

What would you like to hear your community leaders say about homelessness?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 2.10.23

Working Together

We shape our self to fit this world	to produce the miraculous.	to those elements we have yet to see
and by the world are shaped again.	I am thinking of the way the intangible air	or imagine, and look for the true
The visible and the invisible	passed at speed round a shaped wing	shape of our own self, by forming it well
working together in common cause,	easily holds our weight.	to the great intangibles about us.”
	So may we, in this life trust	— <i>David Whyte, <u>The House of Belonging</u></i>

Truth

- Acknowledge that homelessness was declared a crisis more than 2,000 days ago.
- Want recognition from leaders of smaller communities like Eatonville that we even have homelessness.
- Transparency in funding processes (perception of money being spent w/out going toward new programs)
- Want the Mayor to talk about behavioral health and mental health, not just homelessness. These are inextricably interrelated. (person with lived experience)
- Want the Mayor to admit that sweeps are harmful to unhoused people and say that she will work to change that entire policy.

Compassion

- Reflect on the homeless who die on our streets each year, on average twenty years younger than those who live in housing.
- Would love to hear Woodard oppose recriminalization of possession.
- Want to see an end to the sweeps, not blaming homelessness on a single problem at a time (it's not only an addiction/mental illness/social issues).
- No demonization/more compassion - "our" neighbors as opposed to otherizing language.
- Every veteran needs to be provided a roof over their head. Period.

- Let's get people indoors and stable. It doesn't need to be fancy, just serviceable. And soon.

Effective Strategies

- Highlight effective work to encourage a more optimistic outlook and to help counter all the blame that gets put on the homeless population.
- Commit to coordination and collaboration with Pierce County and the cities and towns of the county to implement the comprehensive plan to end homelessness.
- Support for tenth of percent tax.
- Needs to be better support with outreach resources. Talked about how large a barrier loss IDs and difficulty replacing can be.
- Commitment to more housing at 30% and below AMI. More support for Permanent Supportive Housing. Precipitating factors like drugs, divorce, job loss, health make living on streets happen faster; lack of a place they can afford to live is the cause.
- Need affordable housing for people with limited incomes from low-paying jobs, or those on fixed incomes. So 30% AMI or max 50% AMI. These are the income levels where the greatest need for additional housing is.
- Elderly and disabled people need attention, especially those with health or MH issues. Need housing for people to be supported in recovery from surgery or other health issues, then housing for longer-term. Need mental health support and case management to be successful. (person with lived experience with this specific topic).
- Want to hear that Tacoma has been behind on building housing and we are trying to, if not on track, to catch up.
- Want to hear that there is a certain % of money being allocated to shelter and housing for the most vulnerable and those banned from shelters, like the elderly and ones with health issues.
- Sanctioned campsites are a great model for getting housing in place quickly. More sites, more faster.
- Housing policies need to focus on making more spaces, not restricting them. Once we have enough beds to get everyone indoors, then we can shift to "levelling up".
- Want to hear about work to reduce barriers to building and how we, all of us, the community, need to reduce barriers and not create barriers to building housing.
- People want to live near their support network. Families, schools for kids, friends, etc all tend to be anchored to the locale where one becomes homeless. Services/site across town may make an individual more vulnerable rather than less.
- The low-income housing strategy should be built as network rather than monoliths. Many small nodes minimize the impact to specific neighborhoods, provide elasticity to expand and contract with economic changes, and help nurture community within the node. Large monoliths create ghettos and destroy communities.

- People who move into housing need case management and a plan to move toward self-sufficiency. The low barrier shelters allow people to do drugs, and don't require people to address their various challenges or work toward self-sufficiency. Case management and a plan for moving ahead should be required. (person with lived experience).

Questions

- What is the actual financial and human costs of sweeps.
- A lot of money is spent to put up temporary emergency shelters when they are planned to sunset. Why can't they continue?
- Why doesn't the City address the criminals who commit crimes in encampment?. Sweeping the whole encampment punishes everyone.
- Definition and criteria of "chronically homeless" is a problem. (person with lived experience)
- Why not put trash containers at encampments instead of huge cost of trash removal during sweeps.

Notes and Resources List

If you haven't visited the **Coalition website**, you can take a look here:

<http://pchomeless.org>

Free Food & Resources Market open tomorrow, Sat. 2/11, 10-12 AM, 4819 S 12th Tacoma WA. everyone welcome.

All "recovery residences," must be registered through the HCA as of January 1, 2023.

Registry information and a searchable database by county: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-behavioral-health-support/recovery-residences#recovery-residence-referral-mandate-RCW-71-24-660>

Tacoma Encampment Removal page.

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=133588>

Tax Preparation Help. Here is where you can check for VITA sites near you -

<https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/jsp/vita.jsp?zip=98424&lat=47.2324122&lng=-122.3473803&radius=25>

Resources on Blake

<https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/blake>

<https://civilsurvival.org/guides/determining-blake-eligibility/>

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7229/Blake>

<https://kingcounty.gov/courts/clerk/programs/blake.aspx>

Prison Policy Initiative has the data on incarceration rates. Making drug possession a felony again would make this worse. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/>

Love in the Time of Fentanyl is showing on KCTS Monday at 10.

<https://www.kcts9.org/show/independent-lens/schedule>

Resources on replacing ID. <https://hhrctraining.org/events-webinars/webinar/1751/helping-individuals-experiencing-homelessness-obtain-identification>

<https://hhrctraining.org/knowledge-resources/toolkit/1926/helping-obtain-ID>

Recovery Navigator Program (West Pierce) referral line, 253-878-6057 Online referral: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=Slkwa8riH0igXSBcplvleSkoKDCIOpFGiEd7kvOxdYIURTVBOVRVRIhKMDA0UIVUU1IVSIZLMFIEQiQIQCN0PWcu>

Recovery Navigator Program (East Pierce) Kenneth King - Outreach Coordinator - kingk@p-c-a.org 253-502-5455

COVID vaccine clinic info you can share with your clients: Shiloh Baptist Church shelter at 1211 I. Street. Tacoma. 2/18/23 and 3/18/23 from 11am to 3pm.

Jennifer Ammons at NW Justice is interested in hearing of anyone who loses possessions or is otherwise harmed by being swept from a location they genuinely did not know was within a "buffer" zone. JenniferA@nwjustice.org

This is the link to join the Advisory Board meeting this afternoon (2/10) at 3 p.m.: <https://piercecountywa.zoom.us/j/91084688732>

Advocacy Resource List

<https://leg.wa.gov>

<https://tvw.org>

WLIHA Advocacy pages - Take Action Now! <https://www.wliha.org/take-action>

2023 Public Policy Priorities <https://www.wliha.org/advocacy/2023-public-policy-priorities>

Join the weekly advocate calls on Fridays, 2-3pm on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUsdumvrDMtHtSqWteCBB4VIDeAolIRnuCl>

SB 5332 - 2023-24

Prohibiting locating homeless encampments near schools and early learning facilities.

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5332&Initiative=false&Year=2023>

Tenant Rights Action Conference, Saturday, February 11th, 12:00-4:30p.m, Common Good, 621 Tacoma Ave, Tacoma, WA 98402