

Questions and Answers

NCS Presentation on March 5, 2021 to the Coalition to End Homelessness

Questions are represented as written in the chat

Created 3/23/21

1. Can we use foreclosed houses for housing to support individuals exiting homelessness?

Foreclosed homes are private property, so we are limited to how we can partner with property owners and/or banks to encourage rehabilitation and re-use. In the past, the City has received donations of foreclosed homes from banks, which were then gifted to Habitat for Humanity to increase affordable home ownership opportunities. Given the competitive housing market we are seeing today, however, foreclosures are being resold promptly by banks back into the private housing market for a profit.

The City does have programs to support property owners of derelict homes that are not in foreclosure. A derelict home is one that has been deemed unsafe to live in by the City and is boarded up. [The City's Home Rehabilitation program](#) offers qualifying low and moderate income property owners up to \$50,000 in low-interest, payment deferred loans to help pay for necessary home repairs. This program support the City's [Affordable Housing Action Strategy](#) of keeping homes in good repair.

2. Who will be prioritized for the mitigation style site you mentioned? Will the larger encampments be prioritized?

City staff is evaluating parcels owned and controlled by the City for a possible transition site. The service delivery model and recommendations for client placement is expected to come forward to City Council at study session on March 30, 2021.

3. Why are we creating hygiene stations in neighborhoods rather than in a sanctioned encampments?

The location of the hygiene station pilot project at S 8th and Yakima was determined based on need for services at existing nearby encampments.

4. What is the plan for the following: Yakima Avenue Camps, Evergreen State/6th Ave camp, 38th street camp, Puyallup Avenue Camps? Specifically hygiene services and garbage services and alternative site options.

The Homeless Outreach Team continues to monitor known encampments and connect those living there with services and resources. Due to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance not to disperse encampments to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the City is piloting a hygiene station on S 8th and Yakima, which is in close walking distance to Evergreen. In addition, the Homeless Outreach Team schedules cleaning services at other high need sites, including those mentioned above, in order to remove hazardous waste and litter.

The City is currently evaluating possible locations for a more comprehensive transition site for those living outdoors.

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5. **Why is there such a small amount of funding allocated to housing versus shelter? Shelter is great but it is temporary. Is the city focused on longer term solutions? If so, how can we increase funding for housing solutions?**

The information shared at the March 5th Coalition to End Homelessness meeting reflected only the Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) Department investments in housing, rather than the City as a whole. The NCS department administers about 10% of the federal funding for housing allocated to the City. The Community and Economic Development's Housing Division manages the majority of the federal funds, which brings our overall investment in housing to over \$16.3 million. These additional funds supports affordable housing, home rehabilitation, down payment assistance and other housing and economic development programming. More detail about this investments can be viewed in our [City's biennial budget book](#).

In addition to our current investments, City Council is currently considering legislation for an additional one tenth of one percent sales tax that would support the development and availability of affordable housing in our community. Presentations came forward to City Council during [Study Session on February 23rd and March 23, 2021 and can be viewed online](#).

6. **Is there a date when this Strategy is projected to be complete?**

A draft of goals and outcomes of the strategy will be shared with City Council at the end of April.

7. **The Coalition voted to lead an effort to end homelessness across Pierce County. The Pierce County Council is looking to have Pierce County Human Services take ownership of that plan. How will this strategy framework integrate with that County work?**

The City of Tacoma and Pierce County are close partners in addressing homelessness and will continue to work with them, the Coalition and the Continuum of Care on issues related to individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

8. **Who will operate the new larger mitigation site?**

The City is currently at the stage of evaluating possible locations. Should we proceed in developing a transition site, we will begin planning for site management.

9. **Could you please share more details about the Hygiene stations and what that includes?**

The hygiene station pilot at S. 8th and Yakima includes portable toilets, handwashing stations and dumpsters. The site also has on-site security from 6pm-6am daily.

10. **I saw complimentary funding is only 4%. Is there a way to partner with private or state organizations to donate their mental health services?**

The City of Tacoma's complementary services budget includes some behavioral health, needle exchange, case management, home furnishing, and vocational programming. In addition, Tacoma

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taxpayers fund a separate mental health budget through a .01% sales tax that accounts for nearly \$13 million for the 2021-2022 biennium. Services funded by this Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSUD) tax include services for domestic violence, health and health care, homelessness, sheltering and youth development.

Non-profit and for-profit corporations are able to partner to leverage private donations in order to meet community need. The Coalition is well positioned to continue to develop these partnerships.

11. How is client voice and provider expertise involved in the creation of the large sanctioned encampment. Were multiple smaller sanctioned encampments considered?

The City is at the point of assessing options for a potential location, which could impact the availability of services. If a location is identified and confirmed, we will begin the process of connecting with potential service providers and clients.