



City Council

Approval of Homeless Response Plan Funding Request and Status Report

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive a status report on the Homeless Response Plan and move to approve an allocation of \$30,000 from City Council goal money to support the public process for the Homeless Response Plan.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve an allocation of \$30,000 from City Council goal money to support the public process for the Homeless Response Plan, and receive a status report, including introduction to the Community Work Group, upcoming public workshops, other partner/community engagement, and overview of resource needs.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Stacey Ray
Amy Buckler
Grace Burkhardt, member of the Community Work Group

Background and Analysis:

Rising homelessness is the most significant and urgent public concern facing our city. In July 2018, the Olympia City Council declared a state of public health emergency related to homelessness; the Thurston County Commissioners also declared a state of emergency last year. Although

homelessness is most visible within the urban hub of downtown Olympia, this issue affects all of Thurston County

During 2019, the Olympia City Council is convening a broad, community-driven process to identify strategies and actions to respond to homelessness and its impacts on the city. The approach is based on a framework and methodologies called Participatory Leadership: a community-based approach to addressing complex issues that emphasizes learning, dialogue, equity, and inclusiveness.

Staff will provide an update about progress made to date, including:

- Several partner and community organizations were briefed by staff and Councilmembers, inviting participation.
- The Community Work Group has convened. **See attached** for an introduction to the group members.
- A series of community and partner engagement opportunities are planned for the first phase of the process. **See attached** timeline.
- The online portal “Engage Olympia” launched by March 26.

Funding Request

As the scope of the work around the Homeless Response Plan has come into clear focus, staff anticipates additional resources will be needed to support expectations for the public process. The expectations include multiple engagement opportunities within a tight timeline and quick turn-around of summary reports of input from each meeting available to the Community Work Group, City Council and public. Staff is requesting \$30,000 from Council Goal Money to move this project forward.

The primary use of these funds would be for consultant support services to assist with meeting design, analyzing and developing summaries of public input. This work will require a level of professional sophistication that existing staff are able to do, but do not have the capacity to perform within the process timeline. The work requires the ability to identify tensions within and among stakeholder groups, and sort out what are policy issues, strategies and actions.

Between March and October 2019, the consultant would:

- Be responsible for assembling, sorting and analyzing all collected input.
- Attend most of the community engagement events, take detailed notes and produce summaries for future compilation and analysis.
- Present to the Community Work Group about findings from community input events.
- Store data in a log and database form. The database serves as the central clearinghouse from which themes, options and other Community Work Group discussion threads will be assembled. The log provides a contextual reference point in the event future clarification or intent is helpful. The goal is to develop a summary table or matrix that outlines key challenges and opportunities as well as potential strategies, actions or resources that could be applied to address them.
- Present findings and or tool explanations to stakeholders at various levels, depending on staff needs and direction.
- Advise staff on engagement strategies as needed.

Funds would also be used toward the development of communication materials, and miscellaneous costs associated with large public meetings (e.g., room reservations, printing). See **attached** funding request.

Staff anticipates the requested funding is needed to support expectations for the public process, primarily for the consultant help with assembling, sorting and analyzing all collected input. Alternatively, the process timeline or scope could be changed so that expectations can be supported by existing staff resources. Implications are that the Community Work has only committed their time through this year, and there was an expectation that the process inform the City's homeless response efforts by 2020. Another alternative would be to fund the need using homeless response funds allocated to address the emergency. The implication is less money in that pot for a second mitigation site or other emergency actions that may arise this year.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

There is significant public interest in the City's response to homelessness. As the process moves forward, summary reports of each community and partner engagement event will be posted to the Engage Olympia website.

Options:

1. Move to approve an allocation of \$30,000 from City Council goal money to support the public process for the Homeless Response Plan.
2. Move that the process timeline or scope be changed and carried out with existing staff resources.
3. Move that funding for the Homeless Response Plan be derived from the homeless response funds allocated to address the emergency.
4. Do not approve the funding request at this time.

Financial Impact:

Funding request for \$30,000 to support the Homeless Response Plan public process. See attachment for details.

Attachments:

Funding Request
Process Timeline
Community Work Group
Link to Homelessness webpage