

July 18, 2019

MEMORANDUM

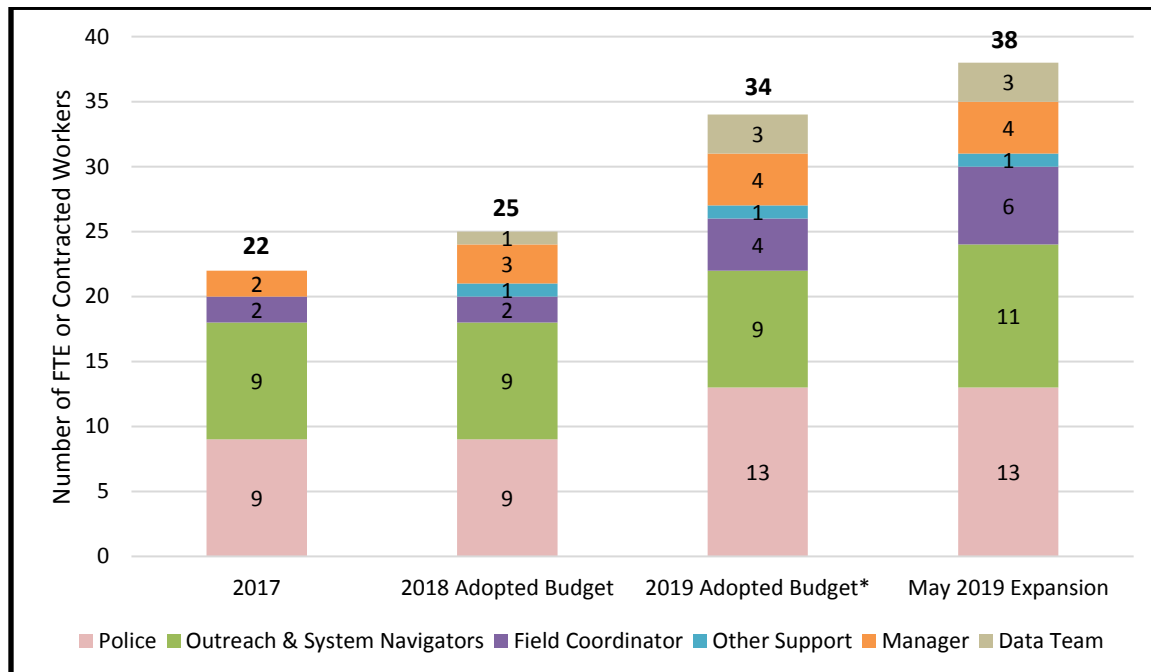
To: Members of the Select Committee on Homelessness and Housing Affordability
From: Jeff Simms, Central Staff
Subject: Background on Expansions of the Navigation Team

On Monday, July 22, 2019, the Select Committee on Homelessness and Housing Affordability (Select Committee) will receive updates on the expansion of the Navigation Team as announced by the Mayor on May 31, 2019 (see Appendix A) and discussed in a memo to the Council (see Appendix B). This memo provides background on the size and composition of the Navigation Team, the recent announcement, and areas where additional information from the Human Services Department (HSD) may be useful.

Size of the Navigation Team

Since its conception in 2016, the Navigation Team has gone through multiple expansions, most recently the addition of four FTEs announced by the Mayor in late May 2019 (see Figure 1). Expansions have primarily increased the number of support staff (e.g., supervisors, a communications manager, and data analysts) and field coordinators, who manage the assessments of sites and overall logistics for the remediation of encampments.

Figure 1: Number of Navigation Team Staff from 2017 to Present



* One-time funds from King County allowed HSD to implement the expansion proposed in the 2019 Adopted Budget at the end of 2018. Additional outreach workers resulting from increased funds in the 2019 Adopted Budget for the REACH contract are not included above.

The Outreach Workers on the Navigation Team are contracted employees of Evergreen Treatment Services – REACH (REACH). Since the creation of the Navigation Team, there have been eight REACH workers, as well as an Outreach Supervisor, who is an HSD employee.

May 31, 2019 Expansion of the Navigation Team

On May 31, 2019, the Mayor announced the expansion of the Navigation Team but did not announce the increased involvement of Community Police Team (CPT) officers and bike patrol officers in removing encampments. Police officers have always had the authority to instruct individuals whose encampment posed an obstruction or hazard to move, but in practice, that work was generally assigned to the Navigation Team.

Communications from the Mayor’s Office and HSD prior to the announcement indicated that CPT and bike patrol officers would begin enforcing the removal of encampments that could be defined as obstructions or hazards. Although the increased utilization of these officers to address homelessness was not announced, those officers received training on the rules governing the removal of encampments in May. The Mayor’s Office indicates that the Navigation Team would be contacted by these officers if an individual requested shelter or other services upon being told to remove their belongings from the right-of-way. It is not clear how often these officers are engaging with encampments. The weekly reports to the Council on encampments that will be removed (see [Statement of Legislative Intent 14-98-A-1](#)) do not include information specific to these activities; it is unclear if the summary information on removals includes those initiated by CPT and bike patrol officers.

The press release focused on the addition of two Field Coordinators and two System Navigators. System Navigators are HSD employees who provide similar services as the REACH outreach staff, but the System Navigators have schedules that cover the weekends. The expansion in the 2019 Adopted Budget included additional funds for the contract with REACH to increase the number of outreach workers, but those additional funds were never awarded. Instead, those funds were redirected to hire two System Navigators, which were included in the May 2019 expansion.

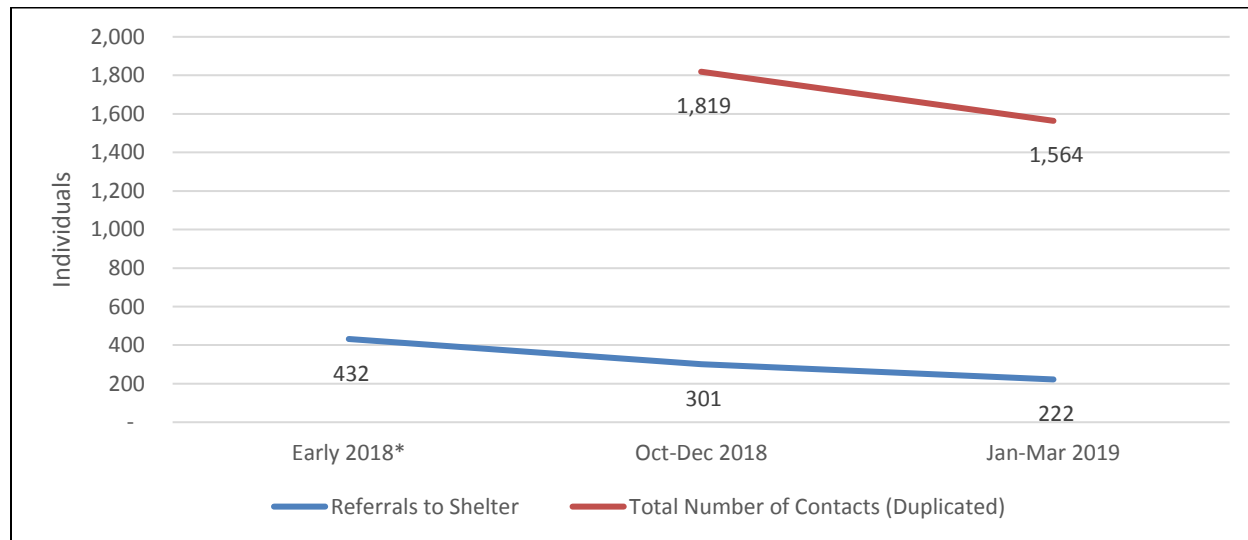
Budget and Performance Impacts

The May 31 expansion of the Navigation Team could have both budgetary and performance impacts. CBO has indicated the System Navigators were hired as temporary employees utilizing the funds in the 2019 Adopted Budget that would have expanded the REACH contract. The Field Coordinators are supported with underspend from vacant positions in HSD’s Homeless Strategies and Investments Division, but no FTE pocket has been identified for these positions. It is not clear if an increase in budget and staffing will be necessary to make these positions permanent.

Further, it is not clear how the recent expansion will affect metrics related to the work of the Navigation Team. Although the Navigation Team does not have performance targets that it is

required to meet, the Council receives quarterly updates on its work per [Green Sheet 14-95-A-4](#) (see Figure 2). The hiring of the System Navigators aligns with a decision not to have REACH outreach workers present on the day that an encampment is removed. REACH outreach workers instead have focused on building relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness and visiting encampments on the occasions when at least 72-hours notice of an impending removal is provided.

Figure 2: Navigation Team Quarterly Data



* Data taken from the [presentation on the Navigation Team to the Select Budget Committee on October 3, 2018](#), which provided data for seven months rather than quarterly. Previous memos to the Council assumed that presentation reflected six months of data. As such, quarterly estimate may not align with earlier materials. As of January 2019, data system improvements have improved the accuracy of the reported number of contacts made by the Navigation Team.

Potential Follow-up Questions

Councilmembers may want to obtain additional information during the presentation in the following areas:

1. Are System Navigators more successful than the REACH workers in connecting individuals with shelter or providing CPT and bike patrol officers support when encountering homeless encampments? How many times have CPT and bike patrol officers contacted the Navigation Team to provide services to an individual experiencing homelessness?
2. How many times have CPT and bike patrol officers enforced the removal of an encampment that is an obstruction or hazard? Are those removals included in the weekly report sent to the Council?
3. What are the results to date of using CPT and bike patrol officers to engage with encampments that are hazards or obstructions?

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director;
Aly Pennucci, Supervising Analyst



NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Prentice, mark.prentice@seattle.gov

Mayor Jenny Durkan Announces Continued Expansion of City's Navigation Team, New Steps to Connect More People Experiencing Homelessness with Services

Additions Allow Teams to Work Seven Days Per Week

Applauds \$1 Million in State Budget for WSDOT Cleanups Near and Along I-5 and I-90

Seattle (May 31, 2019) - Mayor Jenny A. Durkan today announced the continued expansion of the City's Navigation Team through the hiring of four additional members that will allow the team to work seven days per week. The Navigation Team is comprised of a specially-trained team of Seattle Police Department officers and outreach workers who connect unsheltered people to housing and resources, while also removing unsafe encampments from public property. The additional four members of the Navigation Team adds the necessary capacity to refer individuals to services seven days per week, in neighborhoods throughout the city. In total, there will be 38 members of the Navigation Team, including contracted outreach workers, which has expanded from 22 since Mayor Durkan took office in 2017.

“This crisis requires urgent action and new steps. We will continue to work for holistic solutions and do more to help bring people inside and connect them with services and housing – and we will continue to invest in the strategies we know have an impact, like enhanced shelter and our Navigation Team,” said Mayor Durkan. “The mission and work of the Navigation Team remains the same: Connecting people with services and helping them move into safer places. With vital new state resources in place in July, we will also continue to work with our partners at Washington State Department of Transportation to address homelessness in the state's right-of-way near and along I-5 and I-90.”

“I welcome the new outreach workers, called System Navigators, to join the Navigation Team,” said Jason Johnson, director of the Seattle Human Services Department (HSD). “These investments are impactful, providing direct support to people living unsheltered by expanding our ability to offer services and shelter referrals seven days a week. Every time the Navigation Team is out in the field, we have the opportunity to engage more people and offer critical lifesaving services.”

During this spring's legislative session, Mayor Durkan worked with legislators to obtain key state investments in the state budget for affordable housing, behavioral health treatment and to address homelessness. Also in April 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation as part of its budget process that allocates an additional \$1 million to clear debris, garbage, and hazardous materials, and implement safety improvements along WSDOT rights-of-way in the Seattle area.

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Appendix B: Mayor's Memo to Council Discussing Navigation Team Expansion

To: Seattle City Councilmembers

Date: May 31, 2019

Subject: Expanding the Navigation Team

From: Deputy Mayor David Moseley and Senior Advisor on Homelessness
Tess Colby

Cc: Jeff Simms, Council Central Staff

In an effort to keep Council apprised of developments around the Navigation Team, this memo provides more information on the Navigation Team expansion through the hiring of two additional Field Coordinators and two new System Navigator positions that will allow the team to work seven days per week.

As noted in the newly released Point in Time Count, there were an estimated 3,558 individuals living unsheltered in the City of Seattle in January 2019, which is down from 4,488 in January 2018. Every night, thousands of our neighbors sleep outside without shelter, in inhumane and dangerous conditions, and the Mayor believes we have an obligation to bring more people off the streets and into safer places. Over the last year, we have worked significantly towards consolidating and expanding the Navigation Team as well as a historic 25% increase in shelter capacity, including enhanced shelters which are exiting more people from homelessness to permanent housing.

As Councilmembers know, the Navigation Team is a team comprised of specially trained Seattle Police officers and outreach workers who connect unsheltered people to housing and resources, while also removing unsafe encampments from public property. In 2018, the City's Navigation Team made more than 1,500 referrals to safer places. During the snowstorm, the Navigation Team worked extended hours to provide additional outreach and to provide transportation to shelters for hundreds of people living unsheltered – the work that they are doing is saving lives and connecting people with shelter, case management, and other resources.

This announcement includes the addition of two new Field Coordinators for a total of six Field Coordinators, and the addition of two System Navigators, a new position being created within the Navigation Team. These new positions create additional outreach capacity within City staff and will further the team's reach by providing coverage on weekends, which addresses a critical need.

- Field Coordinators are responsible for inspecting and managing encampment sites. They also help ensure the MDAR and City regulations are followed. Further, Field Coordinators are responsible for the removal operations, including the storing of suitable possessions and disposal of debris, garbage, and waste. Field Coordinator positions will be funded via existing salary savings in the Navigation Team budget.
- System Navigators are new positions being added to the Navigation Team. These individuals will be responsible for providing outreach services and shelter referrals to people living unsheltered within encampments, particularly on days when City staff are addressing an area. System Navigator positions will be funded via the \$171,000 originally appropriated in the 2019 Budget for augmented outreach services for the Navigation Team. HSD now believes this outreach capacity would be better served from in-house city staff.

Below is the full breakdown of the Navigation Team, which now includes 30 people and 8 contracted outreach workers for a total of 38 people. This includes 11 SPD officers and 2 SPD Sergeants. Personnel from SPR, SDOT, SPU, and other contracts will continue their work to collect and dispose of debris, hazardous materials, and waste.

- 11 SPD officers + 2 Sergeants
- 1 Navigation Team Lead
- 1 Encampment Response Manager
- 4 Field Coordinators
- 1 Outreach Supervisor
- 1 Communications Manager
- 3 Data Analysts
- 1 Admin Specialist
- 1 Navigation Team Operations Manager
- 8 contracted outreach workers
- **NEW:** 2 Field Coordinators
- **NEW:** 2 System Navigators

Since 2008, the City has had specific rules – Multi-Department Administrative Rules (MDARs) – for the removal of encampments that balance providing services and alternatives to people living in encampments with the health and safety benefits of removing encampments. The latest protocols as part of the MDARs and regulations were implemented in April 2017, prior to the Mayor taking office. Since the Mayor has taken office, there have been **no changes** to these regulations or the City’s laws. Under the MDARs and the City’s current laws and regulations, the City has been enforcing hazards and obstructions in the public rights of way, fenced and posted public property, parks, and emphasis areas.

In general, the Community Police Team and Bike Patrol officers more often encounter individuals who are experiencing homelessness and need services and support. However, SPD officers, including CPT and bike officers, did not have Navigation Team staff available seven days a week nor clear protocols on who to contact to offer shelter, outreach resources, or storage of items. CPT and bike officers now have been trained on the [Multi-Department Administrative Rule \(MDAR\)](#) and [regulations regarding unauthorized encampments](#) and can contact the Navigation Team to offer services, shelter and storage of belongings to any individual who is obstructing sidewalks, parks, emphasis areas or fenced or signed areas. Our CPT and bike officers will continue their focus on crime and public safety, and these new Navigation Team members provide additional outreach support, a resource to key line officers, and do not impact or change the MDARs or City regulations.

In addition, REACH will continue its work to conduct outreach as part of the Navigation Team effort to people living unsheltered in encampments. REACH, which is also working with the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), has extensive experience conducting street-based outreach and voluntary engagement activities with adults and families experiencing homelessness in Seattle, including outdoor encampments, day centers, and emergency shelters. As part of their contract, REACH will employ and manage an Outreach Team consisting of seven REACH Care Coordinators and a Supervisor who will conduct outreach in encampments *in advance* of scheduled removal. For those still on site and open to outreach at the time of a removal, System Navigators will perform that function.