

DRAFT Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan

Acknowledgments	3
City Council	3
Project Team	3
Coordinated Response to Homelessness Team	3
Policy Work Group.....	3
Homelessness Assistance & Response Team	4
Executive Summary	5
Purpose	5
Vision.....	5
Background on Homelessness in Kirkland.....	6
Methodology & Community Engagement.....	8
Staff Expertise	8
Community Engagement.....	8
Introducing the Action Plan Framework	11
Framework.....	11
Continuum of Care Policy Goal Area	11
Prevention	11
Outreach.....	11
Emergency Shelter Services	11
Temporary Shelter and Housing.....	12
Permanent Subsidized Housing	12
Program Delivery & System Support.....	12
Status	12
Strategy.....	12
Person-centered Approach.....	12
Timely Communication & Collaboration	13
Proactive Policy Development.....	13
Prioritize Safety	13
Strategic Spending.....	13
Responsible Party.....	13

Level of Investment.....	13
Implementation.....	14
Prioritizing Actions	14
Shelter Capacity.....	14
Staffing Capacity.....	15
The Action Plan.....	17
Prevention	18
Outreach.....	22
Emergency Shelter Services	29
Temporary Shelter & Housing	33
Subsidized Permanent Housing	36
Program Delivery & System Support.....	39
Contact Information.....	47
Appendices.....	47

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Please note that this plan is an accumulation and amalgamation of a variety of feedback from a diverse group of community members. The final document is not necessarily the official position of the consulted groups.

For more information, please visit kirklandwa.gov/homelessness

Executive Summary

- This document is a draft. Staff will continue to revise this draft plan and executive summary in response to ongoing community engagement and feedback, which will inform how staff characterize the complete body of work.
- Homelessness is increasing in King County. Homelessness is prevalent in Kirkland, even when it is not visible in Kirkland's public spaces.
- Community engagement demonstrates that homelessness is an issue in Kirkland, and that community members are concerned about the issue worsening in the near future.
- Staff recommend a combination of ongoing and proposed actions using Kirkland's Continuum of Care to prevent homelessness from growing and becoming more visible in Kirkland.
- To make the biggest and most immediate impact, staff recommend prioritizing actions that increase temporary shelter capacity and outreach staff capacity.

Purpose

The City of Kirkland's goals include both 'Attainable Housing', to provide access to housing and encourage the construction and preservation of housing stock that meet a diverse range of incomes and needs, and 'Supportive Human Services,' to meet basic human needs, help people through economic and personal crises, help individuals thrive, and strive to remove barriers to allow all equal opportunities to succeed.

Over the past five years, the community submitted more than 300 reports of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kirkland. While some of these reports involved the same individuals or situations, each one required a coordinated City response. Additionally, the City's Homeless Outreach Coordinator has engaged 214 unduplicated residents experiencing homelessness since April 2023. Because homelessness is often underreported and [regional rates](#) continue to rise, these trends suggest that homelessness is not only present in Kirkland but also growing and at risk of reaching a tipping point.

With rising economic uncertainty and increasing costs of living in King County, acting on homelessness is both humane and essential for the long-term vibrancy of our community. The City of Kirkland remains committed to ensuring the safety of unhoused persons, housed neighbors, businesses, visitors, and responding staff. As such, the Kirkland City Council Approved [Resolution 5631](#), Directing the City Manager to create a Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan to prevent homelessness where possible, support unhoused individuals in their transition to stable housing, and provide a compassionate and dynamic response to situations involving unhoused residents on a case-by-case basis.

Vision

Kirkland is a belonging community enjoyed by all and a place where community members experiencing housing instability have access to resources needed to thrive, with the goal that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The City's Comprehensive Plan includes a Vision Statement that articulates Kirkland in the year 2044 and summarizes the desired character and characteristics of our community. The Homelessness Action Plan is intended to be the City's way of achieving the adopted Vision as it relates to the Housing and Human Services Elements.

Kirkland is a place where all people are valued. The city is dedicated to celebrating diversity and inclusion while combating racism and discrimination.

Kirkland is accessible for people of all abilities to walk, bike, roll, utilize transit services, and new innovative modes of travel. Diverse housing accommodates residents in every stage of life and is accessible to shops, services, and job opportunities citywide.

Kirkland is innovative and economically resilient, providing public services and capital infrastructure that accommodates growth.

Kirkland is a sustainable city that preserves and enhances our natural and built environment for current and future generations. Kirkland is resilient and livable in the face of climate change.

Background on Homelessness in Kirkland

Homelessness has increased in Kirkland and the greater Seattle metropolitan region. In the recently released 2024 Point In Time report released by the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA), East King County had an estimated 1,910 people experiencing homelessness, an 85% increase from 2020.

In 2023, the City Manager launched an interdepartmental Coordinated Response to Homelessness Initiative. The initiative helped the City more efficiently and effectively coordinate the growing regional focus on issues of homelessness and housing, support the Health Through Housing project coming to Kirkland, and respond to gaps in the system identified by the City's first Homeless Outreach Coordinator position. Since 2023, this initiative has identified that the City is challenged to address issues of the homeless population in Kirkland, even with the dedicated resources currently provided by the Council. This challenge is due to a combination of the scarcity of affordable housing and support services, limited shelter space, and federal court decisions. As a result, staff recommended that the Council adopt a Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan that would establish a comprehensive strategy to humanely and compassionately support Kirkland's current unhoused population and prepare the organization to respond to a steady increase or sudden influx of those experiencing homelessness. To ensure Kirkland is prepared, City Council adopted [Resolution R-5631](#) in June 2024, declaring the City's commitment to address homelessness and engage the community to develop a unified homelessness continuum of care action plan.

Read more about the regional response to homelessness, current state of homelessness, [Kirkland's Continuum of Care](#), and the City's recent work in the [2025-6 Budget Issue Paper](#).

The City has been at work responding in real time to homelessness and emergent needs as they arise. Throughout this response and in developing the Action Plan, the City has committed to the following principles:

- Ensuring Kirkland remains safe, welcoming, and economically vibrant

- Making homelessness in Kirkland rare, brief, and non-recurring by providing paths to stable housing
- Fostering a balanced, person-centered approach that considers the varied interests of everyone in Kirkland—housed and unhoused—with compassion
- Upholding the evolving laws and codes to which everyone in Kirkland is bound while not imposing additional restrictions on unhoused residents due to their circumstances
- Partnering with rather than duplicating the work of non-profit, faith-based, county, state, and federal programs
- Not opening our parks, roadways, alleys, underpasses to unauthorized sleeping, parking, or camping
- Not taking on disproportionate resource burdens or becoming a regional attractant for unhoused residents

The City acknowledges that partnerships are essential and that work is occurring regionally on homelessness and housing. The City is committed to being an active partner in this work and values collaboration over duplication. The City of Kirkland is part of the regional ecosystem as a funder of direct service providers (shelters, nonprofits, etc.) and supports regional initiatives and programs (coordinated entry, affordable housing programs, etc.). In addition, the City of Kirkland has identified gaps in the existing system and provides direct service to meet this need in the form of direct outreach to unhoused individuals in Kirkland. In addition, the City is responsible for enforcement of the City's laws and encampment clean ups when they occur on City property. A summary of the City's role compared to regional entities is represented visually below:

Services: Who Does What

   						
Infrastructure					Key	
Housing Capital and Development					 Kirkland is a Funder	
CoC Funded Services					 Provides Service/Program	
Shelters					 Out of Scope	
Programs					Guiding Principles	
Diversion					 Keeping Kirkland safe, welcoming, and economically vibrant	
Rapid Re-housing					 Making homelessness in Kirkland rare, brief, and non-recurring	
Coordinated Entry					 Fostering a balanced, person-centered approach	
HMIS					 Keeping Kirkland resources focused on our own un-housed residents	
Other Services					 Partnering rather than duplicating programs	
Outreach					 Maintaining parks, roadways, alleys, underpasses etc. for their intended uses	
Encampment Cleans					 Upholding evolving laws and codes without imposing additional restrictions	
Behavioral Health and Crisis Response						
Enforcement						

Methodology & Community Engagement

The City values the perspective of Kirkland's diverse community, service providers, and partners. The Action Plan incorporates feedback from a variety of sources.

Staff Expertise

The City of Kirkland operates a Human Services division comprised five full time staff and one part-time staff. The Human Services Division serves as coordinator, collaborator, facilitator, and funder for support systems that help people through economic and personal crises and provide low-and moderate-income persons with opportunities to succeed. The Human Services Division is well connected with providers and other jurisdictions across the region. This team lent their expertise of social work, youth services, grant management, and policy to respond comprehensively and compassionately to homelessness. In particular, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator engages directly with unhoused individuals. The Homeless Outreach Coordinator has identified gaps in service in the broader service ecosystem and offered proposed solutions for City pilot programs and for the Action Plan.

In 2023, the City Manager launched an interdepartmental Coordinated Response to Homelessness Initiative. The initiative developed several City pilot programs to respond to the emergent needs of unhoused individuals. The pilot programs and other policy recommendations from this team are incorporated in the Action Plan.

In addition, the City consulted with each branch of the Homelessness Assistance & Response Team (HART) on the development of this plan and of the pilot programs that the City implemented over the past two years.

Community Engagement

Over a series of [Council meetings in April, May](#), and June 2024, 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. 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. The Council later approved [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. At that time, staff shared initial community feedback themes and next steps for engagement and what to expect with the plan.

Staff executed a robust community engagement process to inform the development of the Draft Action Plan. Staff met with—or will meet with—targeted stakeholders previously identified by Council as essential to ongoing conversations about homelessness prior to the plan's finalization. In parallel, Communications and Human Services staff continue to update core informational resources—such as the homelessness website.

Targeted Stakeholder Engagement*:

- General Public
 - Via widely publicized Community Forums (x2) and Focus Groups (x3)
 - Participants self-identified as Kirkland residents, business owners, service providers and faith leaders.
- Lived Experiences of Homelessness
 - Lake Washington United Methodist Church (LWUMC) Safe Parking Participants
- Direct Responders, Regional Partners, and Non-Profit Service Providers
 - City of Kirkland's Homelessness Assistance and Response Team (HART)
 - Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee
 - Neighboring Cities Human Services and Outreach Staff
 - IKRON
 - Kindering
 - Friends of Youth
 - Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)
 - New Bethlehem
 - PorchLight
 - Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP)
 - The Sophia Way
- Public Health Organizations
 - Connections Health Solutions
 - Evergreen Health
- Commercial and Economic Stakeholders
 - Business Community (Park Lane, Kingsgate)
 - Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
 - Kirkland Downtown Association
 - Landlords
- Civic Organizations
 - Human Services Commission
 - Kirkland Community Foundation
 - Kiwanis
 - Neighborhood and Community Groups
 - Senior Council
- Educational Providers
 - King County Library System
 - Lake Washington Institute of Technology
 - Lake Washington School District
 - Northwest University
- Faith-Based Organizations
 - Bellevue Presbyterian Church
 - Chabad of Kirkland - Center for Jewish Life
 - Evergreen Mennonite Church
 - Holy Family Catholic Church
 - Holy Spirit Lutheran Church – Kirkland

- o IMAN Center of Kirkland
- o Kirkland Church of Christ
- o Kirkland Congregational United Church of Christ
- o Kirkland Family Church
- o Kol Ami: A Center for Jewish Life
- o Lake Washington Christian Church
- o Lake Washington United Methodist Church
- o Life Community Church
- o Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church
- o Northshore Church
- o Salt House Church
- o St John's Episcopal Church
- o St. John Vianney Catholic Church
- o The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Sammamish Valley Stake)
- o Woodmark Church

*This is a DRAFT stakeholder list reflecting the audiences staff has already—or intends to—meet with to continue shaping the action plan. It may expand in response to additional opportunities and needs uncovered by the ongoing engagement process.

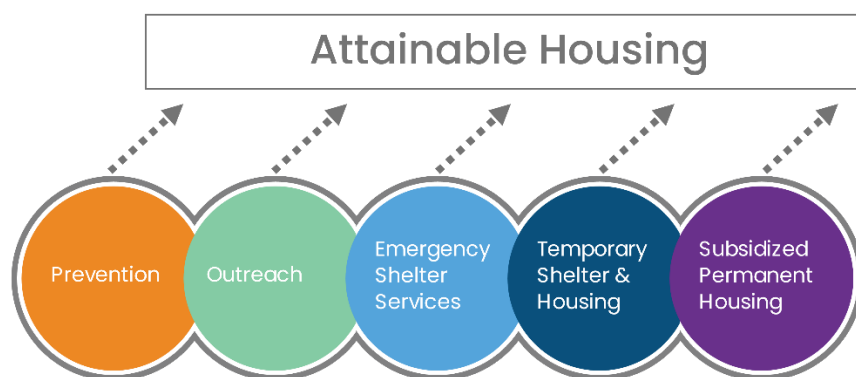
Introducing the Action Plan Framework

Framework

Meaningful progress on homelessness will require consistent action and investment over time. The actions proposed in this plan are categorized by policy goal area, status, strategy, responsible department, and level of investment for convenient sorting and phasing.

Continuum of Care Policy Goal Area

The City's goal is to prevent homelessness and, when it does occur, to transition individuals back into stable and attainable housing as quickly as possible. The Homeless Continuum of Care Action Plan identifies actions in 6 policy goal areas in alignment with the continuum of care: Prevention, Outreach, Emergency Shelter Services, Temporary Shelter & Housing, Subsidized Permanent Housing, and Program Delivery & System Support. The actions proposed in this plan are categorized by policy goal area.



Prevention

Homelessness prevention provides resources to keep individuals and families housed when experiencing an unexpected financial event or crisis that can otherwise lead to housing instability. The most common services include financial assistance or legal support that can help with eviction prevention, rent support, utilities, medical bills, car repairs, and childcare.

Outreach

Outreach focuses on building relationships with people experiencing homelessness by getting to know individuals and connecting them with immediate resources and services to foster trust. Outreach work includes basic needs distribution, food, water, and referrals to services like shelter, housing, treatment, and healthcare.

Emergency Shelter Services

Emergency shelter programs vary in service model but are often time-limited, providing an interim step toward securing permanent housing.

Emergency shelter services are programs that offer 24/7/365 shelter with wraparound support to households who have lost housing, including case management, employment, and behavioral health support. Several shelters also offer day center services. Day centers offer hot meals, showers, laundry, mail services, case management, and other resources.

Temporary Shelter and Housing

Temporary Shelter and Emergency Housing programs vary in service model but are often time-limited, providing an interim step toward securing permanent housing. These services are the most difficult and most urgent services the City provides. Common models of temporary shelter and housing include sanctioned encampments, safe parking programs or mobile vehicle residency, transitional housing, and non-congregate temporary housing.

Subsidized Permanent Housing

Subsidized Permanent Housing is generally categorized as housing units available for those who are qualified by income and/or other criteria to live in homes that receive public subsidy. Typically, the goal for subsidized permanent housing is that households pay no more than 30% of their monthly income on rent and utilities. These types of units provide stable, rent restricted housing for low- and moderate-income households. Permanent affordable housing units are often created through local housing incentive and inclusionary programs, including mandatory inclusionary zoning, voluntary density bonus, and multifamily tax exemptions. Another model within permanent affordable housing is permanent supportive housing, which offers wraparound services that can include employment navigation, transportation access, food access, and behavioral, mental, and medical services.

Program Delivery & System Support

The City of Kirkland is committed to the provision of responsive, person-centered, and accountable human services. Program Delivery & System Support refers to the oversight, management, funding, and reporting of this work.

Status

Actions in this plan are labeled by their status:

- **On-going:** Work on these actions has commenced and is underway; the City anticipates continuing these activities indefinitely
 - *Some actions are listed as ongoing because they are currently underway. However, some of these items are funded by one-time dollars. To maintain ongoing service on these actions beyond 2026, the Council would need to identify additional funding. These items are marked with an asterisk.
- **Proposed:** These actions are new recommendations emerging from community, staff, expert engagement, and regional best practices. As of the consideration of this plan, City staff have not initiated these actions but recommends them for Council consideration. New funding would be required to support these proposed actions.

Strategy

Homelessness is a complex issue that warrants a diversity of strategies to ensure a comprehensive and humane response. While many actions incorporate elements from multiple strategies, actions in this plan are categorized by their primary approach.

Person-centered Approach

This strategy upholds unhoused persons as individuals worthy of respect, human dignity, and autonomy. Approaches utilizing this value focus on reducing the harm of homelessness, eliminating barriers to care, meeting basic human needs with respect and autonomy, and building relationships with individuals. A Person-Centered Approach provides a compassionate

and dynamic response, acting on a case-by-case basis to meet needs with dignity and respect. Wherever possible, programs should incorporate both choice and accountability for unhoused residents.

Timely Communication & Collaboration

This strategy recognizes that the City of Kirkland is not alone in its work to respond to homelessness. It acknowledges that partnerships are essential to the success of this work. The City is committed to continued collaboration with and between departments, regional entities, organizations, and community members. Timely communication allows for transparency and efficiency of services. Some policies and programs proposed in this plan will require additional community engagement and collaboration.

Proactive Policy Development

Considering the regional landscape, the City seeks to be responsive to the needs of the housed and unhoused community. Simultaneously, the City proposes proactively policy and programs to mitigate and address issues before they arise or worsen. The City seeks to incorporate best practices from other programs and jurisdictions to respond to this crisis.

Prioritize Safety

The City of Kirkland acknowledges that it is inherently unsafe to live outdoors. This strategy prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of unhoused individuals, staff, housed neighbors, businesses, and the environment. This value may incorporate enforcement action if other strategies or options are not available or effective

Strategic Spending

Additional resources are required to maintain or expand capacity in response to homelessness. The City will prioritize targeted investments that maximize benefit and are cost-efficient.

Responsible Party

Multiple City departments, regional agencies, and nonprofit partners are involved in the response to homelessness. While many partners may be involved in each of the actions proposed in this plan, the plan notes a responsible department for each action. This party is the lead entity on the action and is responsible for the initiation, collaboration, and success of this item.

Level of Investment

Many of the actions proposed in this plan will require additional resources. While not comprehensive, the level of investment label is intended to provide an estimated range of the cost of each item. The cost is noted **per biennium**.

- \$ Investment is estimated to cost < \$20,000 per biennium
- \$\$ Investment is estimated to cost < \$200,000 per biennium
- \$\$\$ Investment is estimated to cost < \$1,000,000 per biennium
- \$\$\$\$ Investment is estimated to cost > \$1,000,000 per biennium
- N/A Action does not require funding

Implementation

The time horizon of the Homelessness Continuum of Care Action Plan is for the biennium budget of 2025-2026. Future iterations of this plan will be considered in tandem with biennium budget discussions. However, given the complex nature of homelessness, this Action Plan is intended to be used as a living document with ongoing revisions, and prioritizations based on evolving needs and community input.

Given the complexity of homelessness data, the City will explore potential approaches to data reporting to Council, including format, content, and appropriate frequency. The City will engage regularly with the community about the successes and challenges of this action plan.

Priority Investments

The City of Kirkland has invested in the continuum of care to ensure a comprehensive and humane response to homelessness. Community engagement with housed and unhoused residents, service providers, and stakeholders suggest that Kirkland's investments have been effective at preventing homelessness and connecting unhoused individuals with resources. However, the existing system of resources is capacity constrained. The City must increase its investment in staffing to maintain existing homelessness response service levels. As the demand for services increases and the economic and political environment changes, community sentiment is that homelessness will get worse. To prevent ballooning of this issue, the City should invest in additional expansion of service and staffing capacity.

For example, the City's Homelessness Assistance and Response Team (HART) effectively builds rapport with individuals and connects them with resources. However, the resources available to the HART team are increasingly limited. The HART team reports that they often have unhoused clients willing to come indoors, but there are no shelter beds available. This undermines the trust in the relationship and inhibits staff's ability to help an individual exit homelessness.

The City recognizes that homelessness is a complex issue requiring regional and national partners. The City's role within this ecosystem is to identify Kirkland-specific gaps. The City has identified bottlenecks and capacity as key restraints that inhibit Kirkland's progress on homelessness. As such, staff recommend that Council consider two key areas to prioritize investment:

Shelter Capacity

The HART team needs more non-congregate shelter options to house clients while working on long-term housing stability goals. Congregate shelters on the Eastside are full or near capacity most nights. Additionally, congregate shelters are not suitable for all clients. Increasing investment in diverse, short-term solutions that are non-congregate is essential to providing life-saving shelter and connection to services.

A potential action to expand temporary housing and shelter capacity is to develop a Tiny Home village program. The City has researched Tiny Home villages, concluding that, in order to be successful, they must be done in partnership with a private property owner and sited with community collaboration. Staff recommends the continued evaluation of private property partnerships and community engagement to site and implement a Tiny Home Village on the Eastside.

The City may also consider developing a funding model with regional shelters to provide set-aside beds that are reserved for Kirkland's referrals. This potential solution may be complicated by the regional service model.

The City's hotel set-aside program allows the Homeless Outreach Coordinator to provide short-term shelter in a hotel for unhoused clients while they await placement with a longer-term facility. This program is time-restricted, as hotel placements can be costly and the resources are limited. Additionally, not all clients are suitable for housing in a hotel environment. The City may consider expanding this program with additional funding.

In addition to shelter shortages during normal conditions, severe weather is life threatening for unhoused individuals, and existing resources are at capacity. The City overspent its 2025-2026 budget for the severe weather emergency hotel set-aside program. With additional severe weather incidents anticipated, additional funding is needed to continue this program. The City may also consider alternative models using shelter beds or tiny houses.

Staffing Capacity

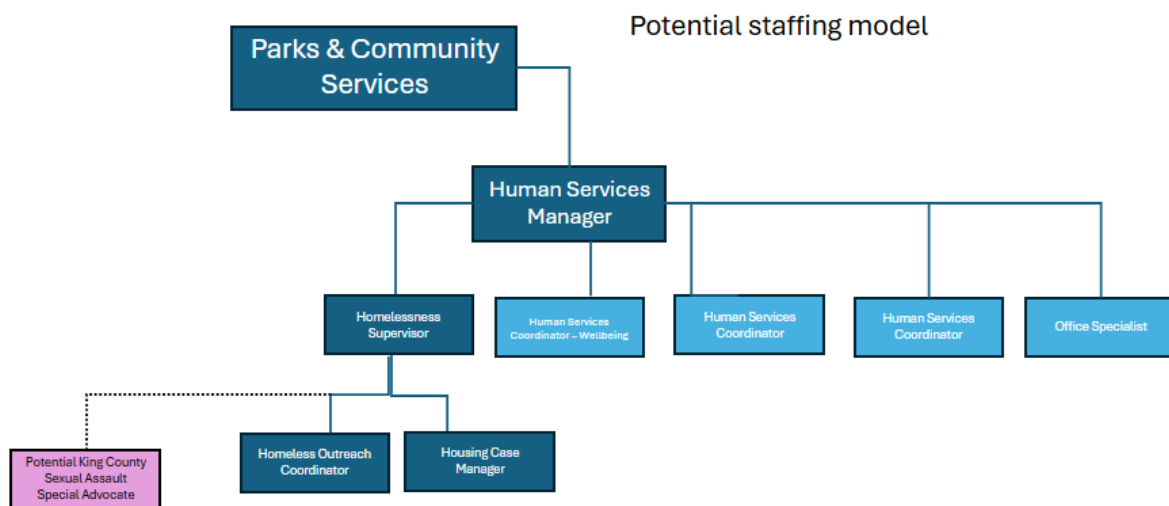
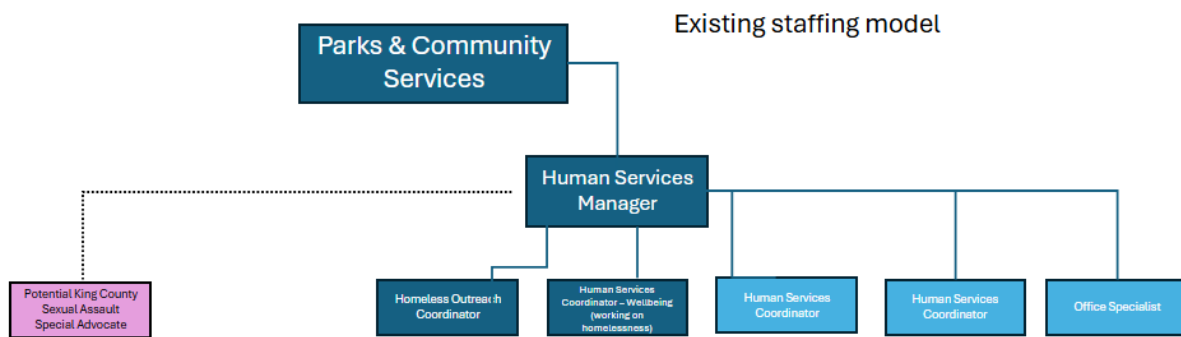
In stakeholder engagement, the community expressed universal support for the City's existing outreach and coordination efforts. The most recommended action by staff and experts was to maintain existing service levels by increasing the support for the Homeless Outreach Coordinator with additional staff. The City has options to consider to expand staffing capacity.

Connecting clients to long-term and short-term stable housing is time intensive, and this process creates a bottleneck in the system of connecting clients to resources. Hiring a Housing Case Manager would reduce the administrative burden on the Homeless Outreach Coordinator, enabling her to provide more direct outreach in the field and more efficiently move clients out of homelessness.

The City may also consider hiring additional Homeless Outreach Coordinators to provide more complete coverage throughout the week. The City currently has one Homeless Outreach Coordinator, who provides 5 day a week coverage. There is no backup coverage when the Homeless Outreach Coordinator is out on vacation or sick leave, or succession plan if she departs the organization. This position is a role with high potential for burnout, yet the community repeatedly noted that it is essential. Hiring additional Homeless Outreach Coordinators will create capacity for the City to connect unhoused clients with housing and resources and help them exit homelessness.

However, expanding the Homeless Outreach team would also require expanding supervisory staff to meet the administrative and safety demands of these positions. A potential Homelessness Services Supervisor could also serve as the liaison and project manager for several of the collaboration projects outlined by the action plan.

Several staffing model options are presented to expand staffing capacity.



Behavioral health challenges are barriers to unhoused individuals working with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. If an individual has behavioral needs but is stable, they may not agree to work with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator or qualify for existing services. Because homelessness is traumatizing, there is a higher likelihood that people experiencing housing instability are also experiencing behavioral health challenges. Existing service levels provide behavioral health assistance only if the individual is in active crisis or if the response is associated with a 911 call. This gap in services is a barrier to connecting unhoused clients with shelter and bringing them indoors. Adding a mental health professional to City staff or contracting with a service like Mobile Integrated Health to expand services would increase staff capacity to connect individuals with shelter and housing.

The Action Plan

Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Prevention

Overview

Homelessness prevention provides resources to keep individuals and families housed when experiencing an unexpected financial event or crisis that can otherwise lead to housing instability. The most common services include financial assistance or legal support that can help with eviction prevention, rent support, utilities, medical bills, car repairs, and childcare.

Community Note

In community engagement for this Action Plan, the City heard overwhelmingly from residents and stakeholders that the City should invest most strongly in prevention and examine the upstream causes of homelessness. From an emotional, physical, and financial perspective, both short- and long-term, it is less strenuous and more cost effective to prevent a household from becoming homeless than it is to coordinate efforts to exit a household from homelessness and re-establish stability.

Community engagement conversations regarding prevention converged around the following themes:

- Access to Resources
 - Many respondents expressed that individuals who go through a financial hardship should have a centralized point to access resources
 - Even service providers struggle to understand which resources are active and accepting clients and which are expired.
- Affordable Housing
 - Many community members noted that increasing affordable housing supply is key to preventing people from becoming homeless.
 - Some business respondents noted that housing instability is a workforce issue. Many employees in Kirkland cannot afford to live here and are commuting hours to work. The housing instability that these individuals face is also a workforce retention issue for local businesses and institutions.
 - Some expressed that concern about squatters may prevent landlords from leasing to “riskier” low-income tenants or tenants with limited or no rental history. Many landlords do not have the funds to support a rental property should the renter fail to pay.
- Behavioral Health Challenges
 - Even individuals who are housed can struggle with behavioral health challenges that threaten their housing security.
 - Increasing behavioral health resources for both the housed and unhoused communities can contribute to the wellbeing of the community and its housing security.
- Proactive Outreach to Prevent Homelessness

- Many community members expressed concern about populations at risk of homelessness, particularly seniors. The City should conduct proactive outreach to specific subpopulations who are most at risk of losing housing.
- Seniors and individuals with special needs are acutely at risk because they are generally on a fixed-income, experience accessibility and technology barriers, and are highly dependent on others for support.

Expert Note

In the development of the Action Plan, staff heard from the City's HART team, service providers, nonprofits, and shelters that prevention is a valuable component of any response to homelessness.

Expert conversations regarding prevention converged around the following themes:

- **Resource Constraints & Navigation Challenges**
 - Service providers often encounter individuals at the brink of homelessness but existing resources are insufficient or out of date
 - It can be hard for service providers to understand which programs are still active and accepting clients, making referrals difficult
 - Existing databases like 2-1-1 are out of date because they rely on capacity-constrained nonprofits to update information
 - Replicating regional resource hubs bears the same risk of redundancy and becoming out of date. Data is only as good as the quality and relevance of its inputs.
 - Unless an individual is actively unhoused, there is no case management support available to help navigate the different affordable housing options and assistance programs. This creates a gap that prevents housing insecure residents of Kirkland from accessing services.
- **Affordable Housing**
 - The City should invest in rental assistance programs; many people facing housing instability have jobs but simply cannot afford rent.
 - Families in the Lake Washington School District are doubling or tripling up inside 2-bedroom apartments because they cannot afford rent.
 - The City is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and should continue to support its Affordable Housing Goal in the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Proactive Outreach to Prevent Homelessness**
 - Youth who experience homelessness in childhood are at risk of experiencing homelessness as adults.
 - Adults with disabilities and youth exiting foster care are also uniquely at risk of housing instability
 - Proactive case management is missing for high acuity individuals. Seniors and individuals with behavioral health challenges need someone to check in on them to ensure that they are taking their medications, keeping track of payments, and caring for their wellbeing. Many individuals lack family or other social connections that provide this care and can quietly slide into homelessness without additional support.

- In particular, seniors may have technology and accessibility challenges that make it especially difficult to access services. Language barriers also pose challenges to accessing resources.
- Prevent Evictions & Keep People Housed
 - Property tax deferrals, rental assistance, caps on late fees, and support for landlords to incentivize acceptance of partial payment and understand options can keep people housed.
 - Recent state legislation (HB 1217) enacted rent and housing stability measures including rent increase caps, rent increase notice requirements, caps on move-in fees and security deposits, and avenues for enforcement. These laws are new and not well understood by tenants or landlords.
 - Landlords may be the first to identify signs of crisis in their tenants but lack awareness of resources that could help tenants to remain housed.

Goal

Prevent an individual or family from losing housing by providing direct assistance or connections to resources.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
Prevention	1	Continue prioritizing human services grant funding that supports rent assistance and other prevention response.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$\$\$	Short-Term
Prevention	2	Continue to fund a full-time attorney dedicated to eviction prevention and housing support for low-income Kirkland residents in partnership with Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP).	Strategic Spending	PCS	Ongoing	\$\$	Short-Term
Prevention	3	Continue funding a 1.0 FTE Human Services Coordinator position focused on Community Wellbeing, which includes connecting residents to resources.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PCS	Ongoing	\$\$	Short-Term
Prevention	4	Continue the Kirkland Cares Low-Income Support Program to support households with	Strategic Spending	FA	Ongoing*	\$\$\$	Short-Term

		discounts on utility rates and other City services and charges.					
Prevention	5	Explore funding partnership to create a dedicated homelessness action fund to act as a centralized donation hub for community members, including the faith community to support outreach flex funds and severe weather response.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	N/A	Short-Term
Prevention	6	Educate landlords and tenants on HB 1217 that put rent and housing stability measures into place including rent increase caps, rent increase notice requirements, caps on move-in fees and security deposits, and avenues for enforcement.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PB	Proposed	\$	Short-Term
Prevention	7	Provide educational resources, incentives, and protections to support single-unit landlords leasing to low-income tenants or tenants without rental histories; as well as working with HOAs to promote ADU availability and room rental flexibility.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	CAO	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term
Prevention	8	Explore voucher program with Lake Washington School District (LSWD) to address housing gaps for families at risk of homelessness.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term

Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Outreach

Overview

Outreach focuses on building relationships with people experiencing homelessness by getting to know individuals and connecting them with immediate resources and services to foster trust. Outreach work includes basic needs distribution, food, water, and referrals to services like shelter, housing, treatment, and healthcare.

Community Note

In community engagement for this Action Plan, community members noted that they were generally supportive of the City's efforts to provide humane care and outreach to unhoused individuals in our community. Homelessness can be invisible in the Kirkland community, and the data provided by the Homeless Outreach Coordinator's outreach validated the problem statement for many outreach participants.

Community engagement conversations regarding outreach converged around the following themes:

- Community Engagement & Education
 - Respondents noted that they were surprised and impressed by the level of response that the City is already providing on homelessness and commented that the City should do more to publicize its existing effort on this issue. Some even connected the lack of visible homelessness to these efforts.
 - Some community members expressed eagerness to contribute to helping unhoused individuals access resources.
 - The community urged the City to proactively engage and share resources with neighborhood associations, community groups, and the broader Kirkland population to educate them on the City's Action Plan and HART Team.
 - A more compassionate "coordinated" vs. police-only response is viewed favorably as long as it is balanced with accountability.
- Existing Service Levels/ Responsiveness
 - Prior to engagement, most respondents were unaware of the work that the Homeless Outreach Coordinator and Homeless Assistance & Response Team (HART) are already doing in Kirkland.
 - The Homeless Outreach Coordinator's work, approach, and responsiveness was broadly praised, signaling community support for ongoing investment.
 - Many respondents noted that the HART team was an efficient use of City resources and should be continued.

Expert Note

Service providers and Kirkland's HART Team expressed near-universal concern for the sustainability of existing outreach efforts. The City currently has one Homeless Outreach Coordinator, whose caseload is growing and is unsustainable. Engagement from service

providers expressed that to continue the excellent provision of services and outreach to unhoused individuals, additional staff and resources are required.

Expert conversations regarding outreach converged around the following themes:

- Community Engagement & Education
 - Internally, the City strives to provide a response to the community within 24 hours of receiving a ticket or complaint about an unhoused individual in the community. Given the Homeless Outreach Coordinator's working hours and the complexity of responding to individuals in crisis, it is not always possible to have a resolution within 24 hours. This contradiction creates tension for staff and for community members. This expectation is not sustainable at the existing service level.
 - The City is eager to communicate with the public regarding the complexities of homelessness. However, given the sensitive nature of working with individuals experiencing trauma and the City's own capacity constraints, this proactive outreach is not feasible at the existing service level.
 - The Kirkland community is compassionate, and for many, seeing homelessness in our community is upsetting. Simultaneously, it is not illegal to be unhoused in the City of Kirkland. Responding to community complaints about unhoused individuals strains staff capacity to connect unhoused individuals to services. Additionally, there are limits to the City's power to remove an unhoused individual if they are not breaking the law—and case law continues to evolve on this issue.
- Existing Service Levels, Responsiveness, Vulnerabilities & Gaps
 - The existing service model is for one Homeless Outreach Coordinator to provide 5 day a week coverage. The Homeless Outreach Coordinator is not an emergency responder and does not work evenings and weekends. While the Homeless Outreach Coordinator regularly flexes her hours to include early mornings and weekends, one Coordinator cannot provide 24/7 service. On evenings and weekends, there is a lag between when first responders make a referral to the Homeless Outreach Coordinator and when she is available to respond. This was raised as a problem not only by residents but also by businesses and organizations such as the library who do not necessarily want to call the police. Due to the transience of the unhoused population, this can result in an incomplete referral. In addition, there is no backup coverage when the Homeless Outreach Coordinator is out on vacation or sick leave, nor redundancy or succession plan if she departs the organization.
 - The work of the Homelessness Outreach Coordinator is to both meet with unhoused people in the community and also make referrals to resources and housing. The housing referral and navigation system in the region requires extensive administrative time to manage, screen, and nominate clients for housing and resources. This competing responsibility is a challenge to manage while simultaneously providing responsive service in the field.
 - The Homelessness Outreach Coordinator regularly works extensive overtime hours.
 - The work of outreach to vulnerable groups is both essential and emotionally draining. Without further support, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator is at risk of burnout.
- Shared Information Systems

- Service providers use different software to share and track information. There is no system integration across these platforms. The lack of communication across service providers can result in duplication of work. For example, if first responders encounter an unhoused individual, they do not have a way to quickly look up the individual's prior contacts to know if the individual is actively working with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator or real-time visibility into available beds. The lack of information sharing can lead to gaps in communication, duplication of effort, and gaps in service.
- The lack of software integration makes it challenging to communicate with the public about the status of an individual. As a result, the public may submit multiple inquiries about an unhoused individual, multiplying staff workload. The public may also be frustrated by the City's seeming lack of response.
- Service Gap: Behavioral Health
 - Behavioral health challenges are barriers to unhoused individuals working with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. If an individual has behavioral health needs but is stable, they may not agree to work with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator or qualify for existing services. Because homelessness is traumatizing, most unhoused people are dealing with behavioral health challenges.
 - Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) can only assist in behavioral health cases when the case is tied to a 911 call. Regional Crisis Response(RCR) can only assist when unhoused individuals are in active crisis. The Homeless Outreach Coordinator is not a mental health professional and is not equipped to respond to individuals with complex behavioral health needs. This is a gap in services that leaves individuals cyclically unhoused and without access to resources.
- Lack of Available Emergency Resources
 - Establishing trust by following through on promised resources is essential to the work of outreach. Often, unhoused clients will agree to accept resources or housing support, but the resources do not exist or are at capacity. This can undermine the new relationship and trust of the resources offered.

Goal

Establish relationships with unhoused individuals and offer connections to immediate resources and services. Outreach provides person-centered care to prioritize life-safety and human dignity while maintaining public safety.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
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Outreach	9	Continue HART coordination and response with regular evaluation of its role, mission, and function at the City. Continue educating City staff and the community on the purpose and how to activate HART. Consider branding a Kirkland Coordinated Response Protocol.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	10	Continue funding a 1.0 FTE Homeless Outreach Coordinator position focused on building rapport and connecting residents with resources to help address barriers to work towards housing stability.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PCS	Ongoing	\$\$	Short-Term
Outreach	11	Formalize pilot programs to reduce barriers for people working with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator, including mail services, showers, laundry, and property storage at LWUMC.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$	Short-Term
Outreach	12	Continue to invest in the Flex Fund the HART team uses to purchase basic human needs items or other resources that otherwise pose barriers to housing.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$	Short-Term
Outreach	13	Continue vehicle and RV repair program.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing*	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	14	Continue property safekeeping program for unhoused residents who require temporary storage of belongings.	Person-centered Approach	KPD	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	15	Continue 24/7 open restroom at Marina Park.	Prioritize Safety	PCS	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	16	Evaluate current wound care service through MIH. Consider expansion to provide services outside of 911 response.	Person-centered Approach	KFD	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	17	Ensure all Kirkland police officers are trained on homelessness standard operating procedures for	Prioritize Safety	KPD	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term

		both engagement and enforcement.					
Outreach	18	Continue to work with the Kirkland Senior Council and support the Senior Center to provide resources to seniors experiencing housing instability.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	19	Evaluate current members of the HART team and consider expansion to include Probation and other staff that interact with people experiencing homelessness.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Proposed	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	20	Fund a 1.0 FTE Housing Case Manager position to support homeless outreach clients with housing navigation and case management support plus direct assistance to residents who have been priced out of market rate housing (fixed income, disability, loss of spouse, etc) and do not know how to navigate the complex multiple steps required to locate and apply to affordable housing.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Short-Term
Outreach	21	Consider flex fund expansion to include all first responders to offer basic needs to people who are unhoused as part of their response.	Strategic Spending	FA	Proposed	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	22	Expand access to training, culturally-relevant resources, and linguistic services (interpretation and translation services) for the HART Team to assist the growing, diverse population of unhoused residents.	Strategic Spending	CMO	Proposed	\$	Short-Term
Outreach	23	Create Homeless Outreach Program Manual to educate internal staff on policies and procedures in responding to homelessness across the City.	Timely Communication and	PCS	Proposed	\$	Short-Term

			Collaboration				
Outreach	24	Continue to fund severe weather response. Partner with faith-based organizations and private sector philanthropy to increase funding.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$	Short-Term
Outreach	25	Consider increasing homeless outreach staffing over time to provide 7-day a week response capability, ensure staff wellbeing, retention, coordination with HART, and sustained impact.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term
Outreach	26	Explore centralized data tracking tool to synthesize information on shared clients and locations for HART team members. Develop a scope of work for technological solutions to allow HART to collectively track the last point of contact with a client.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term
Outreach	27	Explore options to deploy a mental health professional to correspond with the Homeless Outreach Coordinator. This may include partnerships with MIH who have been trained in SOAR to support people experiencing homelessness apply for SSA, SSI, and SSDI, or additional City staff.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term
Outreach	28	Expand transportation options for HART members to support unhoused clients accessing medical appts, DMV, court dates, and other appointments. Consider formalizing bus ticket program through Human Services to other HART members unable to transport clients.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Outreach	29	Explore co-hosting a regional clinic in the OneHealth Clinic model - providing veterinary and human medical services, co-located. Consider piloting at	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Proposed	\$	Long-Term

		annual Kirkland Health and Wellness Fair.					
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Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Emergency Shelter Services

Overview

Emergency shelter programs vary in service model but are often time-limited, providing an interim step toward securing permanent housing.

Emergency shelter services are programs that offer 24/7/365 shelter with wraparound support to households who have lost housing, including case management, employment, and behavioral health support. Several shelters also offer day center services. Day centers offer hot meals, showers, laundry, mail services, case management, and other resources.

On the Eastside, there are 8 year-round shelters serving men, women, youth, families and domestic violence survivors, totaling over 700 beds. The majority are near or at capacity on any given night and people stay longer than is intended for such facilities, creating bottlenecks for newly unhoused people.

Community Note

In engagement forums, the community broadly agreed that temporary and emergency housing programs were a necessary part of the continuum of care. Respondents supported preventing unhoused individuals from sleeping in public spaces.

Community engagement conversations regarding emergency shelter services converged around the following themes:

- Shelter Constraints
 - The community had a general sense that shelters were at or near capacity but was interested in seeing data to demonstrate that this is a problem.
 - Unhoused individuals say that the emergency shelter length of stay is too short to identify a “next step” of a temporary housing option – which means that an individual can exit shelters and remain unhoused.
- Severe Weather
 - The faith-based community expressed interest in collaborating and providing financial support for the City’s emergency activations caused by severe weather. Faith based organizations are often contacted by residents in need when severe weather conditions occur.
- Serving Kirkland Community Members
 - Some community members noted that unhoused Kirkland community members should not be sent away to other communities—except for high acuity cases that may require very specific assistance not available here or in the region.

- Simultaneously, community members did not want to attract unhoused individuals from other communities into Kirkland by providing a regional shelter service here.

Expert Note

Service providers and experts agree that emergency shelter services are essential to providing immediate life-saving support for unhoused individuals. Yet the existing systems are severely capacity constrained. Emergency housing programs are intended to be short-term emergency housing options. However, due to the lack of subsidized permanent housing in the pipeline, individuals may utilize emergency housing programs for long-term housing. Emergency housing options lack capacity and have a low rate of turnover.

Expert conversations regarding emergency shelter services converged around the following themes:

- Shelter Constraints
 - Unhoused individuals are often willing to go inside but shelters are full
 - When an individual is exiting transitional housing or emergency shelter, there is no subsidized permanent housing option to move to. Simultaneously, there are others waiting for their place in transitional housing or emergency shelters. This creates a leak in the system that can send people back to being unhoused and unsheltered.
 - Gaining a real-time understanding of which shelters have capacity and which are full is an administrative burden. The Homeless Outreach Coordinator must call shelters four times a week to see if they have capacity.
 - The urgency of seeking emergency shelter for an individual can complicate other goals for stability. For example, in probation appointments, probation officers often spend time helping clients find a shelter for that night. This is meeting an important and immediate need, but it does take away from the time in the probation appointment to work towards other assessments that have time-sensitive consequences at the court.
 - Access to low-barrier shelters is essential and severely lacking. There are no options for unhoused individuals who have substance use disorder and who are actively using.
- Family shelters are limited. Lake Washington School District reported a recent anecdote of a mother and daughter that were evicted and had to split up due to lack of family shelter space; the student was looking for a youth shelter option and the mother sought emergency shelter from an adult congregant shelter. Even when split up, local shelters were full and the individuals had to look at options outside of King County.
- Severe Weather
 - Kirkland City Council allocated \$20,000 for 2025-26 to provide emergency shelter for unhoused individuals in severe weather conditions. In January 2025, an extended season of severe weather activation cost the City \$81,000. With more frequent and severe weather anticipated in 2025-26 and beyond due to changing climate patterns, this program is unsustainable with current funding models.

- Unhoused individuals who participated in community engagement stated that the severe weather threshold is not compatible with the lived experience of being outside.
- Barriers to Accessing Shelter Resources
 - For many unhoused individuals, a pet is a beloved family member. Many medical care services, shelters, and programs do not allow pets or emotional support animals in their programs. This is a meaningful barrier to care. Veterinary care is also needed.
 - Shelters have limited storage capacity and may not be able to accept an unhoused individual's personal items. Concern about the safety of their personal items may prevent an individual from seeking resources.
 - Because many shelters serve specified, binary populations, LGBTQIA individuals may not feel as safe or welcome using these services.
 - Individuals who have experienced assault and/or trauma during previous shelter stays may not feel safe or utilizing shelter services.
- Kirkland's Unhoused Residents
 - Many unhoused Kirkland residents are local to East King County and are unwilling to go elsewhere to access services or shelter. The Eastside is their community and where they have established medical care and access to other resources. In addition to these real barriers, there is a general perception that Seattle is unsafe.

Goal

Save lives by bringing people indoors. Provide shelter and resources that promote basic human dignity and welfare while working towards permanent housing.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
Emergency Shelter Services	30	Continue Hotel Set Asides Pilot Program for clients working with Homeless Outreach Coordinator who require interim shelter but on track to secure housing. Consider expanding budget due to shelter capacity issues on Eastside.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$	Short-Term
Emergency Shelter Services	31	Continue funding to build capacity at Eastside shelters and day centers for all population types; but prioritizing women and family shelters.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$\$\$	Medium-Term

Emergency Shelter Services	32	Improve the threshold for activating extreme weather shelter programs, in accordance with input from individuals with lived experience.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing*	\$	Medium-Term
Emergency Shelter Services	33	Explore opportunities to advance programs that support populations not served under the current shelter model or experience barriers, including but not limited to: couples, people with pets, LGBTQIA+, immigrants, and refugees.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Emergency Shelter Services	34	Advocate for and enlist other interested entities such as faith organizations and LWSD to increase emergency shelters and other resources for families with children to reduce the long-term, generational impact of homelessness.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Proposed	\$	Long-Term

Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Temporary Shelter & Housing

Overview

Temporary Shelter and Emergency Housing programs vary in service model but are often time-limited, providing an interim step toward securing permanent housing. These services are the most difficult and most urgent services the City provides. Common models of temporary shelter and housing include sanctioned encampments, safe parking programs or mobile vehicle residency, transitional housing, and non-congregate temporary housing.

Community Note

In community discussions, residents and stakeholders were less familiar with the concept of temporary shelter and housing programs. They commonly confused temporary shelter & housing services with emergency shelters or with subsidized permanent housing. Community forums reached a general understanding that more shelter and housing resources are necessary, but did not provide specific feedback about the City's role in these services.

Community engagement conversations regarding temporary shelter & housing services converged around the following themes:

- Tiny Home Villages
 - Faith leaders in Kirkland expressed support for siting a Tiny Home village on the Eastside. Residents understand and are fairly neutral to the concept. The siting of such a village is more controversial.
- Fair Distribution around Kirkland
 - There's a tension between community members seeking a broader geographic distribution of temporary encampments versus others who do not feel like the program should be expanded at all.

Expert Note

Policy regarding temporary shelter & housing services has evolved in recent years. In the past decade, many temporary housing services have closed or been adopted into permanent subsidized housing models. The goal of this policy shift was to minimize the number of transitions an individual must make between homelessness and housing security. However, recent best practice has seen a revival of the temporary housing model, which builds the skills, stability, and preparedness for stable housing as a person exits homelessness. As a result of this fluctuating trend in services, few temporary housing services exist, including in Kirkland. And the resources that do exist are at capacity.

Expert conversations regarding temporary shelter & housing services converged around the following themes:

- **Tiny Home Villages**
 - The City has extensively studied the possibility of Tiny Home Villages. Service providers and staff see Tiny Home Villages as a potentially viable model to provide transitory housing stability. However, barriers remain for implementation. On average, Tiny Home Villages can cost approximately \$1 million per year in operating costs. This investment is currently not funded under existing service levels. Siting a Tiny Home Village location is challenging, particularly on public property due to City code. To be successful, a Tiny Home Village would require private partnership, space, funding, and community support—including targeted outreach to neighborhoods proximate to siting.
- **Safe Parking**
 - The Safe Parking program was praised by unhoused participants.
 - Safe Parking is not a true shelter or housing service; an individual living in their car is not considered sheltered. Severe weather conditions threaten the safety of participants of safe parking programs. These programs and related services are also regularly at capacity.

Goal

Provide a safe place for individuals to live temporarily, stabilize, gain skills for long term housing success, and support their transition to permanent housing.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
Temporary Shelter and Housing	35	Continue providing sanitation services, fencing, and case management at City designated temporary housing sites.	Person-centered Approach	PW	Ongoing*	\$	Short-Term
Temporary Shelter and Housing	36	Support Comprehensive Plan policies to reduce regulatory and zoning code barriers to transitional housing programs and to avoid displacement.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PB	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term

Temporary Shelter and Housing	37	Analyze current code that supports sanctioned encampments to assess the following: - Consider allowing the City or other organizations that are not "community-based organizations" to function as a sponsor or managing agency for authorized encampments - Consider extending the initial authorized operation period of 92 days - Consider allowing authorized encampments to be established on a recurring basis over a period of several years in the same location, similar to City of Redmond's regulations	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PB	Proposed	N/A	Medium-Term
Temporary Shelter and Housing	38	Explore interest in development of tiny home villages on the Eastside, particularly at faith community properties.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	CMO	Proposed	\$\$\$	Medium-Term
Temporary Shelter and Housing	39	Explore diverse, short term sheltering solutions that are non-congregate (e.g. pallet shelter, tiny home, safe parking) on the Eastside, particularly at faith-based community properties.	Strategic Spending	CMO	Proposed	\$\$\$	Medium-Term
Temporary Shelter and Housing	40	Evaluate current investment in congregate shelter solutions by population type and identify alternative strategies.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Proposed	\$	Long-Term

Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Subsidized Permanent Housing

Overview

Subsidized Permanent Housing is generally categorized as housing units available for those who are qualified by income and/or other criteria to live in homes that receive public subsidy. Typically, the goal for subsidized permanent housing is that households pay no more than 30% of their monthly income on rent and utilities. These types of units provide stable, rent restricted housing for low- and moderate-income households. Permanent affordable housing units are often created through local housing incentive and inclusionary programs, including mandatory inclusionary zoning, voluntary density bonus, and multifamily tax exemptions. Another model is permanent supportive housing, which offers wraparound services that can include employment navigation, transportation access, food access, and behavioral, mental, and medical services.

Community Note

Participants in community engagement efforts were generally familiar with the permanent supportive housing model due to King County's upcoming permanent supportive housing project in Kirkland, Health Through Housing at the former LaQuinta property. Community members were generally supportive of the *concept* of permanent supportive housing (especially wraparound services) but expressed concerns about the implementation of these projects.

Community engagement conversations regarding subsidized permanent housing converged around the following themes:

- King County's Health Through Housing Project in Kirkland
 - Many of the community members who participated in Kirkland's community engagement forums and focus groups came prepared to discuss King County's permanent supportive housing initiative, Health Through Housing. Community members were generally familiar with the project but expressed surprise at the City's presentation about the details of permanent supportive housing.
 - Community commentary revealed much misinformation and misunderstanding of what Health Through Housing is and is not.
 - In particular, some respondents were surprised that the Health Through Housing program provides wraparound supportive services and dedicated apartments. They also expressed relief that the local referral network is responsible for referring many of the individuals being placed in the Health Through Housing program.
 - Some respondents had questions about the implementation of this plan and how evictions would occur, if necessary.

- High Acuity Individuals
 - Multiple sessions of community engagement discussed the need for a separate system of care for individuals with high-acuity needs. These individuals' complex mental, behavioral, and medical health needs may make them incompatible with programs such as permanent supportive housing. There is no alternative long-term program for these individuals.
- Support for Alternative Affordable Housing models
 - The community response was broadly supportive of a broad array of housing models, including ADUs, room rentals inside single family homes, cottage units suitable for seniors, and other programs.
 - Many questioned the definition of affordable and also noted that cost of living is high in Kirkland.

Expert Note

Subsidized permanent housing is needed to reduce the backlog of individuals exiting homelessness.

Expert conversations regarding subsidized permanent housing converged around the following themes:

- King County's Health Through Housing Program
 - King County's Health Through Housing program is an important opportunity for Kirkland residents to exit homelessness and receive wraparound care. The City should continue to provide support and oversight—including its ongoing community engagement with King County and Plymouth and enforcement of the code of conduct, good neighbor agreement, and safety and security plan.
 - Overwhelmingly, experts and service providers said that the City needs more affordable housing, including subsidized permanent housing, which reaches capacity very quickly.

Goal

Provide a safe place for individuals to live stably and long-term, which in some cases includes access to wraparound services.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
Permanent Subsidized Housing	41	Support current Comp Plan policies to incentivize increased supply of affordable housing units for households between 0-60% AMI and promote progress on number of affordable housing units/developments in Kirkland,	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	PB	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Long-Term

		including workforce and student-focused housing opportunities.					
Permanent Subsidized Housing	42	Provide oversight and support success of first permanent supportive housing project in Kirkland through coordination and collaboration with the operator, King County, and City. Bring transparency to the community through support of regular reporting to Council and regular engagement with the community after project opening.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Short-Term
Permanent Subsidized Housing	43	Implement the local referral network and ensure accountability relating to the City approved code of conduct, community relations plan, safety and security plan, and good neighbor agreement.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term

Continuum of Care Goal Area:

Program Delivery & System Support

Overview

The City of Kirkland is committed to the provision of responsive, person-centered, and accountable human services. Program Delivery & System Support refers to the oversight, management, funding, and reporting of this work.

Community Note

- Safety of Kirkland Neighborhoods and Community Spaces
 - A majority of respondents expressed that they want neighborhoods that will be safe, quiet, and peaceful.
 - While understanding the need for compassion and the complexity of recovery, many expressed the need for accountability. Respondents expressed that the City must enforce the laws.
 - Community members sought assurance that should an individual be disruptive to the community and break the rules, that individual would be removed.
- Economic Uncertainty
 - Many respondents expressed their own economic concerns for their family and local economy. They worried that changes at the federal level would lead to an increasing demand on City resources to respond to homelessness.
 - Most respondents anticipated that homelessness would get worse in our region before it improves. Most expressed that the City should be proactive about addressing homelessness before the situation worsens.
 - Individual respondents expressed personal economic uncertainty and a strong resistance to increasing taxes to fund local response to homelessness in addition to other City priorities and taxes.
 - Many respondents expressed that the City should be proactive about advocating for increased state and federal funding to support the response to homelessness.
- Kirkland's Fair Share
 - Kirkland residents and stakeholders were broadly supportive of increased efforts to respond to homelessness. They expressed sympathy for unhoused community members and felt that the City should do more to support these individuals but in a balanced way. They expressed a pervasive fear that Kirkland will become like Seattle if the City does not do this well.
 - However, multiple respondents noted that today's homelessness is the result of decades of policy failures stemming from the federal and state levels.
 - Many noted that homelessness is not an issue exclusive to Kirkland; a regional approach is necessary, and neighboring jurisdictions must also take responsibility for their residents.

- Many respondents expressed that Kirkland should serve Kirkland residents (housed and unhoused) but should not become a magnet for unhoused people from other communities. Kirkland cannot sustain services for a regional response by itself.
- Data
 - Nearly every community focus group discussed the importance of reviewing the data on homelessness, both to confirm the problem and to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution. Clear metrics and accountability were voiced as being particularly important in matters of public safety and enforcement.
 - Some participants wanted to understand exactly how many unhoused people were “from” Kirkland to understand the scope of the issue and validate that Kirkland is not addressing another jurisdiction’s problem.
 - Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the existing data on homelessness—mostly because there is not agreement on root causes or solutions. However, the data provided by the Homeless Outreach Coordinator’s contacts in 18 months validated the problem statement for many engagement participants.

Expert Note

- Funding
 - Maintaining existing service levels is not feasible without additional funding sources, including for additional staff.
 - The essential goal of human services is to make systemic changes to reduce the need for human services. Yet the regional and national context of homelessness means that demand for human services funding continues to increase. Despite a record level of investment in the City’s 2025-26 budget through human services grants, the demand for these resources continues to grow.
 - The City’s response to homelessness has been as lean as possible. The existing Homeless Outreach Coordinator has been supervised by the Human Services Manager, who also oversees the entire Human Services division, a body of work that includes 5 direct reports, oversight of \$6M in grant funding to 75 community programs, regional policy and funding collaborations, Health Through Housing development coordination, Human Services Commission, and Youth Council. Due to the growth of the division to meet the community’s needs, along with the increase and complexity of the Homeless Outreach Coordinator’s case load, the needed staffing levels are not sustainable without additional investment. As the Homelessness team grows, the administrative and managerial burden of these roles also grow.
- Data
 - Given the inherent transience of homelessness, it is difficult for unhoused individuals to maintain paperwork necessary to apply for housing or other resources. Requiring paperwork for service is a barrier to care. Unhoused individuals are repeatedly asked for verification and information to access services. The City values the basic human rights, dignity, and privacy of unhoused individuals in our community. Wherever possible, the City prioritizes the provision of services and respect for individual privacy over verification and data keeping. As individuals transition between resources, services, and

jurisdictions, it becomes difficult to track what information and resources have already been offered and accepted.

- Lake Washington School District shared that while homelessness is less visible in Kirkland, it is wide reaching among families with school-aged children. In the last school year, Lake Washington School District saw an increase from 300 families to 700 families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Lake Washington School District reported that it is common to have 2-3 families in a single apartment. This “doubling up” and “tripling up” is not reflected in the City’s data on homelessness, contributing to the sense that the problem is not fully visible in Kirkland.

Goal

Develop sustainable and actionable workplans that meaningfully reduce homelessness. Provide clear reporting about the effectiveness of services and efficiency of funding and build awareness City actions, services and progress.

Actions

Policy Goal Area	No.	Action	Primary Strategy	Primary Lead	Status	Investment	Timeline
Program Delivery & System Support	44	Ensure that response to homelessness coordinates with other Citywide plans and work including: - Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan - Homelessness Element in the Comprehensive Plan - Health through Housing Agreement	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PB	Ongoing	N/A	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	45	Continue Eastside City homeless response coordination, including: - pooled contract interlocal agreement with shelter providers - monthly meetings with street outreach teams, human services staff, and the Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee - monthly meetings with KCRHA	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Short-Term

Program Delivery & System Support	46	Advocate on the county, state, and federal level for funding to support Kirkland's homelessness action plan.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Ongoing	N/A	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	47	Continue to allocate Community Development Block Grant public service funds to emergency shelter programs.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Ongoing*	\$\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	48	Continue comprehensive campaign to engage with and educate the community on Kirkland's successes and challenges to address homelessness through online and printed materials and events, partnering with faith community and other advocate partners when appropriate.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	49	Continue participation in case management and data tracking system with the Cities of Redmond and Bellevue.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Ongoing*	\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	50	Support KCRHA to collect annual Eastside data on number of sheltered and unsheltered individuals through the Point in Time Count.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	51	Continue to participate and support the Regional Crisis Response Agency.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Ongoing*	\$\$\$\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	52	Coordinate with KTUB staff and nonprofit organizations to support youth and young adults experiencing housing insecurity.	Person-centered Approach	PCS	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	53	Coordinate with community centers and other city spaces to make referrals and provide resources for participants accessing the	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Ongoing	\$	Short-Term

		space, including but not limited to, North Kirkland Community Center and Peter Kirk Community Center.					
Program Delivery & System Support	54	Continue to develop standard operating procedures and policies that prioritize a person-centered approach with compassion, accountability, and safety as a focus. Establish a regular review schedule of existing procedure and policies on an annual basis.	Prioritize Safety	CMO	Ongoing	N/A	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	55	Continue to advocate for state funding for affordable housing in the Housing Trust Fund.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Ongoing	N/A	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	56	Hire a human services supervisor to staff and support the expanded homeless outreach program, serve as liaison of the HART team, and support implementation of the action plan.	Strategic Spending	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	57	Establish dedicated space for Human Services staff to conduct outreach and provide services confidentiality. This includes the Homeless Outreach Coordinator, KCSARC Pilot Position, and any future human services positions focused on direct service.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Proposed	\$\$\$	Short-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	58	Explore potential approaches to data reporting and measures of success to Council, including format, content, and appropriate frequency.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Proposed	\$	Short-Term

Program Delivery & System Support	59	Centralize volunteer opportunities by and among faith communities related to homelessness within the Volunteer Services Program.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	60	Research regional funding and facility options for individuals with high acuity needs, aiming to provide specialized interventions beyond transitional shelters and supportive housing programs.	Person-centered Approach	CMO	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	61	Explore local funding to sustain MIH with staffing levels that specifically support homelessness response in Kirkland.	Proactive Policy Development & Legislative Action	KFD	Proposed	\$\$\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	62	Coordinate regular meetings to ensure system coordination with key stakeholders, including LWSD, King County Library System, Connections, Evergreen, Fairfax, etc.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	63	Explore activating partnerships with the private sector to address funding gaps in Eastside homeless services.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	64	Advocate for KCRHA to expand data-sharing software connecting service providers, shelters, and jurisdictions with real-time data on resource availability and client case management.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	65	Advocate for King County to implement a regional housing levy to increase funding for low-income housing in Kirkland.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	N/A	Medium-Term

Program Delivery & System Support	66	Advocate for more pass through dollars of King County human services levies to support local homelessness response. Encourage Best Starts for Kids (BSK), Veterans, Seniors, Human Services Levy (VSHSL), and Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund (MIDD) to align funding model similar to the Medic 1 and King County Parks Levy.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	N/A	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	67	Explore and develop a referral process between the Homeless Outreach Coordinator and residents exiting an institution, including but not limited to, hospitals, behavioral health clinics, and jails.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	PCS	Proposed	\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	68	Explore a workforce development partnership with Evergreen Health and LWTech on workforce development programs that could provide assistance to the service provision network. Example: Automotive Tech programs assisting in vehicle repairs at safe parking programs, culinary programs supplying community meals, healthcare technician graduates assisting at a healthcare clinic.	Timely Communication and Collaboration	CMO	Proposed	\$\$	Medium-Term
Program Delivery & System Support	69	Assess current human services grant funding levels across goal areas, and determine prioritization based on highest level of need across the continuum	Strategic Spending	PCS	Proposed	\$\$	Long-Term

		of care. Consider conducting a needs assessment to strategically align Human Services Division work.					
Program Delivery & System Support	70	Explore levy to create sustainable local funding for human services and homelessness programs.	Strategic Spending	CMO	Proposed	\$\$\$\$	Long-Term

Contact Information

Questions, concerns, or comments for City staff? Please contact Human Services or the City Manager's Office.

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Learn more online: <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Homelessness>

Appendices

- [King County Regional Homelessness Authority 5-Year Plan](#)
- [King County Regional Homelessness Authority 2024 Point In Time Count](#)
- [All Home King County Point 2020 In Time Count](#)
- [King County Reports on Housing Policy & Data](#)
- [Resolution 5631](#)