

BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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BACKGROUND:

The 2018 Proposed Budget adds \$3.4M and 11.73 FTE to support a new cross-departmental Homelessness Emergency Response program (HER), providing management and oversight of the City's efforts for unsheltered homeless. It comprises a multi-departmental effort by the Human Services Department (HSD), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Police Department (SPD), and Finance and Administrative Services (FAS).

The activities of HER entail outreaching to unsheltered homeless individuals to connect them with the region's homelessness system, addressing public safety and public health concerns regarding unauthorized encampments, unauthorized encampment assessment and removal, and ensuring adherence to administrative rules governing unauthorized encampment removal.

The implementation of HER would be achieved through transfer of a cabinet-level position, obtainment of office space, reassignment of cleaning duties, and transitioning one-time costs related to transforming strategies commenced under former Mayor Murray's Bridging the Gap plan, such as the Navigation Team, to on-going investments.

Funding for HER involves \$1,000,000 from Commercial Parking Tax revenue, \$500,000 from Gas Tax revenue, and \$1,905,615 in General Funds for a total of \$3,405,615 in new appropriations (Table 1).

Table 1: 2018 Proposed HER Budget by Department

2018 Proposed				
Department	General Fund	Other	% Funding	FTE
NAVIGATION TEAM				
FAS	\$772,141		23%	6.0
HSD	\$585,000		17%	
SPD	\$182,400		5%	
Subtotal	\$1,539,541		45%	6.0
UNAUTHORIZED ENCAMPMENT CLEAN-UP				
SDOT - Gas tax		\$500,000	15%	
SDOT - CPT		\$1,000,000	29%	
DPR	\$512,074		15%	
FAS	(\$146,000)		(4%)	5.73
Subtotal	\$366,074	\$1,500,000	55%	5.73
TOTAL	\$3,405,615		100%	11.73

The Council has expressed interest regarding unauthorized encampment removals in the City. This memo will first provide a broad overview of the process for unauthorized encampment removal, secondly describe proposed incremental costs of the Navigation Team, and finally describe the proposed new program for unauthorized encampment removal clean-up.

I. Unauthorized encampment removal overview

The City removed and cleaned up 135 unauthorized encampments from January to mid-August 2017. In response to concerns regarding encampment removal, former Mayor Murray convened the MDAR Advisory Committee, tasked with making recommendations on improving encampment removal rules. These new rules—the [FAS Encampment Removal Rule](#) and [Multi-Departmental Administrative Rule \(MDAR\) 17-01](#)— were implemented on April 3, 2017, and outline requirements for City officials in clearing unauthorized encampments.

The Navigation Team – A key component of unauthorized encampment outreach and the overall removal process is the Navigation Team, launched in February 2017 as part of the Bridging the Gap strategy. The team currently consists of 22 staff: 14 City staff (eight full time officers and a sergeant in SPD, two Encampment Coordinators, an Encampment Response Manager, an Outreach Coordinator, and administrative support) and eight contracted staff (seven outreach workers and an outreach supervisor from Evergreen Treatment Services’ REACH program). The Navigation Team was designed based on research and other jurisdictions’ experiences that indicate assertive outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness increases participation in services for unsheltered individuals. Specifically, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness recommends an approach for the most difficult-to-reach (e.g., homeless persons with mental illness or addiction disorder) that involves intensive and persistent outreach, utilizing a name list, contacting multiple times to develop relationship of trust, and having an ability to provide immediate services or interim housing options.

Requirements for Removal – Requirements include but are not limited to documentation of all encampment removals in a database, 72-hour notification prior to an encampment removal, an offer of shelter or housing before removal, and the storage of belongings and process for their proper return. The FAS Encampment Removal Rule defines an “immediate hazard” as an element in the area that poses risk of serious injury or death, such being situated near a freeway on ramp, or landslide-prone areas. Once an immediate hazard is identified in the area of an encampment, the City is enabled to remove the encampment without adhering to 72-hour notification or other requirements set forth in the rules.

Removal Prioritization Process – Consideration to remove an unauthorized encampment by the City is initiated through reporting by a government employee, or, more commonly, through a report via the City’s Customer Service Bureau (CSB). CSB records indicate nearly 1,100 unauthorized camping service requests in a six-week period (August 24, 2017 to October 5, 2017). Encampment Coordinators visit identified sites and use assessment tools and photo-documentation to evaluate the area. The Encampment Response Manager uses the information collected by the Coordinators to prioritize sites for clean-up based on health and safety issues observed. Considerations may include but are not limited to excessive amounts of garbage,

criminal activity, vermin infestation, or biomedical debris. Notification is posted according to the clean-up prioritization schedule.

Deployment – The Navigation Team’s officers and contracted outreach staff are deployed to notified sites and attempt to connect individuals with services, including shelter. The Outreach Coordinator works with the supervisor of contracted outreach to coordinate deployment to sites and, as a licensed mental health professional, also serves as the primary resource for engaging people living in encampments who may be exhibiting mental health concerns and providing recommendations for supporting such individuals. When an unauthorized encampment is not slated for removal, the Navigation Team may still visit the site and engage with site residents to offer referrals and build relationships while City staff remove trash from the site. The Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR) performs site visits to monitor compliance with the FAS Encampment Removal Rule and MDAR 17-01.

II. Navigation Team – 2018 Proposed Budget

The proposed incremental costs for the Navigation Team are detailed in Table 2 with a discussion of items further below.

Table 2: Navigation Team 2018 incremental costs

Dept.	Item	2018 Endorsed	2018 Proposed	FTE
FAS	Encampment Response Manager 2 (Reclassification)	\$0	\$11,037	1.0
	Encampment Coordinator SA 1 (Reclassification)	\$0	\$110,278	2.0
	Outreach Coordinator SA 2	\$0	\$149,380	1.0
	Admin Spec 2	\$0	\$88,026	1.0
	Policy and Operations Support SA2	\$0	\$149,380	1.0
HSD	Contracted outreach	\$0	\$585,000	
SPD	Police Officer (8.0 FTE)	\$940,448	\$0	
	Sergeant	\$141,861	\$0	
	SPD Overtime	\$0	\$182,400	
FAS	New location (2,000 sq. ft.; showers)	\$0	\$264,040	
Total		\$1,082,309	\$1,539,541	6.0

Staffing

A. FAS

The 2018 Proposed Budget includes funding for reclassification of 3.0 FTE of ongoing positions, including a Manager 2 (\$11,037) and two Strategic Advisor 1 positions (\$110,278). These positions were reclassified in 2017 from a Strategic Advisor 1 position and two Maintenance Laborer positions, respectively, in light of the emergent complexity of inter-jurisdictional and inter-departmental coordination necessary to complete the work.

There are two 1.0 FTE Strategic Advisor 2 positions proposed for the Navigation Team. One of these positions, Policy and Operations Support (\$149,380), would be responsible for interpreting protocols when questions arise in the field, coordinating and integrating interdepartmental and interjurisdictional resources needed for encampment work, prioritizing encampments for removal, auditing compliance documentation, completing Racial Equity Toolkit analysis. This position will also assist in developing work for people living in vehicles. The other position, the Outreach Coordinator (\$149,380), is currently staffed and will sunset at the end of the year.

The Proposed Budget seeks to move the Director of Homelessness, a cabinet level position in the Office of the Mayor, to FAS to lead HER. This is a new function for this position as previously these emergency operations were led first by the Mayor's Special Advisor on Public Safety and is currently led by the Mayor's Director of Operations in close coordination with other Department directors. The position will remain cabinet-level; there are no associated funding changes for this move.

B. HSD

Bridging the Gap included \$600,000 in one time funds for contracted outreach services. The current year's contract includes funding for seven outreach workers and an outreach supervisor with REACH. The Outreach Coordinator has also utilized HSD contracts with other providers for specialized outreach, such as DESC's HOST program. The Proposed Budget includes \$585,000 for outreach; these funds are currently being competed in the Homeless Investment RFP to be concluded later this year.

C. SPD

SPU anticipates approximately \$116,000 in overtime costs in 2017. The Proposed Budget for 2018 includes \$182,000 for overtime. Time scheduling for engaging with people who are homeless sometimes does not adhere to a regular schedule. Navigation Team officers are periodically scheduled on weekends.

Location

Former Mayor Ed Murray activated the City's Emergency Operations Center in February 2017 as a practical means to convene the multiple Departments and City partners to respond to unsheltered homeless. City Departments utilized existing resources for the coordination. The EOC activation was intended to be temporary, and its use for this purpose is planned to end by the close of the calendar year. The 2018 proposed budget accordingly includes \$264,040 in appropriations for a permanent space for HER operations, which entails funding for rent of a City-owned building (2,000 square feet), ongoing and one-time supply costs, fourteen parking stalls, and one-time tenant improvement costs. The new location will require showers and boot decontamination equipment due to public health hazards encountered in the field. Ending EOC activation for Navigation Team activities will free up the space for more regular activities of the Office of Emergency Response.

Theory of Change

The Executive produced a theory of change for the Navigation Team; a theory of change is a framework that can potentially be used to evaluate a program or strategy. The theory of change posits the Navigation Team as a solution to concerns regarding low rates of acceptance of shelter among people who live in unauthorized encampments, and the interdepartmental coordination needed to ensure compliance with administrative rules in encampment removal.

The theory of change will be analyzed by the Office of the City Auditor with the assistance of Council Central Staff; this report, to be released later this month, will provide a suggested reporting plan to acquire evaluative data to help determine next steps in assessing performance of the Navigation Team.

Options:

- A. Amend the 2018 proposed budget to reflect Council priorities.
- B. Issue a SLI that instructs the Executive to report on the activities and results of the Navigation Team.
- C. Impose proviso language to restrict spending for the Navigation Team to reflect Council priorities.

III. Unauthorized Encampment Clean-Up – 2018 Proposed Budget

The following table shows expenses for Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), SDOT, DPR, and FAS through July 31, 2017 in conducting unauthorized encampment clean-ups, which total almost \$4.4 M for approximately six million pounds of trash collected.

Table 3: 2017 Unauthorized Encampment Clean-Up Costs (through July 31, 2017)

2017 Unauthorized Encampment Clean-Up Costs		2017
Labor	Seattle Public Utilities	\$274,000
	Seattle Department of Transportation	\$1,200,000
	Department of Parks and Recreation	\$683,000
	Contractual (Finance and Administrative Services)	\$650,000
	Disposal	\$464,000
	Fencing	\$570,000
	Equipment and other	\$523,000
	Total	\$4,364,000

The plan under HER would change the approach for unauthorized encampment clean-up by transferring clean-up responsibility primarily to DPR, as summarized in Table 4 below. Although SPU and SDOT will not be explicitly tasked with unauthorized encampment clean-ups related to Navigation Team activities, they may still engage in such activities through management of illegal dumping (SPU) and cleaning the right-of-way.

Table 4: 2018 Proposed Budget for Unauthorized Encampment Clean-Up

Dept.	Item	2018 Endorsed	2018 Proposed	FTE
FAS	Contracted clean-up (reduction for DPR)	\$650,000	(\$146,000)	
DPR	2 Clean-up Crews, Manager, Radio Dispatcher, Health and Safety Spec	\$0	\$578,800	5.73
	Tipping Fees	\$0	\$452,000	
	Ongoing equipment	\$0	\$117,274	
	One time equipment	\$0	\$704,000	
	Safety, support and supplies	\$0	\$160,000	
	Total	\$650,000	\$2,012,074	5.73

There will be two dedicated DPR special maintenance crews that will be responsible for clean-ups involving the Navigation Team; for more details see the DPR issue paper. The Washington State Department of Transportation will continue to clean areas administered by the state and FAS will continue using contracted clean-up at a reduction of \$146,000 to the \$650,000 endorsed amount. The full incremental cost of the new clean-up plan is \$2,012,074.

Cleanup costs for DPR also includes \$525,471 in General Funds absorbed in the 2018 Endorsed Budget. The projected ongoing cost for clean-up, including \$525,471 for DPR in absorbed 2018 costs and excluding one-time equipment costs, is \$1,687,545.

Options:

- A. Amend the 2018 proposed budget to reflect Council priorities.
- B. Impose proviso language to restrict spending to reflect Council priorities.
- C. Adopt the 2018 budget as proposed.

BUDGET ACTIONS PROPOSED BY COUNCILMEMBERS AS OF 10/09/17:

1. Add \$150,000 for health professional to staff Navigation Team (CM Bagshaw)

This funding would add 1.0 FTE nurse position to the Navigation Team. Adding a health professional to the Navigation Team will increase capacity and modality of care for unsheltered homeless at encampments.

2. SLI directing FAS to provide enhanced reporting on the Navigation Team (CM Herbold)

This would request FAS to provide Council with updates described in the reporting plan outlined in a report by the Office of the City Auditor, to be completed shortly after the first quarter of 2018.

3. Proviso on Navigation Team operations (CM Herbold)

This would proviso spending on Navigation Team activities at Budget Control Levels for SPD and FAS pending written confirmation of the Executive’s adherence to an agreed-upon reporting plan for Navigation Team outcomes based on the Theory of Change and other supporting documents.

4. Provide support for the provision of sanitation, portable toilets, and trash removal services for unauthorized encampments (CM Sawant)

This proposal calls for funding and services for amenities to support residents of unauthorized encampments; this proposal is unrelated to clean-ups resulting from “sweeps” and is intended as a harm reduction strategy.

5. Proviso on “sweeps” of homeless encampments (CM Sawant)

This would proviso all spending, including staff time, by the City of Seattle, preventing implementation of unauthorized encampment removal on public land, except on school property, active rights of way such as roads and sidewalks, and active parks. “Sweeping” means removing inhabitants and personal belongings, or providing administrative, security, or contracting support to such removals; this would not apply to sanitation, other law enforcement, trash removal, or outreach services to homeless people. Proviso will be lifted after passage of legislation guaranteeing human rights of unauthorized encampment inhabitants.