educating the community about all the ways we connect people.

These shelters are often full/at capacity at all times

What if someone refuses services?

Different rules/regulations for emergency shelters vs permanent/long-term housing [ex: La Quinta – which has been closed for a while

5. Temporary Shelter

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Research tiny home developments – Everett. Is there a need for volunteers to build tiny homes?

Is the city identifying land for tiny homes? Village style; City run/assisted. Tiny housing vs denser style housing?

Love the safe parking option for families – showers, cooking

Require developers to develop to max density

Funding is critical but our regressive tax structure makes it challenging

What is the method of prioritization? – Who gets housing – temporary or permanent – is it equitable?

How does the city prioritize the local homeless community vs influx of new people.

Lake City partners senior women's shelter 60+ City of Kenmore temporary – group homes stability.

Unauthorized spaces - facilities w/a bed, shower, etc. Better than a tent or car

Emergency vs temporary – clarity on solutions

RVs on City property.

Need to educate community. Safe parking program – mostly women; why not prioritizing

Look at demographic & assign more rapid services. Need to understand terminology

Include community that these services affect. Need unhoused residents at the table

Risk w/people overwhelming services if more made available. What can a community bear?

Space for people w/medical, mental health needs

Educate about homelessness in Kirkland – real needs; unexpected; crises; disparities

Even people with double incomes can't afford the housing – people living here now couldn't buy in today

Tiny houses – do we have land we can use? People will come out of the woodwork against – NIMBY. Select location carefully

What are people's sentiment when they are in temporary shelter/housing?

People have a range of experiences being in temp housing

Question about cost of maintaining shelter as it correlates to the conditions

The city should be talking to inter-faith organizations to architect [sic] what is needed.

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How can we make temp shelter & housing sustainable? [the need for donations, etc.]

Service providers could use more clarification from the city on who qualifies for hotel vouchers due to cold weather.

#211 - resource for services

Question about capacity – do we know what is needed and how much is available?

It's easy for me to state my values, but hard to know how to translate that into specific feedback for the city without more details. [except for build more housing!]

Creates unnecessary bumps in road to housing – i.e., time-bound housing

Safe parking is key – to be able to keep car.

Vehicle residents may not take shelter bed if resource is limited [don't want to take bed from someone w/o car]

How many are experiencing homelessness; are existing resources enough? What can the city do immediately?

Shelters are consistently at capacity.

Resources not asked for/taken b/c others w/children need it more.

Service

Hotel vouchers are humane & possible life-savers.

SP fills a big gap

of beds in a unit vs family size so beds unused. Unused beds reported to KC so doesn't appear at capacity

Transitional housing is a failed, unproven strategy. Cars are an important resource.

It's helpful that we have multiple SP options

Faith-based program – offers an address - needed for - qualify for different programs.

Get RVs away from the schools

Sometimes financial support is stopped because it is seen as fraud – all going to the same address.

Pallett shelters – they just build them – is the city working with them? The challenge is finding where to put them. Have to find service providers on sight [sic] [site?]

Couples shelter. Safe parking is not temporary shelter.

Temp encampments are horrible but necessary when shelters are full.

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Housing vouchers – people got housed but then collapsed. There are no shelters for a couple to find shelter unless they have children.

Shelters are gender-specific. Transgender – we need shelters for transgender.

We need more emergency and temp shelters.

The city is currently not doing tiny houses.

How do we get people into go back into [sic] work?

We have to be careful about that w/mental health

We need to be able to provide services @ the shelters.