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HRC/PAA Committee follow-up items: 6.4.2024

Sally Perkins, June 4, 2024

Thank you to the members of the Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee for your time and your great questions and insights last evening. Our conversation helped me sharpen my thinking regarding what I am asking the Committee (and hopefully the Commission) to consider regarding discrimination and human rights violations against unhoused people in Tacoma.

Following our conversation, I would state the key questions this way:

- Given the number of **people with physical disabilities** sleeping overnight on the street, without shelter available that is appropriate for their circumstances, **does “sweeping” these people regularly (with no option for shelter) constitute discrimination against a protected class?**
- Given the number of people with **emotional/cognitive/behavioral health disabilities** sleeping overnight on the street, without shelter available that is appropriate for their circumstances, **does “sweeping” these people regularly (with no option for shelter) constitute discrimination against a protected class?**
- Given the **disproportionate number of Black and BIPOC people** sleeping overnight on the street, with inadequate shelter options, **does “sweeping” these people (with virtually no option for shelter) constitute discrimination against a protected class?**
- I have personally observed, as many as 100 times over the past year (May 2023 through May 2024), that people sleeping overnight on the street **do not have reliable access to water, food, or sanitation (toilets, hand-washing, showers, laundry, garbage service), or safe places to sleep. Is the City’s failure to provide for these things a violation of unhoused people’s human rights?**

- I have been told by people sleeping overnight on the street that **when they are “swept,” they often lose their possessions, including their shelter (tents, tarps), their personal possessions (including prescription medications, ID cards and papers, etc.)** when crews hired by the City “clean up” the space they have been occupying. **Are the City’s actions in confiscating possessions and shelter (including medications and essential documents) a violation of unhoused people’s human rights?**

Possible data sources. Committee members, as volunteers with busy lives, noted the challenges of getting the data needed to verify what I have observed. I share your trepidation, having struggled to get data myself. Here are some ideas, based on my experience.

1. **Pierce County, Point In Time (PIT) count.** Universally agreed to be an undercount, but can provide some useful “snapshot” data. Devon Isakson of Pierce County Human Services (PCHS) can supply this. devon.isakson@piercecounitywa.gov.
2. **Pierce County, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).** Does not cover all people being served; only covers those people being served by County-funded programs. Is more detailed and capable of disaggregation than the PIT. Operated by Pierce County Human Services, the HMIS is being migrated to a new platform, which *may* affect the ability to show some trends from prior data on the old platform. This is not a reason to not use HMIS but this limitation on the data should be taken into account.

it is likely that the PAA Committee would need to ask PCHS to run special reports for the data needed.

3. **City of Tacoma Homelessness Services staff.** The City of Tacoma historically has not participated in either Coordinated Entry (where the HMIS data is generated) or the HMIS system. While Tacoma plans to

participate in the future, current and previous data about unhoused people in the city of Tacoma will reside in Neighborhood and Community Services, the Homelessness Services program. It is my impression that City Homelessness Services staff people keep their own data and requests for reports should be made to them.

CCarbone@cityoftacoma.org.

If Pierce County and/or the City of Tacoma cannot provide the data the Committee is asking for, then to me, the appropriate follow-up question is, “Why not?” In my experience, part of the challenge is that government entities do not prioritize gathering and analyzing data that would reveal the possible discrimination and human rights violations I have listed above.

Qualitative evidence which could corroborate or contradict my individual observations can be requested from the following groups.

4. **Lived Experience Coalition, Tacoma-Pierce County.** This group, made up of people who have personal experience living unhoused, is a part of the larger statewide Lived Experience Coalition. People in this group can provide personal descriptions of many of the conditions reflected in the questions above. Courtney Love is the Pierce County contact person, courtney@wearelec.org. or 253.831.3383.
5. **Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness,** an “open table” coalition where persons interested in helping address homelessness (service providers, government workers, community volunteers) locally participate. The Coalition has about 700 members and a weekly Zoom meeting where approximately 70-80 people participate regularly. Rob Huff is the point person for the CEH; rhuff@pchomeless.org, or 253.229.5769.
6. **Multiple Service Providers,** with firsthand experience serving unhoused people who are regularly swept. Some options for added input are: St Vincent de Paul, Tacoma Rescue Mission, Catholic Community Services, Greater Lakes Mental Health, Comprehensive Life

Resources, Brotherhood/RISE, Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center, etc. This is a representative list, not an exhaustive list. The Coalition can provide the names of additional agencies.

On the following pages, I detail out the questions in more depth, in the hopes that this will assist the Committee in making a work plan for this project (if you decide to take it on). And I include a written version of the context I provided orally at the June 3 PAA meeting.

I thank the PAA Committee for considering this request and will happily answer any questions you might have. I do understand that in the end, the Committee may choose not to take this on, for a variety of reasons. I honor your judgment and decision-making, knowing that you are being thoughtful and measured in your process.

Sally Perkins
June 4, 2024

1. There are a significant number of people with physical disabilities sleeping outside on the street, for whom shelter appropriate to their circumstances is not available.
 - a. How many people sleeping on the street in Tacoma have physical disabilities? Please verify the numbers from multiple sources.
 - b. How many City-provided shelter beds are available that accommodate physical disabilities (structures and staffing)? *Note that ADA compliance is not sufficient to actually SERVE people within the building.*
 - c. How many City-provided shelter beds that accommodate physical disabilities are vacant on any given night?
 - d. On any given night, how many people with physical disabilities are sleeping overnight on the street because there are not enough city-provided shelter beds that accommodate their circumstances?

2. There are a significant number of people with emotional/behavioral health/cognitive disabilities sleeping outside on the street for whom shelter appropriate to their circumstances is not available.
 - a. How many people sleeping on the street in Tacoma have emotional/behavioral health/cognitive disabilities? *Please verify the numbers from multiple sources.*
 - b. How many City-provided shelter beds are available that accommodate emotional/behavioral health/cognitive disabilities (structures and staffing)?
 - c. How many City-provided shelter beds that accommodate emotional/behavioral health/cognitive disabilities are vacant on

any given night?

- d. On any given night, how many people with emotional/behavioral health/cognitive disabilities are sleeping overnight on the street because there are not enough city-provided shelter beds that accommodate their circumstances?
3. What percentage of people sleeping overnight on the street are Black, Brown, BIPOC? What is the level of disproportionality for each group? Calculate disproportionality by comparison to total of each group in the City population, and comparison to total unhoused people in the City. *It is my theory, based on observation, that the people sleeping overnight on the street are even more disproportionately people of color than in the total unhoused population. Please verify the numbers from multiple sources.*
 - a. How many persons with disabilities (separate physical disabilities from emotional/BH/cognitive disabilities) are also people of color? *Please verify the numbers from multiple sources.*
 4. The City of Tacoma currently enforces a policy of “no camping” within 10 blocks of a City-provided shelter for unhoused people (TMC 8.19). Enforcement consists of forcing people to move from their current location to a new location. Shelter is offered, but for people with disabilities, is likely not appropriate to their circumstances (see Questions 1 and 2 above).
 - a. What are the physical and emotional impacts of forcing people to move constantly from places where they have set up temporary homes? What are the physical and emotional impacts of confiscating their belongings?
 - b. What are the physical and emotional impacts of forcing people of color to move constantly from places where they have set up temporary homes? How does this square with the City’s anti-

racism and equity policies?

- c. At what point does constant displacement constitute a violation of these people's human rights?
5. The City of Tacoma's no camping ban and enforcement (TMC 8.19) effectively makes the entire Hilltop neighborhood a no-camping zone. In other words, if you are sleeping outside on the street, the Hilltop is a place of total displacement for you, you are not allowed to sleep on the street anywhere in the Hilltop, even if it is your home neighborhood.
- a. How does this total displacement policy impact the human rights of people with physical or emotional/BH/cognitive disabilities?
 - b. How does this total displacement policy impact the human rights of people of color?
 - c. How does this total displacement policy align with the following City policies (and any others HRC identifies):
 - i. Equity Index, equitable outcomes for people living in low opportunity neighborhoods
 - ii. Anti-displacement policy (but only if you already have a home)
 - iii. Anti-racism, Resolution 40622, including community-led transformation

Background. I have been speaking with the Human Rights Commission about this topic since May 2023. The Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee was kind enough to meet with me in December 2023 and in early 2024 to help shape the information that you now have before you.

I believe it is essential to have an independent investigation of the facts concerning people sleeping overnight on the street in the Hilltop. My packet of information shares my ongoing observations; I have been out speaking with the folks at 11th and M on 104 separate days since May 2023. Most of these visits were for extreme hot or cold weather response (water, handwarmers, other supplies). Some were for holidays (Christmas, Easter) and the last few due to violence against people in the group at 11th and M.

The violence includes a murder by stabbing early Weds May 22. Jason Johnson, Jr., age 48, was the victim. Mr. Johnson was at times part of the 11th and M group and had friends in the group. The friend who tried to help him at the scene still was wearing his blood-soaked pants the next morning. No one called the Police or Fire Chaplains, no one called the Community Trauma Response Team. The group at 11th and M was left alone to process what happened, and when we got there at 10 the next morning, they were still rattled and agitated.

I tried to organize some added supplies for this group but by the time I got that e-mail out, the 11th and M people were being asked to move by the nearby business so that the business could clean the area. The people who tried to help had to drive around looking for these folks. Tacoma's official response to this kind of trauma for unhoused folks is SHAMEFUL. SHAMEFUL.

On May 28, I learned that another young man, a man I spoke with at some length on May 22 at 11th and M, had been shot over near the Pierce County Alliance at S. 5th and Tacoma Avenue. He is still alive but in the ICU on a ventilator and feeding tube. The people at 11th and M are rattled by this as well.

This is context for the request I am making to the PAA Committee.

These are the questions that need to be investigated and answered.



Lohitvenkatesh O <oswallohitvenkatesh@gmail.com>

March 2024 Asynchronous Meeting for the City of Tacoma Human Rights Commission Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee

Sally Perkins <sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com>

Thu, Apr 4, 2024 at 3:20 PM

To: Lohitvenkatesh O <oswallohitvenkatesh@gmail.com>, Keshreeyaji Oswal <keshreeyajioswal@gmail.com>, "bri.tacoma@gmail.com" <bri.tacoma@gmail.com>

Cc: "Shattuck, Nancy" <NShattuck@cityoftacoma.org>, amanda westbrooke <amandawestbrook913@gmail.com>, Verda Washington <vwashing49@yahoo.com>, Robbi Johnston <kendall13@gmail.com>

Hi everyone, I have organized the information regarding human rights violations being committed against unhoused people sleeping overnight on the street, by the City of Tacoma in the sweeps they are doing to enforce their camping ban (TMC 8.19).

I am attaching five documents that segment the information into categories.

Document A is my overview of the human rights violations that I believe are being committed in this case.

Document B includes my dialogue with City leadership about the sweeps, making my case for harm being done to unhoused people sleeping outside on the street. This is a combination of letters and e-mails.

Document C is the County's data about "functional zero" which captures in numerical data such facts as the number of unhoused Black people, people with disabilities, etc.

Document D is a compilation of testimony I have provided to the City Council, the Tacoma Human Rights Commission, and the County's Implementation Advisory Board, addressing time and again the human rights violations being committed against unhoused people sleeping overnight on the street.

Document E is an FYI; the list of "encampment removals" (sweeps) by the City of Tacoma, throughout the City, from 2021 through December, 2023. Note that not all sweeps are on the list; "small sweeps" like the ones experienced by the people in the mid Hilltop, often are not listed. I include this to provide you with a sense of the scope of the human rights violations throughout the City, not just in the handful of blocks that I visit regularly.

This is work that I promised the Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee that I would complete, after our meeting in January 2024. It is now completed, and I commend it to your analysis and action.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Committee and Commission on this critically important issue.

Sally

Sally Perkins

Practical Solutions

PO Box 5366

Tacoma, WA 98415

Message/text phone: 253 525 3020

sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com

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5 attachments



A HR violations in Tacoma sweeps 4.4.2024.pdf

191K



B HRC City documents 2.25.2024.pdf

2300K



C HRC County Functional Zero data.pdf

511K



D HRC all testimony City HRC IAB 2022-24.pdf

928K



E 2023 12 28 CITY LIST OF ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS.pdf

198K

Human rights violations being perpetrated by the City of Tacoma against unhoused residents of Tacoma.

SP 2024.4 4

- **Lack of accessible/affordable food.**
- **Lack of sanitation** (bathrooms, hand-washing, garbage pickup) for people sleeping outside overnight
- **Confiscation of possessions**, with limited time given for people to sort out what they want to keep, and false promises of available storage for possessions that can't be carried individually but which the unhoused person wishes to keep.

If an unhoused person asks that their possessions be stored, it is difficult or impossible for that person to retrieve their possessions (they are at the Stability Site, which is not walkable for most unhoused people), and most unhoused people do not have access to a car or truck to transport their possessions.

- **Lack of settings where people can sleep safely/sleep deprivation.** No privacy, no heat, no protection from assault or theft.
- **Lack of sufficient/adequate/appropriate shelter for people sleeping outside overnight.** There are far more unhoused people than there are shelter beds, and the shelter beds are typically designated for specific groups (veterans, DV survivors, single men, etc., which rarely match the people who need shelter).

The large congregate settings are places where possessions are routinely stolen; where conflicts break out; and where noise, confusion, bright lighting, etc. are difficult or impossible for many people to handle.

- **No identified available/appropriate shelter for persons with physical disabilities** who need personal assistance in accessing bathrooms, cots, food, or other shelter features.
- **No identified available/appropriate shelter for persons with mental health challenges, sensory sensitivities, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD or other challenges** that require support, and specific adjustments for indoor living spaces and guidelines/expectations for social interaction.

Observations about food, water, sanitation, and related services for people sleeping overnight outside on the street in the mid-Hilltop.

Introduction. As part of the Coalition to End Homelessness, I have gone out to provide hot and cold weather supplies and support to my neighbors sleeping outside on the street in the mid-Hilltop, in and near the core of the Hilltop business district. I started this volunteer work in the winter of 2020-21 and continue it today. I have been out on 96 separate days since spring of 2023.

The City of Tacoma camping ban (TMC 8.19) effectively makes being unsheltered on the street illegal and subject to “encampment removal” anywhere in the Hilltop. The overlapping “10-block radius of a City-approved emergency or temporary shelter” ban essentially covers the entire Hilltop neighborhood.

I leave it to the reader to reflect on why the Hilltop has so many “city approved emergency or temporary shelters” that the camping ban covers our entire neighborhood.

Once a person is unsheltered on the street, it is much harder for them to get their basic needs met. This is what I’ve observed.

Food. There is a Safeway store and a convenience store in this area, as well as several restaurants. There is also the Feed 253 food pantry, operated by the Hilltop Action Coalition but open only very limited hours, and often with canned goods or goods that need preparation on a stove. The Hospitality Kitchen at CCS is down the hill on Yakima but a number of the unsheltered people in mid-Hilltop are not mobile enough to get there. **Mobility is affected by disabilities and by fear of losing their possessions if they leave them to go find food.

Unless a person has cash or a working credit/debit card (unlikely), they cannot obtain food legally (i.e. by paying for it).

I think it is likely that people shoplift food although I have not personally observed shoplifting.

The people I see rely on volunteers or friends/family to bring them food. So food is random, often not particularly healthy, and cold. Rarely do these folks get hot food, most typically on the weekends when volunteer groups go out.

Unsheltered people usually do not have can openers, or utensils, or their hands are stiff so opening zip-locs is hard (get the slider top ones), or their teeth are compromised enough that they can only eat really soft food.

Appropriate food is a major challenge with no organized solution. Volunteers do the best they can.

Sanitation. Included here are bathrooms and places to wash up or even take a shower.

Because this is the Hilltop business district, there are businesses with bathrooms that “the public” can use. For quite a while, Safeway allowed the unsheltered folks to use their bathroom, as did Sea Mar.

But in the summer of 2023, I noticed that signs were put up telling people that the business bathrooms were for customers only, not for the general public. At that point, Safeway became unavailable as a bathroom option.

The challenge for businesses is that they don't have the staff to keep cleaning bathrooms so when a lot of people use the bathrooms...the business ends up with a lot of extra work. Or perhaps the City urged them to stop letting unsheltered people use the bathrooms as a way of making the area less hospitable. Not sure. But the effect is that there is little or no access to bathrooms for the current unsheltered people.

There are showers at Sea Mar, on a limited basis. I believe there was a period of time where the showers were not available, but for the most part, Sea Mar is a place where people can shower. Good for Sea Mar.

Sea Mar also has an older commercial washing machine that they have used to launder clothes for unsheltered people. Because it is older, it breaks down at times and may need to be replaced in the future. Sea Mar says they do not have the budget to replace it if it breaks.

There is another location near the mid-Hilltop that offers showers and clothing for unsheltered people but they do not wish to be publicly identified.

Water. Unsheltered people need extra water (despite the lack of bathrooms) year-round. Most of the active effort to get water out to unsheltered people is during hot weather.

The City of Tacoma keeps a supply of pallets of water at the City's Stability Site (1421 Puyallup Avenue) where service providers and volunteers can pick up cases of water to distribute. For individual volunteers, the pick-up can be difficult due to traffic, limited times when the Stability Site is open for pick-up, and the literal weight of a 40 bottle case of water. I buy my water, the 24-bottle cases, at Fred Meyer when I go grocery shopping; it's faster and I can lift the 24 bottle cases.

Honestly, the distribution is hit or miss, in my experience. Before the sweeps, I could take a case out to a location where five or six unsheltered people were staying. Now, it's individuals, not groups, and the water has to be distributed bottle by bottle, at least in mid-Hilltop.

Outreach workers and other groups also take water out and sometimes a site gets more than one case.

The only public drinking fountain in mid-Hilltop is in Peoples Park, from which unsheltered people were displaced in August of 2023 due to pending construction on the east end of the Park. I believe a couple of the people were helped to find appropriate housing and I have not seen any unsheltered people in Peoples Park since. It is my hunch (but no evidence) that they were told that they would be asked to leave if they set up in the Park again.

The good news about the Peoples Park drinking fountain is that at some point (Metro Parks is not bringing any urgency to this), Metro Parks will replace it with a year-round (so frost-proof) fountain that has a water bottle filling feature.

A note about the plastic bottles. Right now the cases of water being distributed are single-use plastic bottles. In addition to the litter, which can be considerable, they can pose a health hazard in terms of the chemicals being used in the plastic, or in their breaking down into nanoparticles of

plastic. Even if they don't have hazardous chemicals in the initial plastic, they can get contaminated as they crack, and they will degrade into nanoplastic pieces. The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Environmental Health) would be a good resource for more info on this.

In a perfect world, people could be given stainless steel water bottles for ongoing use...but as long as sweeps continue, and as long as there are so few public water bottle filling options...well, we don't have the perfect world.

Garbage. The unwillingness of the City of Tacoma to provide some modicum of garbage service to people living outside is puzzling to me. Why not?

The purple bags were supposed to be a way for unsheltered people to bag up their garbage. But purple bags were not released by the City for use by unhoused people or volunteers. We heard about the purple bags, we saw them occasionally, but...we never got them to use.

So here is the reality. If you are unhoused, people will bring you food. It may be food you cannot eat (allergies, food sensitivities, health conditions, etc.). There may be leftovers. There is no refrigeration. Without garbage service, there is nowhere to put the leftover/spoiled food.

If you are unhoused, people will bring you "stuff." I have seen people bring end tables, stuffed animals, big vases of flowers, bulky quilts, stuffed chairs. The unhoused person will, in my observation, try to be appreciative and polite and will accept what people bring. And then there is nowhere to put it. So it piles up.

If you are unhoused, you know that you will lose the stuff you need. Maybe someone will steal it. But with sweeps, the City will take it, and unless you have a plan for transporting it after the sweep, you are going to lose it. So, being aware that your stuff is temporary, you make sure you have duplicates, so that you still can have stuff after most of it is taken away. So it piles up.

Then someone calls 311 "because of the mess" and here comes the City to "clean it up."

I like to ask people who are complaining about having to see unsheltered people and their possessions...

- Do you have a house?
- Do you have a house with heat?
- Do you have a house with doors that lock?
- Do you have a house that has clean running water?
- Do you have a house with a toilet that works?
- Do you have a house with a shower/bath that works?
- Do you have a house with a working refrigerator?
- Do you have a house with a stove or microwave for cooking?
- Do you have a house that has regular garbage service?

If you had a house that didn't have any of these things...what would you do?

February 9, 2024

To: The Tacoma Human Rights Commission
Policy, Advocacy, Accountability Committee

From: Sally Perkins, community member

Re: Analysis of street homelessness presentations and data from the City of Tacoma and Pierce County

Purpose: To support the PAA Committee in its study of issues related to street homelessness so that the Committee may make a determination of possible action to recommend to the full Commission.

Factors/conditions which may be human rights issues/violations:

1. The disproportionate number of Black, disabled, and older persons sleeping outside overnight on the street in Tacoma.
2. The ongoing documented lack of appropriate shelter spaces for the people sleeping outside overnight.
3. The lack of garbage disposal, bathroom, hand-washing/shower, food, and other basic life necessities for people sleeping outside overnight.
4. The confiscation and disposal of possessions of people sleeping outside overnight and the lack of workable storage options.
5. The continuous pressure on people to move, move, move, especially within the camping ban areas.
6. The effective banning of homeless people sleeping outside overnight from the entire Hilltop neighborhood.
7. The ongoing stereotyping of homeless people sleeping outside overnight by City staff and Council members, including criticizing them for “refusing services.”

The materials that follow will be provided in the order in which they occurred, so that a timeline can be maintained. The topics covered will be linked back to the

list above, to show which possible human rights violations occur at which point in the timeline.

Some of the information is in the form of presentations by City or County staff people. Some of the information is numerical data. Some of the information is correspondence between the Tacoma City Manager and me. In each case, I will identify the source of the information. When the source is personal observations (by me or others), I will so indicate.

It is my hope and intention that this information will provide the PAA Committee with enough information to draw its own conclusions about what issues might be pursued further.

With much appreciation to the members of the PAA Committee for their willingness to have me provide this information.

Sally Perkins, Community Member
District 3, Hilltop
sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com

Spring, 2023. Seeing that there were a number of people in the mid-Hilltop who were sleeping outside overnight in the spring of 2023, I joined the many Coalition to End Homelessness volunteers who were helping to address hot weather conditions by taking water and other hot weather supplies out, on any day where the temperature was forecast to be 80 degrees or hotter. Between May and September 2023, I went out on 51 separate days with water and hot weather supplies.

Because the camping ban was in effect, and unhoused people knew they needed to move each day, I chose to go out early in the morning, to get water to people before they moved along for the day. Many people were awake even as early as 5:00 am, and I had the chance to visit with them often.

Increasingly, what I was observing and hearing on the street was at odds with what I was hearing at City Council study sessions and meetings. [I attend virtually all Study Sessions and many Council meetings.] The presentations to Council members skipped over what I felt were salient facts, and either minimized or stereotyped other key aspects of homelessness.

When City staff presented the “homeless services update” to the Council in June of 2023, I decided to analyze the report in detail and challenge the things that seemed inaccurate or incomplete.

Since then, I have gone out on 44 additional separate days (Sept 2023 thru Mar 14, 2024) with cold weather supplies. A total of 95 separate days since May of 2023.

City staff's June 13, 2023 Study Session presentation on homeless services.

I am inserting the slides from the June 13, 2023 presentation on the next few pages of this packet. I recommend scrolling quickly through the slides, then looking back at the individual slides referenced in my two-page document and my correspondence with the City Manager.

Following the slides is a two-page document that is my initial analysis of the presentation. I include this here so that the reader can see how I approached this, and link my comments to the actual slides.

Following the analysis document is my official letter to the City Manager and the City Council expressing my concerns about the presentation. Note that I chose to focus on certain topics in my letter, and did not comment on every item that I felt was problematic.

Recognizing the PAA Committee members have limited time, I am including here the link to the Study Session video so that you can see and hear the questions and comments being made by Council members yourselves. https://cityoftacoma.granicus.com/player/clip/6059?view_id=2&redirect=true



Homeless Services and Strategy Update

City of Tacoma | Neighborhood and Community Services

City Council Study Session
June 13th, 2023



1



Overview



- Inclement Weather Response
- Implementation of Tacoma Municipal Code 8.19
- Shelter Update
- Strategy Update
- Next Steps

2

2

Inclement Weather Response

	Cold Weather	Hot Weather	Air Quality Advisories	Supplies	Shelter
Tier 1	32 Degrees or 35 degrees with rain/wind	85 Degrees	Above 101- Unhealthy for sensitive groups	Supplies provided or Reimbursement depending on Need and Shelter Type; Heat events – Water for distribution; Air events – masks for distribution	Existing Shelters overflow during Inclement Weather; additional Warming Centers during cold weather. Increased capacity by 150 beds.
Tier 2	20 degrees or significant amount of snowfall	90 Degrees	Above 151- Unhealthy		90 or Higher- Use existing Day Center/Shelters, open Cooling Centers.; Above 151- Use Existing Day Center/Shelters add Air Quality Center


3

Implementation of TMC 8.19

- All Areas have been sufficiently noticed
- 100% Voluntary Compliance Achieved
- Overall Stats
 - 62 encampment removals
 - 54 encampment removals within No Camping Zones
 - **1.03 million lbs** of debris removed November 15th, 2022 – Present
 - Cleveland Way: 181,890lbs
 - Levee Road: 186,240lbs
 - Outreach
 - Contacts made: 1,480
 - Interested in Services: 694 (46.89%)
 - Placed in Shelter: 123 (8.31%)

4

4




Implementation of TMC 8.19

Homeless Engagement Alternative Liaison Team Outreach Stats

	3 ½ months before the implementation	3 ½ months after the implementation	3 months after last update	Total after implementation
Prohibited Areas	Aug. 1st, 2022- Nov. 14th, 2022	Nov. 15th, 2022- Feb. 28th, 2023	March 1st, 2023- May 31st, 2023	
Offered Services	194	485	431	916
Accepted Services	95	307	232	539
Acceptance Rate	49%	63%	54%	59%
Non- Prohibited Areas	Aug. 1st, 2022- Nov. 14th, 2022	Nov. 15th, 2022- Feb. 28th, 2023	March 1st, 2023- May 31st, 2023	Total after implementation
Offered Services	208	164	400	564
Accepted Services	110	79	206	285
Acceptance Rate	53%	48%	52%	51%

5

5



Implementation of TMC 8.19

Capacity of Emergency, Temporary, and Safe Parking Beds

	3 ½ months before the implementation	First update after implementation	Since last update
Dates	Nov. 14th, 2022	March 14th, 2023	March 14th, 2023- Today
Emergency Shelters	380	430	462**
Temporary Shelters	112	112	112
Permanent Shelters	648	620*	620
Safe Parking	0	0	40
Total	1140	1162	1234

6

*Permanent shelter decreased in response to post Covid-19 and adjusted for operational ability.
**The Freedom Project is expected to be completed the week of June 12th.

6

Implementation of TMC 8.19

311 Requests Related to Homelessness

Prohibited Areas				Non- Prohibited Areas			
	3 ½ months before the implementation	3 ½ months after the implementation	3 months after last update		3 ½ months before the implementation	3 ½ months after the implementation	3 months after last update
Prohibited Areas	August 1 st -November 14 th , 2022	Nov. 15 th , 2022–Feb 28 th , 2023	March 1 st , 2023-May 31 st , 2023	Non- Prohibited Areas	August 1 st -November 14 th , 2022	Nov. 15 th , 2022–Feb 28 th , 2023	March 1 st , 2023-May 31 st , 2023
Request for Outreach	1134	770	856	Request for Outreach	441	387	515
General Complaints about Homelessness Issues	170	134	124	General Complaints about Homelessness Issues	68	88	121
Illegal Dumping	181	141	90	Illegal Dumping	77	97	61
Miscellaneous	46	37	19	Miscellaneous	9	21	14
Total	1531	1082	1089	Total	595	593	711
Citywide Total	2126	1675	1800	Citywide Total	2126	1675	1800

7

Implementation of TMC 8.19

South Sound 911 Safety Stats

Prohibited Areas	3 ½ months before the implementation	3 ½ months after the implementation	3 months after last update
Dates	August 1 st -November 14 th , 2023	Nov. 15 th , 2022–Feb 28 th , 2023	March 1 st , 2023-May 31 st , 2023
Total Calls for Services	34,361	35,481 (+1,120)	46,271 (+10,810)

8

8

Implementation of TMC 8.19

Staffing levels of the HEAL Team

Prohibited Areas	3 ½ months <u>before</u> the implementation	3 ½ months <u>after</u> the implementation	3 months <u>after last update</u>
Dates	August 1st- November 14th, 2022	Nov. 15th, 2022- Feb 28th, 2023	March 1st, 2023- May 31st, 2023
Number of HEAL FTEs	4	5	7
Number of Budgeted HEAL FTEs	5	8	8
Number of Hours worked by HEAL*	2120	2672	3031
Estimate of Hours at Full Capacity*	2960	3736	3368

*Number does not include Onboarding, Trainings, Holidays, and Time-off

9

9

Implementation of TMC 8.19

HEAL Team Staff Hours

	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
Hours Worked	520	480	800	744	784	688	776	760	1055	1160
Hours Budgeted	920	840	840	760	840	1280	1216	1288	1120	1232

10

10

Implementation of TMC 8.19

Enforcement of the TMC 8.19

- To date, achieved 100% voluntary compliance
- No infractions issued, no fines issued, and no arrests performed under TMC 8.19

11

11


Shelter Update

SHELTER TYPE	SHELTER	NUMBER OF BEDS	Anticipated Project Standdown	Staff Recommendation Standdown	Community Meeting about Extension
Emergency	Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter Site #3 Low Income Housing Institute	60	June 2023	June 2024	June 29 th
Emergency	Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter Site #4 Low Income Housing Institute	85	December 2023	June 2024	October 2023
Emergency	Aspen Court Low Income Housing Institute	100	December 2023	December 2023	na
Emergency	Veteran's Village Forward Operating Base Hope	35	August 2023	August 2024	July 26 th



12

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Safe Parking Checklist

Safe Parking/Temporary Shelter Checklist

Establishing Safe Parking Site Models and Service Needs

Safe Parking - Temporary Shelter Permit NOT required

If you do not plan on adding any additional services detailed below and want to use your already established site for safe parking overnight only, please reach out to shelters@cityoftacoma.org for more information. This allows the City to be informed about the site and assists in our ability to communicate both internally and with the community about reasonable expectations.

Minor adjustments to existing infrastructure such as fencing, security access and cameras, or an increase in garbage and recycling services can be made without a permit, however if infrastructure requires major improvements or additions, a permit may be required.

- Safe Parking Hours from no earlier than 6:00pm to no later than 6:00am daily.
- Quiet Hours from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily.
- Individuals can use some services such as bathroom facilities already on-site during operational hours.
- No open fires.
- Portable handwashing and toilets, coordinating food services, other services can be brought to the site during the Safe Parking hours such as portable shower trailers and laundry units that do not require additional infrastructure to support.

Safe Parking - Temporary Shelter Permit Required - Level of Site Services Provided and/or parking outside allowable hours above.

The number of site services provided may be determined by site model and/or Operator needs. If you plan to add any of these services on-site, the operator will need to seek permit through the Temporary Shelter permitting process in accordance with Tacoma Municipal Code 15.06.080.15. For more information about setting up a temporary shelter, please visit our website.

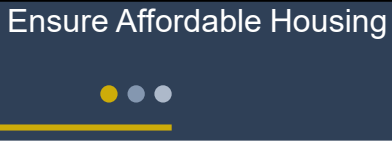
<p>Toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene unit (purchase or rental) that require additional infrastructure to support <p>Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding additional lighting needs for site safety and security <p>Staff/Security facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted security services • Office trailer (purchase or rental) • Security "station" 	<p>Food service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food preparation/storage area on-site <p>Shower facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower unit (purchase or rental) that require additional infrastructure to support <p>Laundry facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laundry unit (purchase or rental) that require additional infrastructure to support
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Supporting Safe Parking locations and the model without permitting or as a temporary shelter

The Safe Parking Checklist can be found at:
cityoftacoma.org/authorizedencampments

More information on the Temporary shelter guidelines can be found at:
cityoftacoma.org/temporaryshelters

13



Ensure Affordable Housing

Goal 1 Objectives

- Objective 1.1: Create more housing for more people
- Objective 1.2: Preserve existing affordable housing
- Objective 1.3: Help people stay in their homes and communities
- Objective 1.4: Reduce barriers for people who often experience them

Previous

- Create flexibility in contracting so providers can address various barriers (Immediate)
- Leveraged publicly and partner-owned land for affordable housing (AHAS 1.4)
- Increased prevention services and funding for people who are on the verge of homelessness (PCCP 3.1)
- Integrated culturally competent and trauma informed practices into new and existing programs (AHAS 2.5)

Immediate (<1 year)

Short-Term (1-2 years)

- Increase support for Workforce Development and Financial Empowerment program (PCCP 4.6 & 3.4)
- Create a range of resources for households experiencing a housing crisis (AHAS 4.2)

Long-Term (3-5 years)

- Streamline processes for households applying for and using rental assistance (AHAS 4.1)
- Earmark a portion of new or expanded sources of local funding to provide support services in new development (AHAS 4.4)

Access Services and Support



Goal 2 Objectives

- Objective 2.1: Provide access to hygiene, outreach, and seasonal weather shelter for unhoused residents of Tacoma.
- Objective 2.2: Streamline access to services through improved tracking and coordination to support unhoused residents in Tacoma.
- Objective 2.3: Deploy targeted strategies to reduce barriers and increase access for priority populations to shelter, treatment and permanent housing.
- Objective 2.4: Collaborate with community and businesses to mitigate the impacts of homelessness.

Previous

- Hire additional Program Development Specialists for the HEAL Team.
- Eliminate known barriers to accessing shelter.
- Establish strategic outreach schedule with HEAL Team and service providers. (Immediate)

Immediate (<1 year)

- Coordinate internal and external partners before people exit facilities into homelessness.
- Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data from those with lived experience.
- Develop a targeted approach for BIPOC populations from homelessness into sustainable housing
- Visual Dashboard to track fluidity of services and shelters access (PCCP 5.8)

Short-Term (1-2 years)

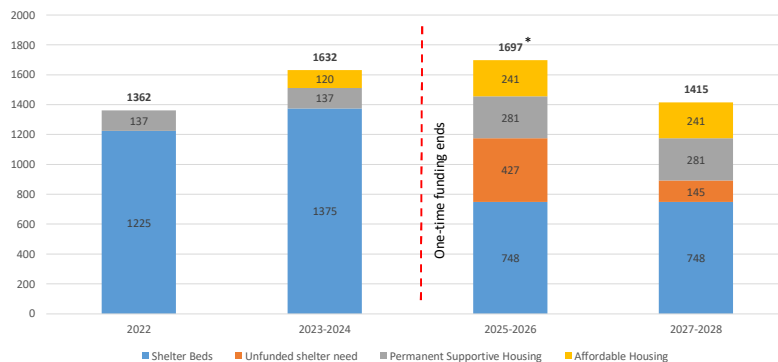
- **Create a "By-Name List". (PCCP 5.1)**
- Create and implement outreach processes and capacity that allows for on-demand services
- Directly fund expansion of detox for immediate access to treatment facilities.
- Implement protocol to strengthen the referral process to shelter and services (PCCP 2.3)
- Continue to work with local stakeholders to collaborate and develop solutions for supportive housing units in Tacoma/Pierce County.

15

Funding Considerations



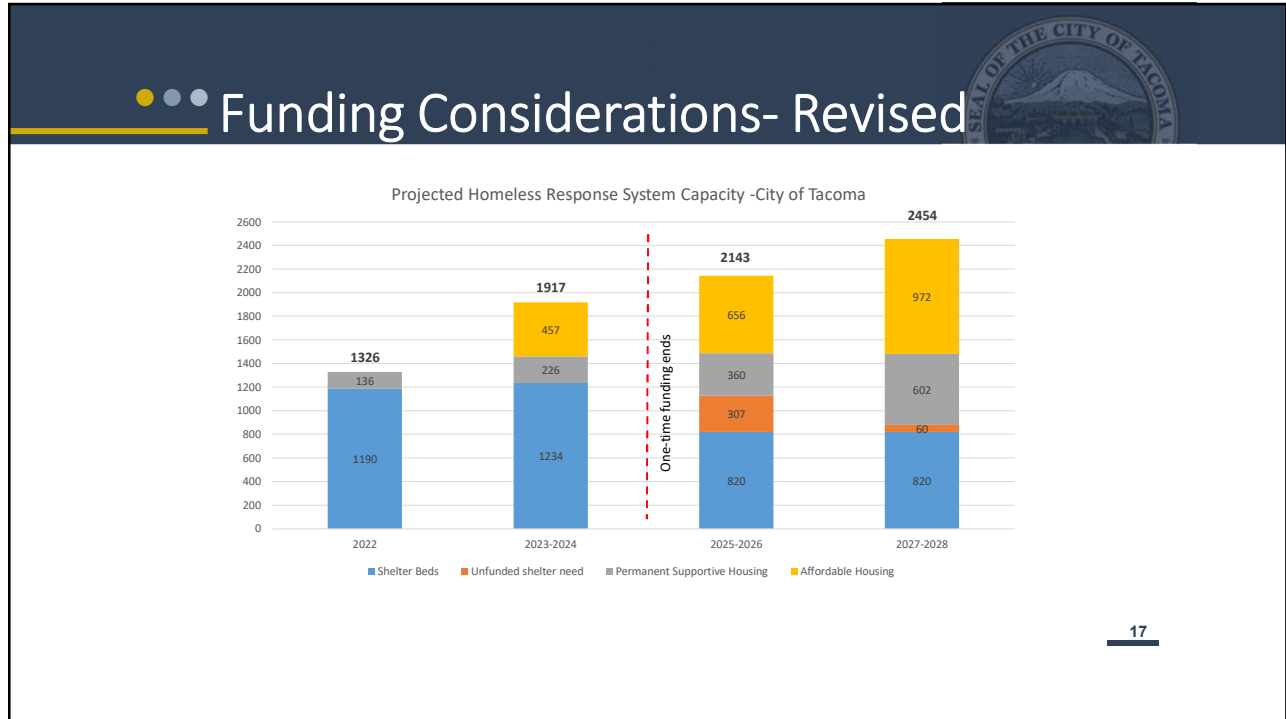
Projected Homeless Response System Capacity -City of Tacoma



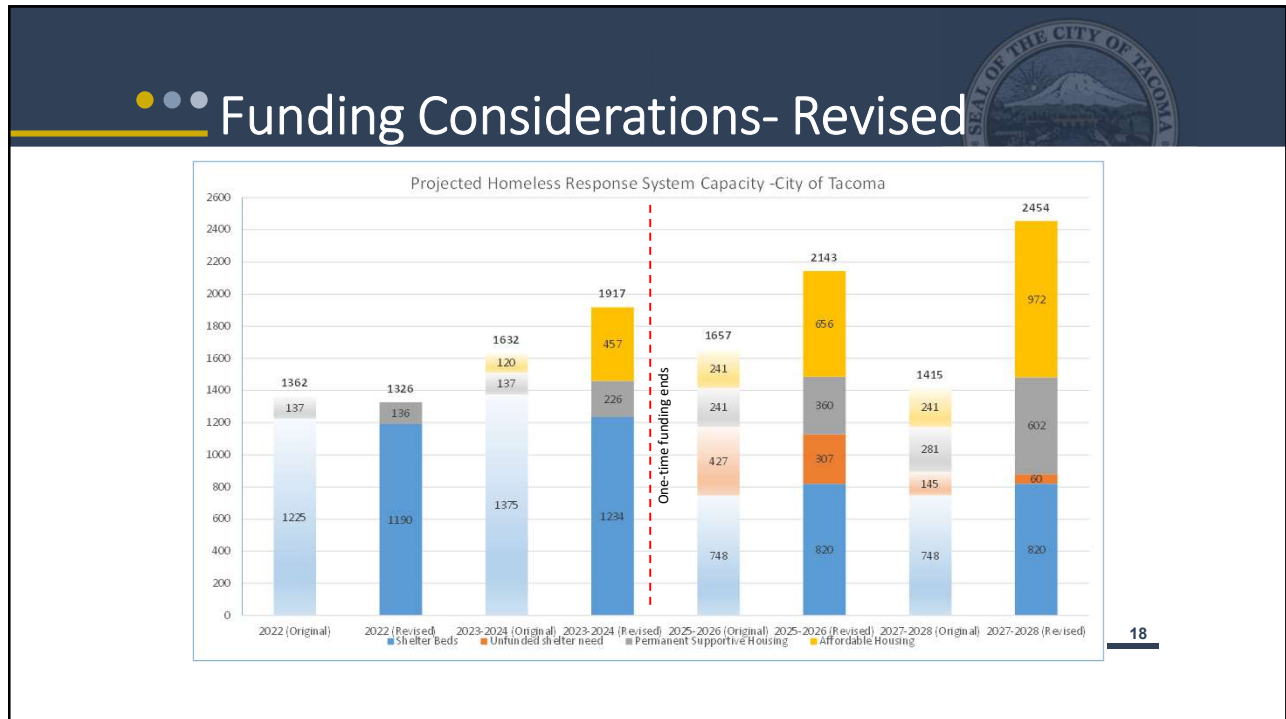
*Reflects peak capacity as the City transitions out of temporary and emergency shelter to more sustainable housing. Available capacity at the end of 2026 will reflect the capacity demonstrated in 2027-2028.

16



16



17



18





Next Steps

- Temporary Emergency Micro-Shelter (TEMS) 3 Community Meeting
 - June 29th, 2023 from 6-7:30pm
 - First Christian Church, 602 N Orchard St.
- Veteran Village, 82nd and Pacific, Community Meeting
 - July 26th, 2023 from 6-7:30pm
 - On-site, 8208 Pacific Ave

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Homeless Services and Strategy Update

City of Tacoma | Neighborhood and Community Services

City Council Study Session
June 13th, 2023



20

Analysis of City June 13 homeless status update.

SP 6.15.2023

Slide 3: Inclement weather response, fails to note the confusion that results around the temperature cut-offs for heat and cold and the resulting unreliability of access to City (and County-) purchased supplies. Fails to note that the County's temperature cut-offs are different from the City's.

Slide 4: Notes the "debris removal" but not the "people removal." Definition of "interested in services" is not provided, nor is a list of services provided.

Slide 5: What were the HEAL Team staffing levels for each of these time periods? See Slide 9, which shows that staffing and hours worked increased in the periods after the camping ban passed. So these increased contacts were achieved because there was increased staffing after implementation.

What is the definition of "Acceptance Rate?" A person says Yes when a HEAL Team member mentions a service? The person takes the phone #? The person makes an appointment? The person keeps the appointments? The person gets enrolled into services? The person has a pay source for services? The person completes the service period? The person now qualifies for housing?

Slide 6: the capacity numbers are misleading as they do not include the shelters scheduled for closure in 2023, including TEMS 3 (68 beds), TEMS 4 (74 beds), FOB Hope (29 beds), and the conversion of Aspen Court to permanent supportive housing (100 beds).

Slide 8: Why are 911 calls up so much between April and June? What is the relationship of this statistic to the camping ban?

Slide 11: Voluntary compliance relies significantly on the cooperation of the unhoused people, not just the self-control of City staff people.

Slide 12, which should have been referenced in Slide 6, to avoid the misleading information in Slide 6, **shows that the City now realizes it needs more emergency and temporary shelter than it had planned for**, even after the claim of going from 1500 to 600 to fewer unhoused people. TEMS-3 is projected to stay open for another year; TEMS-4 for six months; and FOB Hope for another year. Aspen Court's transition to PSH will occur as planned and Aspen Court is not taking new shelter referrals anymore as they move into this transition.

Slides 14 and 15 show the Objectives and Tasks for the Homeless Strategy. There are NO metrics to show if these tasks are impacting homelessness in any way. Where are the results?

Slides 16-18 show shelter capacity in Tacoma and the "unfunded shelter need." Shelter beds are all lumped together (individual and congregate) even though congregate shelter is far less

attractive to unhoused people than individual units. **The “unfunded shelter need” is NOT linked to a projection of the number people needing shelter, so it is impossible to know if the “unfunded shelter need” is realistic. It is also not linked to the projection of additional affordable housing units becoming available for this population.** These numbers are not grounded in any visible assumptions or reality.

It is especially not possible to say that “unfunded shelter need” will drop to 60 beds in 2027-28. To show this number is irresponsible, given the factors increasing homelessness (rising rents, evictions, inflation) and the factors slowing down the production of affordable housing units (high interest rates, inflation in construction costs). This number is not grounded in any visible assumptions or reality.

If the additional affordable housing units in 2023-24 (457); 2025-65 (656); and 2027-28 (972) are actual projects that are funded and ready to go (and not delayed by higher interest rates or higher construction costs), then Slide 17 should contain that footnote and list the projects.

Slide 18 is so busy that I cannot read it.

June 18, 2023

Dear Mayor Woodards, Deputy Mayor Walker, Council Member Blocker, and Council Members Rumbaugh, Ushka, Daniels, Bushnell, Diaz, and Hines; and City Manager Pauli,

I am writing regarding the **June 13, 2023 Homeless Services and Strategy Update that was presented at the June 13, 2023 Study Session**. Many of you expressed enthusiasm for this presentation, and for the Study Session in general.

I found myself increasingly dismayed and ill at ease as the presentation unfolded. Both the opinions that Council Members expressed, and what the Council was being told, were incomplete in some cases, and misleading in other cases. I came away with the realization that the homelessness situation is getting worse, and what you all are doing is not helping.

Tacoma cannot and will not successfully address the challenges faced by our unhoused neighbors if we are not facing and addressing the whole story. This is not about the Council “telling our story”—it is about our entire community understanding the whole story.

I will illustrate my concern through five points here (although many more could be made).

The Council and City Manager failed to acknowledge that there are virtually NO emergency/temporary shelter beds for the people currently living on the streets, whom you criticize for “not accepting services.” The City’s own June 12, 2023 Weekly Update (linked to the City Manager’s weekly report) shows ONE VACANCY TOTAL for TEMS-3, TEMS-4, and FOB Hope, and 3 for Aspen Court. Except that Aspen Court is no longer taking referrals for shelter as they prepare to transition to permanent supportive housing by the end of 2023.

Not once in the presentation, or in Council comments, did you reveal this truth about available shelter. In fact, some Council Members’ comments about shelter and people “not accepting services” implied that there is plenty of shelter, unhoused people are just not cooperating. The Council’s statements about shelter availability were misleading at best, and untruthful at worst. You asked no questions, nor did you pick up on the staff’s point about which types of shelter are most appropriate for unhoused people.

The Council and City Manager demonstrated a significant lack of understanding of the circumstances “on the ground” for unhoused people as a result of the City’s Sweeps. Allow me to share my perspective as a volunteer who takes out water on hot days. First, I buy the water myself because the required temperature triggers mean that the City’s supply is not reliably available ahead of time. Second, I go out at 5:15am so that I can connect with people before they have to start moving (to avoid being swept again) during the day. Third, in general, I

talk with and listen to a number of the unhoused people who are in the Hilltop. Here is what they say: “We don’t want a hassle, we just try to stay off their radar, we are just trying to get by.” “We feel targeted.” “We know that the City doesn’t care.” “I know my rights but it’s not worth it to try to stand up for my rights, they just tell us to move along.”

The people I see are exhausted, they are sleep-deprived, they are sick. Many are older. Some appear to have mental health or substance use challenges, others clearly have physical disabilities. You should go out and count the wheelchairs and walkers and crutches, to get a feel for just how many disabled people you are pushing around with your “successful” sweeps.

I see a disproportionate number of men and women who are Black, yet I hear no Equity Index conversation about this from the Council. The City says it approaches addressing homelessness through a “racial equity lens” but the Council appears to have misplaced your racial equity lens on this topic. Do you have demographics for the people swept? By age, gender, disability status, race/ethnicity?

If you actually saw, in person, the things that I am telling you here...would you still believe that the Sweeps are successful?

The Council demonstrated no understanding of how the folks on the street would actually GET housed. The short version is, THEY HAVE TO BE CURRENT IN THE COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM. Except that...most of the people I talk to have fallen out of the Coordinated Entry system because the CE system purges names out after 90 days, unless the person specifically renews their information in the CE system. To renew, you have to go to a physical CE location. If you get purged out, you have to go through the whole CE process again. To do that, you have to go to a physical CE location. Except if you have a lot of possessions, you are not mobile and it’s not physically possible to go to Associated Ministries or CLR or other CE locations. Asking for CE to come to the unhoused people? When I asked, I got a hard No. And now, with County funding cuts effective July 1, CE capacity will be reduced.

So to get housed, you have to be in the CE system but you cannot access the CE system. Catch-22 anyone?

The Council showed no recognition of the power dynamics of using armed law enforcement personnel to carry out the Sweeps...armed law enforcement means...compliance is pretty much guaranteed, but it is not voluntary. None of the unhoused people I spoke with wanted any sort of interaction with police officers, much less tickets or arrests or fines. They actively seek to avoid this. The visible THREAT of enforcement is enough to “guarantee compliance.”

The fact that the City has issued no tickets, has made no arrests, or levied any fines...simply means that City personnel have been directed, or have decided on their own, not to do these things.

But is this “voluntary compliance” “successful” if there are still a significant number of unhoused people living on the streets? In the small part of the city where I take water, I routinely see 20 or more unhoused people at a time. Is this success? Or are the Sweeps just a form of “official” harassment?

The Council is asking the wrong question when you ask “why don’t people accept services?” You SHOULD be asking “why DO people accept services?” I realize the purpose of the Council’s initial question is to make sure that everyone knows that unhoused people “refuse services.” That permits and reinforces a whole range of negative stereotypes about unhoused people. It’s a dog whistle.

Elected officials have no business reinforcing negative stereotypes about anyone.

So...try asking why people DO accept services. What services are welcomed by unhoused people? Why? What makes those particular services attractive? Are they easily accessible? Do they have immediate openings for new participants? Do they have a good reputation among unhoused people? Were they offered in a way that respected the choices and dignity of the unhoused person? Did the services accepted lead to actual housing? Did the services address a need that the unhoused person thought was a priority in their lives?

In conclusion, I came away from the Study Session presentation and discussion realizing that the situation for unhoused people is worsening and that the Council wants the whole topic of homelessness to just go away. So you have swept...and declared “success.”

Yet during the Study Session, Council members did not drill down on the data, did not ask even the most obvious questions about available shelter beds or services available, and used unexamined and stereotypical assumptions to undergird your comments. The discussion was under-informed, incurious, and showed a preference for justifying the City’s actions, rather than acting as a rigorous analysis of the impacts of the City’s actions. CM Daniels was the only Council Member who asked an analytical question, and her question was not answered. CM Daniels, if you ever want independent policy analysis support from the community, just let us know.

Tacoma cannot effectively address the challenges of people living on the streets unless and until the Council faces and learns about the complexities that SHOULD be the basis for your policy decisions. It’s past time for the Council to dig deeper and see the whole picture.

Sally Perkins
District 3

E-mail from City Manager Elizabeth Pauli, copied and pasted into this document, in response to my letter (June 30, 2023).

Hi Sally,

I appreciated your thoughtful correspondence regarding the June 13, 2023 Study Session presentation, as many of the concerns you highlighted are foundational to the City's strategic approach to homelessness.

Shelter Capacity

The City acknowledges that shelter space is tight, but there is capacity in our system.

For the past year (June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023) the Homeless Management Information System reflected a 91% average utilization rate across the shelter system. This does fluctuate seasonally, and that is why the City funds expansion of shelter units during the coldest months (during which we saw an average utilization rate of 94%).

Maintaining our existing shelter capacity while we work to develop permanent supportive and affordable housing solutions is part of the conversation we continue to have with the City Council, as we work to identify a sustainable source of funding to support these efforts.

We are encouraged that Pierce County continues to work towards the development of the Community First Village to help with the need for shelter capacity across our region, we are also pleased that Fife has been able to utilize state funds to continue operation of their jobs program which is providing needed support for individuals transitioning from encampments into stable employment.

Connection to Services

What you and other members of our community have shared with us has always informed the way the City has responded to Tacoma's most pressing issues. This will never change.

We have shifted our presentation of information from a discussion on offered and accepted services to a demonstration of how many of those individuals are connecting to shelter. The reasons individuals do not connect with shelter options are varied but, anecdotally, the Homeless Engagement and Alternatives Liaisons (HEAL) team has found that it is most often because an individual's preferred shelter location does not have an available unit.

As shared with the City Council on June 13, 2023, we are working towards a "by name" list and, to the greatest extent possible, we do maintain contact information for individuals contacted by our outreach teams so we can connect with them when their desired shelter option becomes available.

Although we are currently working with anecdotal information, prior to our next quarterly update, we will be conducting a more formal poll of individuals we have reached out to, and expect to have more data to share with the City Council about why they do and do not accept services.

Racial Equity

During outreach, the City does collect self-reported information from individuals regarding their age, gender and race. We do not currently survey individuals about their disability status, but we do keep outreach notes regarding access needs.

The information we have reflects what you have also observed, which is a continued disproportionality amongst Black individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. The City's homeless strategy recognizes this, and we are striving to address these gaps by diversifying our shelter options and provider pool. We have also had a specific focus on increasing our providers who serve BIPOC populations.

Coordinated Entry and System Flexibility

The City does *not* require its temporary and emergency shelter locations to participate in the Coordinated Entry system to help individuals get housed. Many of the objectives in the City's homeless strategy are aimed at reducing barriers for individuals experiencing homelessness and increasing flexibility in the system so individuals can exit homelessness more easily.

In addition to *not* requiring participation in Coordinated Entry, the City has also worked to increase funding to providers so they can extend temporary financial assistance to those who need help with first and last months rent, moving fees, deposits, pet fees and other items that have historically created barriers for individuals accessing housing.

Additionally, as the City works to bring additional Permanent Supportive Housing online, we are focused on working with providers who are interested in supporting specific populations, particularly those who have historically been underrepresented and under resourced. We will continue to share progress made on these efforts with the City Council and the community.

Again, thank you for reaching out. I can assure you that the City cares deeply about the same issues you do, and our approach will continue to be founded in compassion with a focus on voluntary compliance and outreach. Your individual efforts as a volunteer have been significant, and I hope you will continue to engage with us and share your perspectives. The City cannot do this vital work alone, and neither can any individual or group working in isolation.

Thank you,

Elizabeth

My response to Elizabeth, on July 5, 2023.

Dear Elizabeth, I hope you had a restful break over the Fourth. Thank you for this follow-up to my letter of June 18. I appreciate the additional information.

Let me note first that, as a volunteer, I've been taking water out to unhoused people early in the morning on a fairly regular basis. These are folks who have been Swept multiple times but still are in the area where multiple camping ban maps overlap. I have seen between 16 and 27 people each day, often moving from place to place, day to day. This morning (July 5) the AQI in this area was 175 at 5:15am and 195 at 6:15am, thanks to the Port, the I-5 freeway, the Canadian wildfires, and the fireworks scofflaws. Today I offered masks along with water.

Now to the e-mail. With regard to your first point about **shelter capacity**, overall capacity is not the only metric to consider. **Your third point, under Connection to Services, that unhoused peoples' preferred shelter option often is not available, is the key metric.** In many if not most cases, the preferred shelter option (as Javon pointed out) is micro-shelters/tiny homes or the individual rooms at Aspen Court.

Yet the City scheduled three micro-shelter locations for closure in 2023, apparently without contingency budgeting to keep some of those shelter spaces online. This was especially surprising given the plan to convert Aspen Court to permanent supportive housing by 12/31/2023.

This whole topic would not have stood out so much if Council members had not spent so much time belaboring the "they refused services" stereotype. If Council members are not willing to resist the temptation to reinforce stereotypes then I would hope that other Council members or you and your team would step in to correct the record with your actual data.

And I assume your staff team is tracking the land use appeals (to the Growth Management Hearings Board) that have delayed the Pierce County Village PSH project. As I understand it, even if the Pierce County Village eventually goes forward as designed, many of those units are intended for people in the Parkland-Spanaway (and other unincorporated) areas of the County, and may not be available for Tacoma residents. It is possible that some Pierce County residents currently living in Tacoma-based PSH housing might move to the Pierce County Village but even that assumption will face challenges in implementation.

I do appreciate the effort now to extend TEMS-3, FOB Hope, and TEMS-4. Once there is an accurate projection of the number of people coming into the homelessness services system, the Council can figure out how many more single-unit shelter spaces are needed.

With respect to **people choosing to accept (relevant and useful) services**, I really hope that the “by names” list comes to fruition because...the Sweeps have scattered the people that the HEAL Team needs to talk to all over the place. Knowing their names won't help if you can't physically find them.

As I noted in my opening paragraph, there are a LOT of people sleeping outside overnight and despite the Sweeps, they find ways to stay in the neighborhoods they know. I will be fascinated to see the results of the poll of unhoused people.

To your third point, I brought up **racial equity** because I never hear a Council member ask about it, nor do I see PPT slides that address it. It is my belief that **Sweeping a disproportionate number of Black or older or disabled people is illegal**. I urge the City to start asking unhoused people about disabilities, including physical, mental/emotional, and chronic illnesses. I think this data should be front page and publicly available on an ongoing basis.

Pierce County, through the HMIS, gathers information about disabilities among the unhoused people it tracks. The County level data shows disproportionality in race (especially Black and Native American), disability (53%), and age (21% over 50 in 2022). Here is the link to that data:

<https://open.piercecountywa.gov/stories/s/7wee-rggc>. While the data is not just Tacoma, inferences can be validly made.

Re: **Coordinated Entry**, I did not realize that all of Tacoma's funded emergency and temporary shelters were not requiring CE as a precursor to getting housed at those sites. This is helpful to know. I hope that means that the people who are accepted into Tacoma's temporary and emergency shelters ARE enrolled through CE once they are settled in. Otherwise, they don't get counted as homeless in HMIS and they may not be eligible for many of the permanent housing options later on.

I do have to ask...one of the “barriers” that Tacoma's “low barrier” temporary/emergency shelters avoids is the Coordinated Entry process? Wow.

The woman I was talking with about housing options said she wanted an apartment in a nearby building. When I inquired about what the woman needed to do to get into that specific building, I was told Coordinated Entry. This apartment option may or may not have been the best option for this woman's particular circumstances but...it was the path into an actual conversation about housing for a woman who, having been Swept at least three times, simply will not talk to anyone from the HEAL Team. And so...for that brief moment, I was the one who might have shifted her trajectory a bit. Now I can't find her.

Elizabeth, I really appreciate your taking the time to provide this additional information. As we both can see, there is much to talk about, including what we assume, what data we look at, and probably the most important part: this is about vulnerable people who need help and support, not ordinances or stereotypes or measuring "success" by the number of pounds of "debris" picked up.

February 14, 2023, TNT article on the City's Temporary Shelter at S. Proctor and S. 69th

For several years, City staff have said that people who are moving from sleeping outside overnight on the street can access shelter spaces essentially on demand, and move relatively quickly into more permanent housing.

The City (and the County) have used this belief to set relatively high outcome requirements for shelter providers.

What is now clear is that there are few vacancies in temporary/emergency shelters and that the people living there need a lot of time to move into more permanent housing, for two reasons. One, there is not much permanent housing for people with very limited incomes.

Example: when the Tacoma Housing Authority opened applications for its wait list in 2023, over 15,000 people applied to get on the wait list. Only 1,825 people (or 12% of those who applied for the wait list) were placed on the wait list.

So the options for a person living in a temporary/emergency shelter to move into permanent housing they can afford...are very limited.

Two, some of the people living in temporary/emergency housing have multiple challenges and barriers to more permanent housing and it takes time to work through those challenges and barriers.

From the article, you can note this key point:

- The City initially required the operator of TEMS-4, the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), to house 75% of the TEMS-4 residents in permanent housing, which LIHI believed was never attainable. The City later revised this goal down to 40%. The City's own Stability Site has exited only 22% of the people it has served, to permanent housing. (City Update (Feb 8, 2024) of Emergency/Temporary Shelter Sites https://www.cityoftacoma.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/NCS/weekly_dataupdate.pdf).

City staff have never been realistic about how quickly a person could move from temporary/emergency shelter into permanent housing. LIHI, as a

major service provider for emergency/temporary shelter, has enough data points to add realistic data to this conversation.

TEMS 4 stats (TNT article) 2024.2.14

A South Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelter for people experiencing homelessness might get a six-month lease extension from the city, officials say. TEMS 4, 3860 S. 69th St., was slated to close Dec. 31, but city officials say talks are underway to finalize an extension of operations there through June.

City spokesperson Maria Lee said there were many considerations for extending operations, including better weather and contractor availability for moving units and residents to another location, community input, and timing for the release of a request for proposal for future development at the site.

Operated by Seattle-based Low Income Housing Institute, TEMS 4 opened in October 2021 at East 60th Street and East McKinley Avenue and was later relocated and expanded by 20 units at South 69th Street and South Proctor Street on property owned by the city.

The site serves up to 85 people experiencing homelessness with 66 tiny home units and includes all adult households, including single adults, couples and adult families, Lee said in an email to The News Tribune. Referrals occur in coordination with LIHI onsite management and outreach teams like the Homeless Alternative Liaison team, she said.

There is a communal kitchen, laundry, office space for case management, restrooms, showers and community space there, according to the city.

Since TEMS 4 opened the city has contracted \$2,971,259 with LIHI for shelter services, operations and initial set-up, Lee said.

The latest census at TEMS 4 as of Feb. 5 was 71 people, she said. According to scope of work contracts laid out between the city and LIHI, fewer Tacoma residents were served and obtained permanent housing in 2021, 2022 and 2023 then were defined in the goals the city had for the site.

The city's goals were to have 145 unique residents served at TEMS 4 in 2021, 150 residents served in 2022 and 150 unique residents served in 2023. In actuality,

135 people were served in 2021, 142 people were served in 2022 and 117 people were served in 2023, Lee said.

Tacoma also had goals for TEMS 4 to help 75% of residents obtain permanent housing in 2021 and 2022, and 40% of residents obtain permanent housing in 2023, Lee said. In reality, 23% of TEMS 4 residents obtained permanent housing in 2021, 28% obtained permanent housing in 2022 and 32% obtained permanent housing in 2023, according to the city.

In total 21 people at TEMS 4 found permanent housing in 2021, as did 20 in 2022 and 15 in 2023, Lee said.

In 2023 the city's goal was to log 5,200 hours of case management at TEMS 4, but LIHI logged 3,968 hours of case management, Lee said. Case management goals were not set for 2021 and 2022 and tracking and reporting of case management hours were not a required output from LIHI in the 2021-2022 contract, Lee said.

In an email to the News Tribune Feb. 9, LIHI chief strategy officer Jon Grant said there were and continue to be challenges facing the community served at the site, which has impacted LIHI's ability to reach its initial goals and help clients get back on their feet. Grant said LIHI told funders early on that the goal of a 75% housing placement rate "was never attainable" and said that was later reflected in a change of contract in 2023 when the housing placement rate goal was lowered to 40%.

Tacoma Homeless Strategy, Systems and Service manager Caleb Carbone told The News Tribune on Jan. 12 it's typical for shelters in Tacoma to have a 30%-40% exit rate into permanent housing. "The population the program serves is high acuity, which includes people with mental health and substance use disorders who often need more time to recover from the trauma of homelessness," Grant said. "TEMS 4's most recent numbers show us within that performance range common among our peer organizations. LIHI should be evaluated within the context of the broader performance of other providers."

Grant said ongoing lack of affordable housing in the greater Tacoma area and recent rent increases, which averaged 22.1% in Pierce County between February 2021 and February 2022, also mean there are fewer affordable housing options for their clients.

In 2021 clients from the Tacoma Emergency Micro Shelter 2 site moved to TEMS 4, “which [was] a complex undertaking to relocate an entire community of clients and getting our staff and assets re-situated,” Grant said.

In 2021 and 2022 during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic lags also meant there were fewer opportunities for clients to gain employment and self sufficiency and “the repercussions on the economy still lasted well into 2023,” he said.

In 2023, Grant said, TEMS 4 saw a larger enrollment of high acuity people with complex mental health needs as compared to more couples in previous years. “Further compounding the trend was that our clients in the post-pandemic era needed more support and services, so people stayed longer in the program, which reduced overall throughput and in turn reduced the number of people served,” he said.

Challenges with case management and social service job recruitment also meant TEMS 4 was short a case manager, Grant said. Since August, TEMS 4 has been fully staffed with two and a half full time case managers, he said.

Grant said many of the challenges facing TEMS 4 are mirrored at other shelter sites, especially with people who have a fixed income and are suffering from mental health barriers or substance-abuse disorders that have not been adequately addressed for years. According to the city, the goals for TEMS 4 in 2021 and 2022 were established on trends LIHI and the city observed in pre-pandemic emergency shelter locations, “as well as the early momentum the provider was experiencing at that time.”

“However, in 2023 we recognized that the trends had changed significantly and adjusted the goals to accurately represent what we were seeing across the shelter system and to consider the population served at this site,” Lee said in an email to The News Tribune. “While we are seeing exits to housing trend upwards, we continue to evaluate the system, collaborate with all providers, meet with advocates and work with people who have lived experience to make sure we are providing the right resources to achieve successful outcomes.”

Once TEMS 4 closes, Lee said, LIHI will continue to support clients with housing plans, and anyone still residing on the site in June 2024 will be moved to another

emergency shelter location. At that time TEMS 4 will be decommissioned, she said. The city is working to release a request for proposal for the sale of the property to support the development of a housing project, Lee said. Tacoma is also finalizing a transition plan for TEMS 4 and intends to suspend new intakes in early spring, Lee said.

Read more at:

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article285102507.html#storylink=copy>

Pierce County data on “Functional Zero” 8.23.2023.

The Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness, and City of Tacoma and Pierce County homeless services staff people continually say that the Big Goal is “functional zero”. This means that the number of people falling into homelessness is never larger than the number exiting homelessness, so that the total number of homeless people does not increase.

There are two problems with this Big Goal. The first problem is that it never gets reported on. Never. NEVER. The second problem is that the data used to compute it is incomplete. There is no estimate of the number of people falling into homelessness each month, no assumptions about how that estimate might be made, etc. The data that IS used is from the Homeless Management Information System, which only records people who come through Coordinated Entry. Which leaves out a lot of unhoused people.

In July 2023, I made a request (during public comment) for the functional zero data. In August 2023, the following data (on the next 3 pages) were provided, as a direct result of my request. Had I not requested the data, it would not have been provided.

As you look at the data, note the following:

- The groups furthest away from Functional Zero (the people for whom the homeless crisis is getting worse) are people with disabilities and Black and Brown and Indigenous people. *Do you ever hear anyone in an official capacity acknowledge this?*

People with disabilities make up 51% of the people in excess of “functional zero;” people of color make up 37%. **These two groups make up 88% of the people furthest from functional zero.** Note that some people appear to be counted in more than one category (which would make sense) which is why the total number of people added up from all of the categories exceeds the total gap number for functional zero.

- The Functional Zero concept suffers from vagueness because we do not know:
 - How many people are falling into homelessness each month (it's not possible to count them exactly but reasonable assumptions can be made about this number). The assumptions should be publicly available and explained.
 - How many people falling into homelessness actually enter the "official homeless services system" by signing up (and staying signed up through Coordinated Entry. The City admits it does not use the CE system to move people into City-approved/funded temporary or emergency shelter. So...how many homeless people are not counted in the "official system" (the Homelessness Management Information System) and thus are not part of any of the official statistics we see, including the Functional Zero data?
 - How many people successfully exit temporary or emergency shelter to more permanent housing (both City and County have routinely overestimated how many people exit temp/emerg shelter to more permanent shelter and how quickly...and a recent Tacoma News Tribune article [included below] verifies that the City has not done a good job of estimating this and that the actual numbers of people are far lower than the City has assumed.

This helps explain why the number of available temp/emerg shelter spaces are so few: vacancies occur far less frequently than the City or County has assumed.

- For Functional Zero to be a useful metric/Goal, all of the assumptions that underlie the numbers need to be transparent and clear, and there needs to be a valid methodology for estimating the number of people falling into homelessness each month, whether they end up in the HMIS or not. Functional Zero data should be reported monthly so that trends can be quickly discerned.

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 20, 2023

To: County Council Select Committee on Homelessness

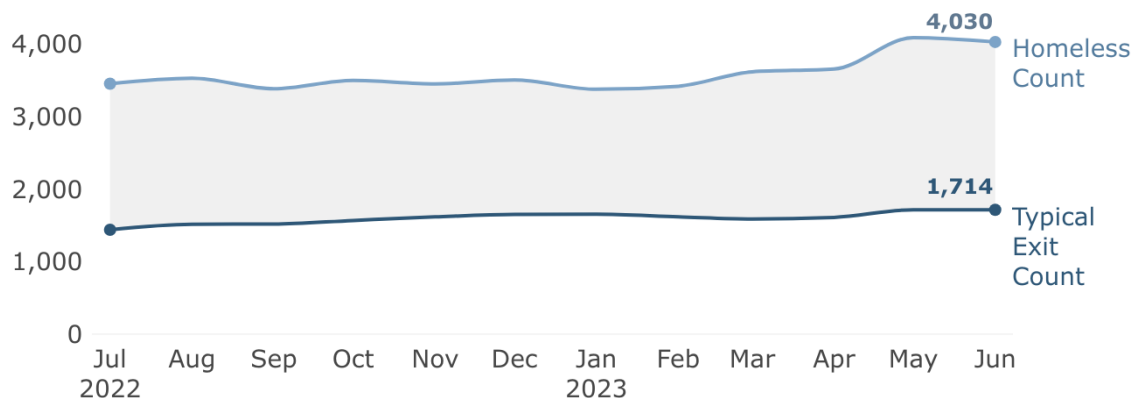
From: Heather Moss, Human Services Director

Subject: Homeless, Functional Zero Status

You have requested the status of Pierce County's efforts towards reaching functional zero. Pierce County monitors progress towards functional zero using the approach developed by [Community Solutions](#), a nonprofit that supports communities in achieving functional zero.

Functional zero indicates the population experiencing homelessness never exceeds the community's capacity to provide a housing solution. This can be measured by analyzing if the number of people experiencing homelessness is less than the typical number of people exiting homelessness to permanent housing. Figure 1 shows these two indicators for Pierce County for the past twelve months.

Figure 1: Monthly Progress toward Functional Zero (July 2022 - June 2023)

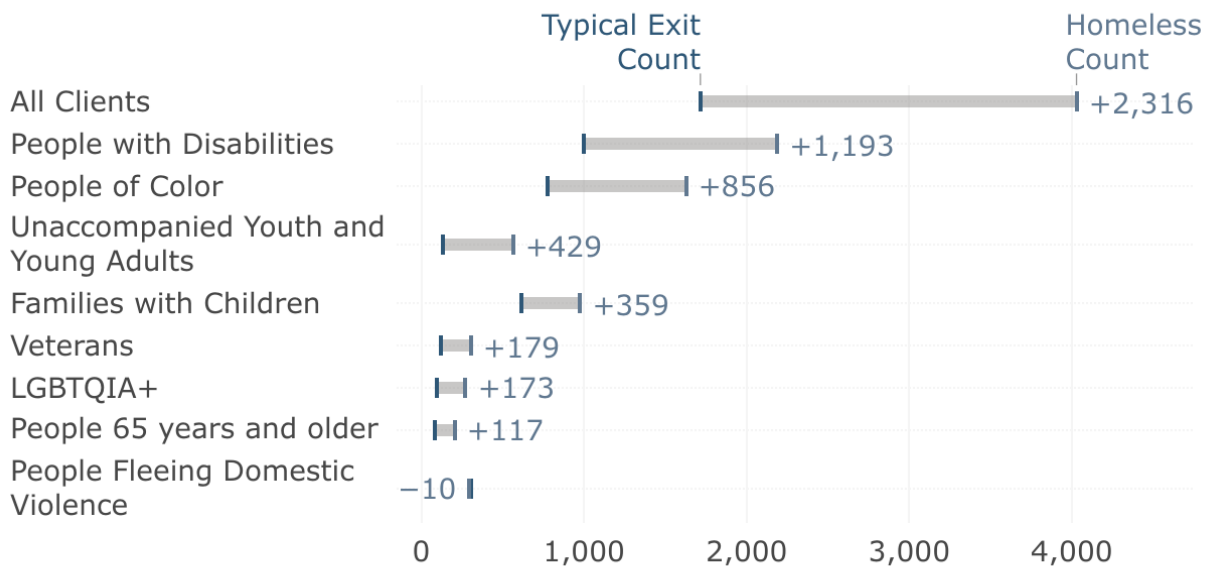


The homeless count is the number of clients experiencing homelessness that are served in Pierce County's homeless crisis response system during the month displayed. The typical exit count reflects the historical number of individuals exiting to permanent housing based on a six-month average.

Source: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 7/17/2023

In June 2023, the most recent data available, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Pierce County exceeded the usual number of people exiting to permanent housing by 2,316. However, proximity to reaching functional zero varies when examining different populations experiencing homelessness, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Progress toward Functional Zero (June 2023)



The homeless count is the number of clients experiencing homelessness that are served in Pierce County's homeless crisis response system during the month displayed. The typical exit count reflects the historical number of individuals exiting to permanent housing based on a six-month average.

Source: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 7/17/2023

Traditionally underserved populations, including people with disabilities and people of color, are more likely to experience homelessness and, therefore, disproportionately affected by delays in reaching functional zero. While we see some sub-populations moving closer to functional zero, Pierce County continues to see a significant capacity gap between people being served to successfully exit the system and new entrants into the system.

Other factors influence our progress towards functional zero. Pierce County Human Services (PCHS) recognizes that service durations often extend beyond a brief entry into and exit from our homeless system; service durations indicate the level of need experienced by individuals engaged with the system and often span multiple months. Additionally, both the seasonality of needs for services and the lags between the opening of a permanent housing unit and placement of a client into

the open unit affect the inflow and outflow of individuals captured at any point in time.

PCHS is committed to increasing successful exits to permanent housing. In addition to funding a full range of homeless services in Pierce County, we are pursuing functional zero using a range of strategies, including:

- Eviction Prevention – a program to build on the county’s successful rental assistance program established during COVID to prevent more people from falling into homelessness.
- Provider scorecards – a performance measurement tool to assess progress toward contracted deliverables, measure intervention effectiveness, and make program corrections (release scheduled for September 2023).
- Reducing street homelessness – a deliberate increase in funding for street outreach, emergency shelter, and rapid rehousing in 2022-2023 by the Document Recording Fee Committee.
- Community Think Tanks – an opportunity for high-performing providers to offer technical assistance and peer support to others in the provider community (scheduled to begin in October 2023).
- Shelter Access Hub – a model in which a designated provider acts as a navigation service for homeless households and assists first responders, medical departments, and street outreach agencies in connecting households to overnight shelter.

PCHS looks forward to continuing to update the Select Committee on Homelessness on our progress toward functional zero.

Documentation of evidence provided of human rights violations when unhoused people are “swept” in Tacoma.

In a separate document, I have provided multiple analyses of data and information reported to the City Council in Study Sessions and Committee meetings.

In this document, I provide copies of testimony at City Council meetings and the County Council’s Select Committee on Homelessness. In addition to this written testimony, I have testified several times orally, most recently at the City Council meeting on January 9, 2024, where I detailed out the sweeps done in the Hilltop in early January, sending unsheltered people out into dangerous rain, wind, and cold conditions.

I have also testified regularly at the County’s Implementation Advisory Board, again orally, as listening to the meeting gives the basis for testimony.

My purpose in providing this documentation is to make clear that the City of Tacoma has been told multiple times that they are violating the human rights of unhoused people, and the evidence is compelling.

Calendar of Testimony about the impacts of the sweeps.

I provided testimony in 2023-24 as follows:

Meeting and Date	Topics
April 11, 2023, City Council	Impacts of sweeps, focus on disabilities observed; sleep-deprived, anxious, fearful.
April 18, 2023, Human Rights Commission	Impacts of sweeps, focus on disabilities, age, race (Black); sleep

	deprivation, lack of food, lack of sanitation facilities.
May 23, 2023, City Council	Notified Council of my request to the HRC; impacts of sweeps; race (Black), disabilities, chronic health conditions
July 2023	Documentation of the cost of the sweeps, as confirmed by the City Budget Office.
August 11, 2023, Human Rights Commission	E-mail; variety of disabilities,
September 11, 2023, Human Rights Commission	Documentation and enumeration of the range of disabilities observed; lack of shelter options that are appropriate for various disabilities, and proposed solutions.
October 9, 2023, World Homeless Day speech	Disabilities, age, race (Black). Sleep-deprived, lack of food.
January 9, 2024, City Community Forum (typed up from notes)	Impact of sweeps with upcoming bad weather (heavy rain, gale-force winds, subfreezing temps)
February 6, 2024, City regular testimony on displacement	Sweeps ARE displacement but your new anti-displacement policy only covers people who are already housed.

I testified “live” at several Select Committee on Homelessness meetings, mostly focusing on data needed to understand functional zero (we are nowhere near functional zero(and why we are not seeing the data, about the futility of sweeps, etc.

City Council testimony April 11, 2023

After each sweep, when the City says that the swept unhoused people “accepted resources,” what exactly does this mean? Do they say Yes to being handed a list of social service providers with addresses and contact information? Do they say Yes to a specific referral? Is that referral a phone number? An appointment? Are they urged to call 211? Do they have to be “current” in Coordinated Entry to get services?

What happens after this information is provided to the unhoused people who are swept? Do they have the tools to follow through (a working phone, for example, that has minutes and is charged)? Is the phone call answered on the other end? Does the City know which swept unhoused people actually get connected to a service provider and receive relevant services?

My observation is that my unhoused neighbors in the Hilltop who are swept are anxious, fearful, sleep-deprived, fiercely protective of their possessions, and resigned to being pushed around (literally) by the City.

What’s the plan for de-escalating the harm that the sweeps are doing, so that unhoused people can breathe enough to actually think about how they want to move forward? And what’s the plan for more private, heated, lockable units for them to move into? Especially people with pets, couples, and families.

The sweeps are making things worse for unhoused people, I don’t think that is what you intend but it is what is happening.

Virtually every unhoused person you sweep is a person with disabilities, whether a mental health condition, substance use issue, physical mobility limitations, hearing or vision challenges...

And do we know the racial demographics of the people being swept?
We are supposedly centering racial equity in our homelessness efforts
so we really should know how this is playing out.

City Council testimony May 23, 2023

Sally Perkins, District 3

Three things tonight:

1. Use the Tacoma4All renter protections as the City's renter protection ordinance. They are reasonable, well thought out, and will help keep people in their homes.
2. Commission the Health Impact Assessment for the warehouse project in South Tacoma. The City can do this independently, and your equity values obligate you to do it, in protection of the residents of your City, in South Tacoma. Your main job is to protect us; please do your job.
3. I wanted to let you know that last week, I asked the Tacoma Human Right Commission to investigate the impacts of your sweeps of unhoused people, as a violation of their human rights. The unhoused people being swept are disproportionately African American, and many are vulnerable, with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Housing appropriate to their needs is not available, yet they are swept. Their human rights need to be protected. I hope the Commission can protect them.

Cost of the Sweeps (SP 7.28.2023, with numbers provided by K Johnston).

Type of cost	2021	2022	2023 Jan-Mar
Contractual	\$424,000	\$792,000	\$269,000
Staff (NCS est)	\$380,966	\$642,339	\$264,747
TOTAL, NCS staff only	\$804,966	\$1,434,339	\$533,747
Staff (TPD est)	\$275,000 (2 FTE)	\$275,000 (2 FTE)	\$68 750 (1/4)of 275k
TOTAL, NCS & TPD staff	\$1,079,966	\$1,709,339	\$602,497 Annual =\$2,409,988

January 9, 2024 City of Tacoma Community Forum testimony.

Note that I testified on line from notes. This write-up is reconstructed from my notes. The meeting video also includes my spoken testimony. Link to the meeting video, I am the final on-line speaker.

https://cityoftacoma.granicus.com/player/clip/6343?view_id=2&redirect=true

Good evening, Mayor and Council members.

If 295 Tacoma-Pierce County residents died in a giant car crash on I-5, what do you think the reaction would be?

If 295 Tacoma Pierce County residents died in a flood, or an earthquake, a fire, or a mass shooting, what would the reaction be?

We'd be all "Tacoma Pierce County Strong, let's help our neighbors, we can do this!"

Yet when 295 homeless people died on the streets of Tacoma-Pierce County in the past 12 months, the community reaction is crickets.

This didn't even come up at your December 19 Study Session, when you talked about homeless services.

On January 5, 2024, the City swept Hilltop people sleeping outside overnight, and confiscated their possessions. This was done despite a weather forecast for heavy rain and gale force winds over the weekend, and a longer-term forecast for subfreezing temperatures and possibly snow. This was done on a Friday, when no service providers would be open over the weekend.

In the words of the young man from the Black Panther Party of Washington, "why are you trying to kill your own people?"

Stop the sweeps.

City Council testimony 2.6.2024, Anti-displacement strategy Res 41358

Sally Perkins, District 3. Testifying on Res. 41358.

I support Resolution 41358, which affirms the City's commitment to preventing displacement of Tacoma residents from their homes and communities, in low and very low opportunity areas of the City.

The statistics you provide about massive displacement of Black residents from the Hilltop over the past four decades tell the story.

In my observation, the most recent wave of displacement started before the 2008 recession and has been accelerated by the light rail project, COVID, and rising housing costs.

A lot of the displacement in the Hilltop has already happened, with higher rents, foreclosures, or people having to move when the family member they lived with could no longer stay in their home.

And that displacement shows up in people living in their cars, or sleeping outside overnight on the street.

What's interesting is, the folks sleeping in their cars, or in tents, or on the sidewalk...having been displaced by the housing market, are now being further displaced by the City of Tacoma, through TMC 8.19, the camping ban.

In other words, through Res 41358 the City will try to protect you from displacement if you still have a home...but if you have lost your home, and can't find housing, the City will displace you again and again and again through TMC 8.19. If you look at the 10-block radius map (the "we will sweep you" map), it covers nearly all of the Hilltop.

How do you all fit these two policies together? How do you reconcile “affirming” this anti-displacement strategy, while at the same time actively displacing people who can’t find housing they can afford?.

As you say, “significant research has also connected displacement to worse health outcomes for residents...placing additional burdens on communities of color and vulnerable residents who are more likely to experience displacement.”

Doesn’t this “significant research” also apply to the impacts of the sweeps?

So is the City the great protector from displacement, or the active enforcer of displacement? How do you reconcile these two conflicting roles?

Human Rights Commission testimony 5.18.2023

Sally Perkins, District 3, Hilltop.

I am here tonight to raise with the Commission what I believe is a human rights issue, related to the ongoing sweeps of unhoused people being carried out by the City of Tacoma.

I live in the Hilltop and have been part of the Homeless Coalition volunteer extreme weather (cold or heat) response for the past two-plus years, bringing supplies like water and handwarmers to our unhoused neighbors. I also walk in the neighborhood most days and have personally seen the impacts of the City's relentless sweeps.

In my direct observation, the unhoused people being swept are disproportionately African American, they are older, and often in poor physical health. And many—maybe most—have disabilities. Disabilities such as substance use disorder, mental health conditions, chronic illnesses, physical mobility limitations, and I could list more. This is all documented in official data about homelessness in Tacoma. After multiple sweeps, most unhoused people experience chronic sleep deprivation, hunger, and lack of cleaning and bathing facilities.

And contrary to popular narrative, there are NOT relevant or appropriate housing options for most of our unhoused neighbors being swept.

My question for the Human Rights Commission is...will the Commission consider doing an investigation of the impacts of Tacoma's sweeps policy, to determine if there are discriminatory impacts of the sweeps on unhoused people who are African American, or who have disabilities, or who are older, or who have chronic health conditions?

As a person of faith and a long-time Hilltop resident, I have increasing alarm and dismay about the impacts of this unfortunate policy.

Testimony at the City Council has had no discernible effect, which is why I am here tonight. Thank you for your attention and for taking this concern seriously.

From: [Shattuck, Nancy](#)
To: [Sally Perkins](#)
Subject: RE: Human Rights Commission meeting on August 14, 2023
Date: Friday, August 11, 2023 4:27:27 PM

I will share this with Chair Westbrooke and also read it out loud during public comment at the HRC meeting on Monday.

Thanks,

Nancy

From: Sally Perkins <sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com>
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 3:25 PM
To: Shattuck, Nancy <NShattuck@cityoftacoma.org>
Subject: Human Rights Commission meeting on August 14, 2023

Hi Nancy, I hope you are doing well and enjoying your expanded job duties at the City.

I wanted to let you and Chair Westbrooke know that I am unable to attend the August 14, 2023 meeting of the Human Rights Commission. We are having Grandma Camp at my house (my housemate's granddaughters, ages 12 and 9) and we will have our hands full with these two spirited and sparkly girls.

I didn't want you or Chair Westbrooke to think I was being disrespectful of the Commission by not being there in person.

I continue to believe that the impacts of Tacoma's Sweeps of unhoused people are a human rights violation. I believe that whatever housing options can be identified for each unhoused person need to take into account the myriad of physical, emotional/mental health, trauma-induced and/or neuro-diverse conditions that they experience and that are considered disabilities. The housing options offered need to be responsive to each person's circumstances and likely or actual disabilities. This need becomes more urgent with the upcoming extreme heat.

I would also like to note that Aspen Court, which currently serves as temporary shelter for people moving off of the streets, is scheduled to close on December 31, 2023, in preparation for its conversion to Permanent Supportive Housing. While this addition of nearly 100 units of permanent supportive housing is great news eventually, the dislocation of the people living there while the conversion takes place is likely to put even greater pressure on other available temporary or emergency shelter, right as the coldest and wettest part of the winter sets in. It is hard to see where all of these people are going to go, except to more misery. I have a meeting with Caleb Carbone on Monday August 14 about Aspen Court and if I learn additional information that would be of interest to the Commission, I will write again on Monday.

You are welcome to consider this e-mail written public comment for the August 14 meeting. If

you could share this e-mail with Chair Westbrooke, I would very much appreciate it.

Thank you so much.

Sally

Sally Perkins
1419 S Sheridan Avenue
Tacoma (Hilltop), WA 98405
sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com

Tacoma Human Rights Commission Testimony, 9.11.2023

Sally Perkins, District 3

I am learning additional details about unhoused people in Tacoma and their access or lack of access to shelter. I wanted to share this latest information with you this evening.

People with the following disabilities, who are sleeping outside overnight, are experiencing serious barriers to emergency or temporary shelter:

These disabilities include:

- Physical mobility limitations
- Vision/hearing limitations
- Cognitive challenges
- Sensory/neurodiverse sensitivities
- Mental health challenges including behavior challenges
- Substance use challenges.

If any of these folks exhibit disruptive behaviors, or an inability to understand and follow emergency procedures or other instructions, or can't independently handle one or more activities of daily living...it is very likely that they will be refused emergency or temporary shelter.

On the surface, this is reasonable—temporary or emergency shelters are not funded, staffed, or trained to provide individual supportive services to people with disabilities who need such supportive services. And in settings with private units (tiny homes or hotels), it's really impossible at the present time.

BUT...in the City fo Tacoma, if a person with these types of disabilities is refused shelter...

Then what are their ACTUAL shelter/housing options?

Right now, as far as I can tell, they are left to sleep overnight on the street.

Where the City of Tacoma will "sweep" (roust) them, confiscate their possessions, hound and harass them...all the time KNOWING that there are no shelter options for them.

The City responds to this concern by noting that their emergency/temporary shelter sites are all required to be ADA-compliant.

This is really good. I am glad the City is requiring ADA compliance.

But ADA compliance is passive—it addresses features in the buildings themselves, not how the building is actually utilized.

For example:

- The ADA emergency light can flash to alert a hearing-impaired person of an emergency but that person cannot hear the instructions of what to do next.
- The ADA bathroom door can be wide enough for a wheelchair but if the person in the wheelchair needs help once they are in the bathroom, there won't be sufficient staff to help.
- The person with sensory sensitivities/neurodiverse conditions such as autism will not be able to tolerate noisy, busy, bright settings; they need a calm, quiet setting. ADA compliance may not address this at all.

The people in our community with these types of disabilities—our neighbors—are the least likely to be able to get into temporary/emergency shelter and most likely to be sleeping overnight on the street. Where they are the targets (that's their word) of the City's sweeps as a result of the camping ban.

Let that sink in. The most vulnerable are the most likely to be sleeping outside overnight and be targeted by the camping ban sweeps.

So, tonight I have two asks.

One is for you, the Tacoma Human Rights Commission. **I am asking the Commission to investigate how many people with these types of disabilities are sleeping outside on the street in Tacoma.** Lest that sound daunting, every outreach team I talk to (including the HEAL Team) says they know all of the people still living on the streets. That's great, they can help you count. But you (the Commission) would provide the methodology, the definitions, the privacy protections, and the skeptical eye for being sure you are getting the whole story.

The question is...are there 20 people with these types of disabilities living on the street? 50? 100? 200? More? Are there any workable shelter options for them as a first step off the street? Once they get into shelter, what is their NEXT housing option? Are those options available in real life, or just on a list somewhere?

The second ask is for the City in general. While the City may not be the only provider of shelter for people with these types of disabilities, the City is the major player on street homelessness, either through regulation (like the camping ban) or through funding.

But I believe there are a lot of other players, including people with lived experience, who could be invited into the solution here, **if the City either was the convener of that conversation, or supported the convener.** Options like adult family homes, mental health group homes, assisted living models, inpatient mental health care, permanent supportive housing, clean and sober homes, substance use detox, etc. should all be considered.

All of these options already exist in Tacoma. But they are not envisioned or coordinated in a fashion that directly addresses the challenge of sheltering unhoused people with disabilities who are sleeping on the street overnight.

The City leadership spends a lot of time explaining why they can't do things, or talking about performative things that don't actually address the problem, like ADA compliance which is good but does not solve the shelter problem for people with disabilities.

Let's put the people who need help at the center of the work. How do we construct an innovative system of housing options that will actually work effectively for people with disabilities?

The first step is...YOU HAVE TO WANT TO DO THIS.

Kick it off, Human Rights Commission! 😊

Testimony to the Implementation Advisory Board, 2022-2024.

The Implementation Advisory Board is a Board established by the Pierce County Council to oversee and address the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness (CPEH). Note that the CPEH includes NO mention of “encampment removals, “camping bans,” “sweeps,” etc. A list of IAB members is the final page in this document. As you can see, the IAB has the power to question sweeps as a tactic for helping unhoused people. But they have not taken any action to do so.

March 1, 2024. Sally said that the sole qualification for someone to serve on the URA should be the demonstrated ability to respond constructively and compassionately to unhoused people sleeping on the street. This humanitarian crisis includes a near total lack of food, water, hygiene items, and respect. If you and your jurisdiction have not been actively working on this, you do not deserve representation on the URA. We do not need more boulders, we need basic sanitation, food, water, medical support, and a big dose of dignity and respect. Until we change the mindset of the people making the decisions, which she feels means changing the people who make the decisions, we can't relieve the suffering of the unhoused.

January 5, 2024. Sally Perkins reported that the homeless people she's helped sixty times or more this winter had their encampment “swept” today. She spoke with eleven of them and most have scattered. They're worried because a lot of their belongings were taken, including their burn barrels. She looked up the shelter vacancies: there are currently ten vacancies, seven of which are for families. She saw no visible families, lots of singles and a couple of couples. So, there are only four slots left that would be available for those 17 people. She mentions it because the statement that there are shelters available when sweeps are conducted is simply untrue. She gave out handwarmers that were utterly ineffective [handwarmers are not shelter]. Sweeps are counterproductive to everything we're trying to do. These people are emaciated and hungry and don't need to be pushed around by police officers. Sally urges this Board to try to change this. She appreciates the group's effort and thanks them for listening.

December 1, 2023. Anika opened for public comment. Sally read from Section 6, Responsibilities, of the Pierce County Human Services Inclement Weather Response Plan, reminding the group that Human Services determines inclement weather response and notifies partners and stakeholders, with homeless services staff scheduling and facilitating daily conference calls. As it turns out, none of this happened. Sally brought hand warmers out to people outside for the sixteenth time this year. We had several days of 28- degree weather and freezing fog. Sally noted that the report to the Select Committee on Homelessness seems to belong in the library's Fiction section. Weekend and holiday coverage have not been worked out since December 20 20, and not much progress has been made. Sally thanked Fred and Michael for their insistence on improvement.

October 6, 2023. Sally Perkins noted that the County Council has cancelled both October Select Committee on Homelessness meetings because they're in budget deliberations. There may be one at the end of the month at the Rescue Mission. The city's signed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court to overturn the past outdoor sleeping ban decision. She's worried about the level of urgency about moving forward and she's worried about the level of trust, and especially that the outdoor sleeping bans seem to have a "cloak of invisibility," in that no one talks about them. Sally took water to neighbors living outdoors on the street 42 times, and saw the struggle and misery they're experiencing by being pushed around, having their belongings taken, bathrooms eliminated, and barriers to obtaining food created. If this process moving ahead is going to get real, unhelpful and destructive policies need to be called out.

July 28, 2023. Sally Perkins takes water to people sleeping on Hilltop, despite the bans. Is it urgent? Is it urgent that probably 75% of them are Black? Is it urgent that 75% of them have discernible disabilities? It's a human rights violation, she thinks, but is it urgent? Most of them are over the age of 50, which is the age they die (20 years sooner than the rest of us). Does it feel urgent that they're consistently harassed by TPD, and drenched by Metro Parks sprinklers? If it's urgent, please take seriously your responsibility towards these human beings who are homeless in your community.

May 5, 2023. Where are we on functional zero? Are we getting closer? Are we getting further away? Are we staying the same? What are the racial demographics of the people in Tacoma, Lakewood, and the county who are being swept as part of the response to homelessness? Do we know if those sweeps are having a disproportionate impact on people of color? Of the people being swept in the same locations, what percentage of the people have disabilities? Disabilities include MH challenges, issues with substance use disorder, PTSD, trauma, physical mobility challenges, etc.? Do we really want to be sweeping people with disabilities? How do the funding reductions impact groups who are disproportionately homeless? Is there a mechanism for measuring that? There needs to be. When you convene people to discuss the impacts of the reductions, please include the community volunteers who are bringing food, supplies, and hygiene items to people every day. In terms of how we handle reductions, that group of volunteers are going to have some helpful insights into what might need to happen, so please include them.

April 7, 2023. Sally Perkins has been helping unhoused neighbors in Tacoma's Hilltop area. -She brought them water when it was hot last Summer. They "got swept," and it took her a while to find them again. They then "got swept" again. Each time she must rebuild the relationship. They were told to work with Coordinated Entry. They're not mobile, due to fear of losing their possessions (after being swept three times) and they also have a pet. Sally asked if someone could come and provide mobile Coordinated Entry. She was told that they're too overwhelmed to do that. The system is not responsive or equitable; there's no way to "say yes" to people. Both the County and city plans have lots of nice words in them, and there seems to be a lot of good news, but it doesn't seem to get down to the ground to help the people who need services. When the system has to work, it doesn't.

September 2, 2022. Sally Perkins noted that Valeri Almony's a total rock star! She talked about the sweeps of unsanctioned encampments in Tacoma. She knows these sweeps are not in our plan, however the City of Tacoma's doing sweep after sweep. What's particularly dismaying is that the sweeps add to misery and don't do anything positive. People have been swept through five separate heat emergencies. We should be planning for cold emergencies. These sweeps are counterproductive. Sally takes water to people on hot days and she's super dismayed by the sweeps that the City's doing.

Implementation Advisory Board Members

Kevin Bates, Helping Hand House, *Representing Service Providers*

Scott Schubert, MDC, *Representing Service Providers*

Cynthia Stewart, *Representing the Continuum of Care*

Rob Huff, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, *Representing the Coalition to End Homelessness (Alternate)*

Rich Berghammer, *Representing the Faith Community*

Adam Reichenberger, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, *Representing TPCHD*

Erika Tucci, Cheney Foundation, *Representing the Philanthropic Community*

Michael Mirra, former CEO of the Tacoma Housing Authority, *Representing the Affordable Housing Community*

Delmar Algee, Pierce County Human Services, *Representing Pierce County*

Steve O'Ban, Pierce County Executive's Office, *Representing the County Executive*

Ned Witting, Puyallup City Council, *Representing the City of Puyallup*

Caleb Carbone, City of Tacoma, *Representing the City of Tacoma*

Tiffany Speir, City of Lakewood, *Representing the City of Lakewood*

Fred Palmiero, from East Pierce County, *Representing Citizens*

Courtney Love, *Representing the Lived Experience Coalition*

Travaris, *Representing the Lived Experience Coalition (Alternate)*

Alan Hartman, *Representing the Youth Advisory Board*

Andrea Reay, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, *Representing the Business Community*

David Schroedel, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, *Representing the Business Community (Alternate)*

CITY LIST OF ENCAMPMENT REMOVALS Updated 12.28.2023 (almost the end of the year!)

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
Mar 26, 2021	S. 38th and G St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
Apr 13, 2021	E 72nd & F St	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
May 14, 2021	13/14th & G St.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
May 14, 2021	13th&Alzheimer	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
Sept 14, 2021	11th& Yakima	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
Sept 21, 2021	8/9th& Yakima	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
Oct 26, 2021	6th& L/M	N/A	N/A	N/A	Prior to other data being recorded
Jan 18, 2022	2nd and G				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored.
Feb 1, 2022	E 72nd and I St				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
Feb 4, 2022	I 705 & A Street				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
March 8, 2022	S 2nd & Tac Ave.				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
March 22, 2022	S.J St 7th to 13th	22	6	15,500 #	
March 28, 2022	E 26th St Bridge				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored 13

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
May 18, 2022	S 9th-11th MLK M				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
May 27, 2022	E 11th & Hylebos Bridge				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
June 1, 2022	S 6th & M St				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
June 21, 2022	Milwaukee Way				No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
July 12, 2022	11th St Bridge			32,360	No individual numbers provided, no materials stored
July 20, 2022	7th & Tacoma Ave	36	13	15,510	No materials stored
August 23, 2022	Center, Steele to Hosmer	22	12	41,020	No materials stored
Sept 13, 2022	Burlington 48th to 56th	8	7	42,910	No possessions stored.
Sept 13, 2022	56th & Madison	5	4	31,630	No possessions stored
Sept 27, 2022	15th-18th Yakima, Yakima 8th	19	16	17,640	No possessions stored
Oct 14, 2022	S J St 4th 5th	4	0	4,560	No possessions stored.
Oct 21, 2022	S 19-21, Yakima	7	0	5,100	No possessions stored
Oct 25, 2022	G, Altheimer 11th to 15th	44	26	45,000	No possessions stored
					26

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
Nov 23, 2022	8000 Hosmer	5	1	4,380	No possessions stored
Nov 29, 2022	2400 E M	8	1	14,340	No possessions stored
Nov 15, 2022	34th 35th Pacific Ave	34	19	102,840	No possessions stored
Dec 13, 2022	E 38th-I 705	5	1	11,700	No possessions stored
Dec 14, 2022	NW Furniture Bank	15	1	20,800	No possessions stored
Dec 15, 2022	Center Street	6	3	16,140	No possessions stored
Dec 2, 2022	So Tacoma Way	44	22	132,010	No possessions stored
Dec 29, 2022	East D Street	3	1	6,540	Complete
Dec 2, 2022	26th and Pacific	11	4	6,370	Complete
Jan 3, 2023	11th & Cushman	6	5	10,290	Complete
Jan 4, 2023	Stability Site #1	51	41	59,840	Complete
Jan 13, 2023	Jungle, E 26th St Under I-705	10	4	3,160	Complete
Jan 20, 2023	S. Frontage Rd Along SR-509	5	0	76,260	Complete
Jan 25, 2023	S 21st & I St.	8	4	5,560	Complete 40

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
Jan 10, 2023	Stability Site #2	34	19	56,200	Appears there have been 2 sweeps near the Stability Site...Completed
Feb 7, 2023	S 25th&S G St	7	7	7,140	Completed
Feb 14, 2023	S 7th& S I St	1	1	2,700	Complete
Feb 14, 2023	15th & Hood	2	1	2,400	WSDOT property; complete
Feb 14, 2023	S 2nd/3rd& G	16	12	18,880	Complete
Feb 9, 2023	S 25th & S J	10	4	18,640	Complete
Feb 17, 2023	11th & Cushman	3	2	1,780	Completed
Feb 22, 2023	Court D 5th/9th	1	1	Not listed	Complete
Feb 22, 2023	28th & Cushman	6	2	12,020	Completed
Feb 24, 2023	80/84th Hosmer	23	15	14,520	Completed
Feb 28, 2023	40th & Fife	32	32	19,420	Complete
March 8, 2023	26th & Pacific	6	0	1,920	Complete
March 2, 2023	78th 80th & S Trafton	4	4	10,670	Complete
					53

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
Mar 21, 2023	I-705&24th&A	8	5	5,640	Completed
Mar 21, 2023	E 25th& C St	4	3	4,000	AKA the Jungle/Completed
Mar 28, 2023	Cleveland Way	51	40	181,890	Completed
April 13, 2023	9th & Market	1	0	Minimal	Completed
April 11, 2023	37th&Union (Union Loop)	16	12	39,370	Completed
April 20, 2023	S 14th&G St.	6	1	8,260	Completed
April 4, 2023	North Levee Rd	21	19	186,240	Completed
May 10, 2023	901 Court E McCormick Park				City web site not updated, no longer listed?
May 10, 2023	Hillclimb Park Ct E/Tacoma Av				City web site not updated, no longer listed?
June 6, 2023	S. Sprague, 19th- 25th St	2	0	2,560	Completed
June 6, 2023	Slope bet/ S Tac Way and Delin St.	10	4	19,862	Completed
June 20, 2023	18th & Stewart	15	0	159,960	Plus 35 vehicles and RVs 65

Date removal began	Location	# contacted	# take resources	Pounds of debris removed	Comments
July 5, 2023	35th & Pine	3	0	3,750	Completed.
July 5, 2023	26th & Pacific	1	0	None	Completed
July 6, 2023	Altheimer	2	0	None	Completed
July 6, 2023	E 34th & C Street	3	0	None	Completed
July 12, 2023	80th & Trafton	12	4	13,460	Completed
Aug 29, 2023	N Frontage Rd	4	0	30,800	Completed
Sept 14, 2023	S 39th & Fife	3	0	None	Completed
Oct 13, 2023	SR509&PoT Rd	16	10	None	Completed
Oct 6, Nov 1, Nov 15, 2023	S 39th & Fife	10	10	2,460	Completed, 3 separate "removals"
Dec 6, 2023	S 40th&S Puget Sd	6	2	6,780	Completed 75



Lohitvenkatesh O <oswallohitvenkatesh@gmail.com>

RE: UPDATE Follow-up to June 3 2024 HRC PAA Committee meeting

Sally Perkins <sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com>

Thu, Jun 20, 2024 at 1:42 PM

To: Mary Ann Lara <maryannlara@outlook.com>, Kelly Oshiro <oshirokh@gmail.com>, Lohitvenkatesh Oswal <oswallohitvenkatesh@gmail.com>, Scott Schubert <sshubert@mdc-hope.org>, Keshreeyaji Oswal <keshreeyajioswal@gmail.com>

Cc: Sally Perkins <sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com>

Good afternoon, members of the Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee. I hope you are enjoying this beautiful weather.

I have some updates regarding the conditions under which our unhoused neighbors here in Tacoma are trying to survive. This information comes from personal observation and/or conversations with unhoused people in the Hilltop.

- They are now being required to take down any tents, tarps used as tents or lean-tos, or cardboard every morning and take it with them when they move.
- Because it is a hassle to put up and take down a tent when it's not raining, many people just keep their tents and tarps and cardboard stored in their grocery carts, wagons, etc.
- City staff/contractors are confiscating all wheeled storage vehicles, including grocery carts, wagons, etc. with the possessions in them. So people are losing their tents and most are now sleeping directly on the ground out in the open.
- Note that when people lose their tent/tarp/cardboard, they lose their "home" which protects their privacy. Their right to privacy in their own home, and non-interference from police, the HEAL Team, Code Enforcement, etc. is lost when the tents, etc. are confiscated.
- One person reported (but I have not been able to verify this yet) that an unhoused person's animal carrier, with the pet inside, was taken and only through the intervention of nearby unhoused people were the carrier and pet saved.
- Another person reported that several police officers surrounded them, printed off various copies of RCWs and possibly TMC provisions to justify threatening to arrest them.
- Several people reported that the confiscation of possessions takes place early in the morning when unhoused people are asleep.
- Several people reported that the confiscations are immediate, the posting notice is set down and the possessions taken, even when the unhoused person objects.

I am struggling to think of another example where a misguided but intentional government policy targets people with disabilities, people of color, and people with little or no income...and there is no outcry.

The Committee's continued efforts to address these human rights concerns are appreciated.

Sally

Sally Perkins

Practical Solutions

sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com

253 525 3020 (message and text phone for work)

From: Sally Perkins

Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 9:12 AM

To: Mary Ann Lara <maryannlara@outlook.com>; Kelly Oshiro <oshirokh@gmail.com>; Lohitvenkatesh Oswal <oswallohithvenkatesh@gmail.com>; Scott Schubert <sschubert@mdc-hope.org>; Keshreeyaji Oswal <keshreeyajioswal@gmail.com>

Cc: Sally Perkins <sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com>

Subject: Follow-up to June 3 2024 HRC PAA Committee meeting

Importance: High

Good morning, members of the Human Rights Commission's Policy, Advocacy, and Accountability Committee.

Thank you for your gracious welcome last evening and for your great questions and comments.

I have, thanks to your help, updated my written comments to you about my request and some data sources for addressing it, should the PAA Committee decide to take this on.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sally Perkins

Sally Perkins

Practical Solutions

PO Box 5366

Tacoma, WA 98415

Message/text phone: 253 525 3020

sally@practicalsolutionstacoma.com