**Talking Points for Ord. 28756: Use of Public Property**

**The Coalition does not want an ordinance that is overly broad, punitive, or rests on police power.**

If there is to be an ordinance defining the use of public spaces, t**he Coalition wants that ordinance to address use of public spaces for the well-being and safety of both housed and unhoused people.**

Public spaces are to be used safely by all the public.

Unused public spaces are to be made available for use for Safe Sites for unsheltered people.

**The Coalition wants:**

To end street homelessness by Nov. 1, 2021. That means every person living unsheltered or in places not fit for human habitation has a safe place in which to live:

Available, appropriate, accessible shelter.

**The Coalition wants The City to commit to accessible shelter for all:**

small sanctioned tent encampments, safe parking sites for vehicle residents, including RVs, tiny houses, pallet homes, hotel rooms, container housing units.

Ensure basic services: bathrooms, hand washing stations, garbage cans, regular trash pick-up, access to showers and laundry

*Note: Given the time it will take to vaccinate people living with homelessness, the likelihood of booster shots, the presence of the COVID variants, congregate shelters are simply not safe options.*

Locate accessible shelter in every district in the City of Tacoma.

Support operation under a variety of models - clean and sober, low-barrier (no ID, \_\_\_\_), ham reduction (active user but no cooking/no dealing), self-managed, minimal management, night security, singles only, families with children only, 24/7 management

Offer services on-site following COVID protocols

Space to meet privately with unsheltered people

Mobile vans to bring services

The Coalition wants the City to work with the County to

Design and fund responses that have immediate solutions:

Bring the existing homeless response system to scale

Operate 24/7 response to calls for assistance from the community and from unsheltered people.

Real time availability of accessible shelter options

Immediate transportation from encampment to accessible shelter

One primary case manager coordinating all support services

**Reminders: Approved Coalition Statements**

**From Coalition’s 4/16/2021 Letter**

The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness is excited to support the changes to the emergency declaration in Ordinance 28755. However, the Coalition is opposed to the proposed public camping ban in Ordinance 28756, which seems in direct opposition to the goals set out in Ordinance 28755. The Coalition is fully committed to ensuring public spaces such as parks and sidewalks are reserved for their intended uses. However, we are very concerned that enforcing a camping ban without available accessible shelter will increase suffering.

While the city of Tacoma has increased shelter beds and options, the number of people experiencing homelessness dramatically exceeds current shelter capacity. A recent County estimate identified 1,350 unsheltered individuals in Pierce County, with Coalition counts showing only 40 shelter beds available county-wide. Enforcement to “encourage individuals to take full advantage of the sheltering...” will have massive negative impacts with nearly no positive ones. Fines and incarceration are traumatic events that create barriers to permanent housing. In addition, enforcement of camping laws without accessible shelter is illegal. We attach Warren v. Chico TRO, April 11, 2021.

We request the City of Tacoma pull Ordinance 28756 until the following actions are completed:

* 1)  Establish appropriate, accessible, and available Safe Sites for All prior to changes to City code
around the use of public property.
* 2)  Work with Pierce County Human Services and the Coalition to determine an accurate
unsheltered count in Tacoma and an accurate Tacoma shelter unit inventory and count of
available units.
* 3)  Lead a City-wide public process with significant community input to establish how to best use
public property to provide spaces for activities of daily living for individuals currently
unsheltered.
* 4)  Completion of the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness.
* 5)  Adoption of the Neighborhood and Community Services 5-year Homeless Strategy.

Again, the Coalition is committed to returning our sidewalks to places for pedestrians to walk and our parks to places to recreate. Neither should be places people sleep. Putting all available energy and resources into establishing enough shelter to meet the need must be the next step to returning our public spaces to their intended use. The homelessness emergency will not end with enforcement; it will end with Safe Sites for All and permanent housing.

In closing, we would like to remind the City Council of Resolution 40622 – the City’s acknowledgement of the disparate impacts of system racism and an affirmation of the City’s commitment to anti-racist systems. An Anti-racist effort would provide services to people experiencing homelessness – a group with dramatic overrepresentation of the BIPOC community. Unfortunately, Ordinance 28756 gives more power to police to disproportionately put people of color in harm’s way. Please pull Ordinance 28756 from consideration.

**Coalition’s Statement on Encampments - 4/9/2021**

We believe that everyone has a right to shelter. Every person living unsheltered deserves an appropriate and accessible and available shelter option.

When accessible and appropriate indoor shelter is not available or people prefer to remain outdoors, those who are unsheltered have a right to a Safe Site in which to live.

Where desired, Safe Sites should make it possible for people residing in them to create community among themselves.

We believe that small, safe sites should be designed with the people who will live in them.

Small sites are easer to manage, easier to fit into and engage with existing communities, and 

provide greater opportunities for success.



The Sites could provide a variety of shelter options with full hygiene services on-site and

laundry either on-site or nearby. Full hygiene services include places to safely and privately go

to the bathroom, hand washing stations, garbage collection, and hazardous waste removal.

Sites should be dispersed and strategically placed on well-drained land in low-impact areas near public transportation.

To the extent possible, Safe Sites should be self-managed with services brought to the Sites on a daily basis. Sites could also operate with a range of management options.

Safe Sites could have tents, pallet shelters, tiny houses, container-based units, vehicles, travel trailers and a container for locked storage of personal items. Safe Sites could also include individual hotel and motel rooms.

The Sites could use a variety of operating models such as: low-barrier, harm reduction, pets, clean and sober, 18 years old or older, single adults, couples.

Living in a Safe Site should lead to permanent housing.