

July 24, 2017

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

General update on the Eastside Men's Shelter and Supportive Housing Project, with a focus on providing Council with a status update on the specific items of Council direction to staff from prior meetings to:

- Prepare options, for Council to address through the city code provisions, for stronger vehicle parking, camping and outdoor camping regulations citywide;
- Create public information and education materials on panhandling; and
- Perform due diligence and open discussions with Sound Transit to determine a path forward for making a homeless shelter project, which could include affordable housing and a day center, in conjunction with the OMF-E site.

In a separate study session item for July 24, Council will continue its policy discussion of the Eastgate LUCA and specific direction regarding regulating homeless shelters and safe injection sites in the City's Land Use Code.

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POLICY ISSUES

This study session is simply a status update, and significant policy discussion is not anticipated on July 24. The following policies are generally guiding the work of staff on these topics:

- The City Council Vision Priorities direct the City to work with regional partners to "establish an eastside permanent winter homeless shelter to be ready for the winter of 2018/19." This priority echoes the Council's adopted 2014 Diversity Advantage plan, which includes an action item "supporting the establishment of a year-round homeless shelter on the Eastside."
- These directive actions are consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies adopted in 2015 including:
 - HO-35: Support regional efforts to prevent homelessness, and make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time when it occurs. Provide a range of affordable housing options and support efforts to move homeless persons and families to long-term financial independence.

- HO-36: Collaborate with other jurisdictions and social service organizations to assure availability of emergency shelter and day centers that address homelessness.
 - HS-14: Support agencies locating human service facilities in Bellevue and, where appropriate, encourage efficiencies through agency collocation and collaboration.
 - HS-18: Support an intentional local community response to homelessness with housing and supportive services provided to families, youth and single adults

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



Information will be provided, relative to the June 5 City Council direction, for staff to develop a schedule and path forward for potential additional code amendments applied citywide associated with homelessness management.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

King County, Congregations for the Homeless (CFH), Imagine Housing, and the City are exploring the potential of a permanent men's shelter in the EG-TOD district on property owned by King County. The City Council has held seven study sessions since August 1, 2016 about the proposed Eastside Men's Shelter and Supportive Housing Project. In Study Sessions on April 17 and June 5, the City Council directed staff to pursue several concurrent actions relative to homelessness in Bellevue and the regulatory requirements around shelters in Bellevue.

Bellevue, in partnership with other eastside jurisdictions, faith-based and non-profit service providers and as part of county-wide efforts to coordinate response to homelessness, has for many years been actively responding to individuals and families experiencing homelessness within our City. With a focus on prevention, City response has centered on an approach across four basic categories: outreach, support services, facilities and enforcement. Ensuring adequate resources within each of these categories creates a comprehensive approach to homelessness, both for individuals in crisis and for the community. Bellevue's approach is guided by a commitment to compassion and pragmatism, with the focus on transitioning individuals out of homelessness while maintaining our commitment to enforce and respond to behaviors and activities that don't comply with existing city rules and regulations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

Council directed staff to return with concurrent actions relative to the siting of shelters in Bellevue:

- Prepare options, for Council to address through the city code provisions, for stronger vehicle parking, camping and outdoor camping regulations citywide;
- Create public information and education materials on panhandling; and
- Perform due diligence and open discussions with Sound Transit to determine a path forward for making a homeless shelter project, which could include affordable housing and a day center, in conjunction with the OMF-E site.

A diverse, cross-departmental team is working toward a comprehensive citywide approach where clear expectations can be communicated to the public and regulations can be successfully enforced. Specific updates on the progress of each item of direction are below.

Prepare options for strong vehicle parking enforcement: Evaluation of existing protocol, enforcement tools and resources is currently underway, including coordination with Bellevue police and parking enforcement officers. This review and evaluation will assist in determining what may be working well and develop options for components that need improvement. An example of elements being evaluated include clarification of existing enforcement protocol related to the 24-hour parking limits and the terms related to “moving”; enforcement tools related to trash dumping and accumulation; waste tank dumping; and use of RV generators. After identifying any gaps and areas for improvement, staff will identify options for potential code modifications and determine resource needs (if any). We expect to return to Council in September with specific recommendations.

Prepare options for the regulation of outdoor camping: Evaluation of existing protocol, enforcement tools and resources is currently underway. This review and evaluation will assist in determining what may be working well and develop options for components that need improvement. While initial review indicate the existing protocols seem to be successful, staff continues to investigate gaps or areas for improvement, and will identify options for potential code modifications and determine resource needs (if any). In particular, we are including within this scope of review the City’s role in enforcing rules and restrictions in camping on private property subject to easements benefitting the public. This issue came up in the Council’s discussion of the Downtown Livability code package on July 17. We expect to return to Council in September with specific recommendations.

Undertake a public education campaign on panhandling and identify sites or locations that are the subject of frequent complaints: Staff is working to provide broader education, and information regarding panhandling. Bellevue has researched several cities, locally and across the country, that have developed educational campaigns on this issue. It is worth noting that a common message is dispelling the ongoing misconception that all panhandlers are homeless. Many studies indicate only a small percentage of homeless individuals actually partake in this activity.

Staff is working to develop an educational webpage specific to this issue. This page will include general information related to panhandling, additional ways to assist homeless individuals instead of giving money, and a community resource guide.

As this item can be relatively easy to accomplish with minimal resources, we anticipate moving forward with development of webpage content, messaging, and a community resource guide over the summer. We expect to launch these materials in the near term, starting with information included in BellevueNOW, a new interview-style format segment on Bellevue Television and YouTube channel, available in late July.

Develop and perform due diligence with Sound Transit related to siting a homeless shelter on the OMF east site: While still at the very preliminary stage, staff have opened conversations with Sound Transit to identify what steps may lay ahead for both agencies, and determine continued engagement.

OPTIONS

We will return to Council with a comprehensive briefing and recommendations in September 2017. Work related to public education and engagement regarding panhandling is underway.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

N/A