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City Council

Approval of a Resolution Recognizing the Regional Need for Housing and Related Services for the Homeless, or Persons in Danger of Being Homeless, and to Consider Raising Revenue as Provided by State Law for Housing and Related Services

Agenda Date: 7/11/2017

Agenda Item Number: 4.F

File Number: 17-0714

Type: resolution **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

Title

Approval of a Resolution Recognizing the Regional Need for Housing and Related Services for the Homeless, or Persons in Danger of Being Homeless, and to Consider Raising Revenue as Provided by State Law for Housing and Related Services

Recommended Action

City Council:

Move to approve a resolution recognizing the growing problem of homelessness in the City of Olympia, which requires prompt attention to reduce human suffering for vulnerable populations, and to consider use of state law to raise the City's sales tax or use tax rate.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve Council resolution as requested by unanimous vote of Council on June 20, 2017.

Report

Issue:

Should the Council approve a resolution recognizing the problem of homelessness in Olympia, to reduce human suffering of vulnerable populations, and to consider use of state law to raise the City's sales tax or use tax rate should the County decline to exercise its option to place a ballot proposition before the County's voters by October 9, 2017.

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Background and Analysis:

At the June 6, 2017, City Council Study Session, Stuart Elway of Elway Research presented the

results of a recent resident voter opinion poll commissioned by the City. The Elway Poll asked residents to respond to a series of questions pertaining to housing and public safety. Mr. Elway reported there was strong support for a housing measure to raise income for housing and related services with nearly 8 in 10 of respondents supporting the package.

Many of the region's most vulnerable homeless end up on the streets of downtown Olympia without access to basic needs of safe housing, reliable food sources, and medical or mental health services. The City has recently completed the Downtown Strategy, which revealed homelessness as the leading concern for the viability of Olympia's downtown area.

The Olympia City Council formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability in February 2017, to study, review, and take public input on issues relating to homelessness and other critical housing related services. The Committee's investigation and research revealed a need for housing and housing related services for Olympia's and the region's most vulnerable citizens, including the mentally ill, veterans of America's Armed Forces, victims of domestic violence and abuse and their children, families with children, and unaccompanied youth and young adults, including persons with substance abuse issues.

The state legislature has provided a method for raising the necessary revenue to provide housing and related services for the homeless in RCW 82.14.530 by an increase of one-tenth of one percent of the sales tax or use tax. State law grants to the local county until October 9, 2017, to impose the full tax rate authorized under RCW 82.14.530(1)(a) by submission of a ballot measure at a special or general election to county voters that is successful if approved by a majority of the voters.

If the County fails to exercise its option to place a ballot proposition before the County's voters by October 9, 2017, then the City of Olympia may submit a ballot proposition to the City's voters at a special or general election authorizing the imposition of the sales tax or use tax which may not exceed one-tenth of one percent of the sales tax or use tax within the City's municipal boundaries.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The poll conducted by Stuart Elway reported strong resident support for housing and related services.

Options:

1. Approve the proposed resolution.
2. Do nothing at this time.

Financial Impact:

None at this time.

Attachments:

Resolution