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## City Council

### Approval of an Ordinance Declaring a Continuing State of Public Health Emergency Relating to Homelessness - First and Final Reading

**Agenda Date:** 12/18/2018  
**Agenda Item Number:** 4.W  
**File Number:** 18-1215

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**Type:** ordinance **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

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**Title**

Approval of an Ordinance Declaring a Continuing State of Public Health Emergency Relating to Homelessness - First and Final Reading

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Move to approve the ordinance declaring a continuing state of public health emergency relating to human health and environmental conditions caused by increasing homelessness in our community on first and final reading.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to approve an ordinance declaring a continuing state of public health emergency relating to increasing homelessness in our community.

**Staff Contact:**

Mark Barber, City Attorney, 360.753.8338

**Presenter(s):**

None - Consent Calendar Item.

**Background and Analysis:**

Homelessness is an issue of urgent public concern facing Olympia and the region. On June 14, 2018, the Thurston County Board of Health declared homelessness a public health crisis in Thurston County.

The latest Point-in-Time homeless census found at least 320 people sleeping unsheltered in unmanaged conditions countywide. In addition to this annual count, City staff periodically conducts

an early morning count of people sleeping on the street in downtown; routinely finding approximately 130 people living unsheltered within the core of downtown.

On July 17, 2018, the City Council passed and adopted an ordinance declaring a public health emergency. Since that date, less than six months ago, the number of tents for homeless persons in downtown Olympia has increased by more than three hundred percent (300%). Since first declaring a public health emergency, the City of Olympia has been in the process of identifying and implementing solutions-based actions to address this increasingly challenging issue.

Declaring a state of continuing public health emergency provides a factual basis for the City's present and existing public health emergency, and references statutory authority that allows the City more flexibility to act quickly in response to homelessness. Under the ordinance, the City may, for example, obligate funds, enter into contracts, or site facilities outside of normal time-consuming procedures.

The continuing public health emergency ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption by a vote of a majority plus one, and the emergency will be in effect through June 19, 2021. In six months after adoption of this continuing public health emergency ordinance, the City Council will review the conditions that gave rise to this public health emergency to determine if this ordinance should be extended for another six-month period, with possible successive renewals until the sunset date.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Homelessness is an issue of significant concern to the citizens, businesses and homeless in the City of Olympia.

**Options:**

1. Move to approve the continuing ordinance declaring a state of public health emergency relating to human health and environmental conditions caused by increasing homelessness in our community.
2. Move to take no action.

**Financial Impact:**

None

**Attachments:**

Ordinance