

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE*

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** Note that the Summary and Fiscal Note describes the version of the bill or resolution as introduced; final legislation including amendments may not be fully described.*

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: A RESOLUTION expressing The City of Seattle's commitment to addressing the shelter needs of people living unsheltered or at risk of homelessness by providing bridge housing options until housing stability or permanent housing can be secured.

Summary and background of the Legislation: Since 2015, the City has successfully developed and managed six city-sanctioned encampments, most of which include tiny wooden structures that have quickly added capacity of the emergency shelter system. A July 2017 assessment of the first three City-sanctioned encampments that they are an effective homeless response strategy to meet the immediate needs of people without shelter, especially those who have been living outside for long periods. The City-sanctioned encampments not only address individuals' immediate shelter needs but are also seeing success in working to resolve residents' homelessness with permanent housing. The City recognizes that there are not currently enough resources to address the housing needs of everyone who is experiencing homelessness and therefore seeks to invest in new innovative bridge housing strategies that address the immediate shelter needs of people living unsheltered until permanent housing can be secured.

This resolution directs the an Innovative Housing Strategies Subcabinet, composed of the Human Service Department, the Office of Housing, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Office of Planning and Community Development, Department of Finance and Administrative Services and the City Budget Office, to develop a Bridge Housing Investment Strategy using \$5.5 million in proceeds from the sale of property to increase the supply of innovative bridge shelter and/or housing options for people living unsheltered. The goal of the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy shall be to maximize capacity of bridge shelter and housing options in a rapidly deployable and cost-effective manner.

In addition, this resolution directs the Office of Housing and the Human Services Department to implement the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot to prevent households on the Seattle Housing Authority waitlist from falling into homelessness. Data indicate that nearly half of the 1,027 households issued a Seattle Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher in the 2015 lottery experienced homelessness at some point during their time on the waitlist. Fifteen percent of households were housed when placed on waitlist and became homeless prior to receiving a voucher. These episodes of homelessness are damaging to the households and costly for the homelessness system. Targeted short-term rental assistance and case management for these vulnerable populations can help to prevent homelessness and provide a more effective launching pad for the households to utilize their ongoing voucher.

This pilot will use the best practices and eligibility criteria from the City’s existing homelessness prevention programs in the Human Services Department, which was overhauled in 2017 to prioritize households for assistance using a tool that objectively assesses which households are most vulnerable to homelessness. Using a similar approach of progressive engagement based on individual need, but with the potential of a deeper and/or longer period of assistance, the City will proactively deliver a package of rent assistance and case management services to serve as a bridge until vulnerable households on the waitlist receive their voucher.

The primary goal of the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Program is to prevent households from falling into homelessness while on waitlists for longer-term assistance. The program’s success will be determined by its ability to prevent episodes of homelessness among the households it serves.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

a. Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? ___ Yes X No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

a. Does this legislation amend the Adopted Budget? ___ Yes X No

b. Does the legislation have other financial impacts to the City of Seattle that are not reflected in the above, including direct or indirect, short-term or long-term costs?

Estimated net proceeds of \$7.5 million from the sale of the Communication Shop property in South Lake Union are identified in companion legislation to finance the work of the Innovative Housing Strategies subcommittee, the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy and the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot for households on the Seattle Housing Authority waitlist. Proceeds are planned to be allocated to these two programs as below:

\$2,000,000	Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Program. Calculated based on estimated currently housed, Seattle households on the SHA waitlist which are vulnerable for homelessness.
\$5,500,000	Bridge Housing Investment Strategy. Includes administrative costs, the demonstration project and future projects which will be designed based on the results of the demonstration project.
\$7,500,000	TOTAL

c. Is there financial cost or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation?

For the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy, response to unsanctioned encampments and individuals living unsheltered presents a large cost and effort for human service providers, first responders other local government functions. Sanctioned encampments have been an attractive and viable alternative for those living unsheltered and, pending analysis of the demonstration project, micro homes are likely also an attractive bridge option for individuals awaiting permanent and stable housing.

For the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot, it is much more difficult and costly to provide services to individuals who are already homeless than it is to prevent households from becoming homeless in the first place.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?

The Resolution establishes an Executive-level Innovative Housing Strategies subcommittee including the Office of Housing, the Human Services Department, the Department of Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and the City Budget Office to develop a Bridge Housing Investment Strategy.

The Resolution also directs the Office and Housing and the Human Services Department to implement the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot, in partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority.

b. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

No.

c. Does this legislation require landlords or sellers of real property to provide information regarding the property to a buyer or tenant?

No.

d. Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?

No.

e. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

No.

f. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities?

Bridge Housing Investment: The development of the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy will increase the availability of bridge shelter and housing options to address the needs of people living unsheltered, who are disproportionately people of color. African American/Blacks are five times more likely and Native Americans are seven times more likely to experience homelessness. People of color also face the additional barriers of institutional and structural racism as they seek to find stable housing.

Rental Housing Assistance Program: People of color are also disproportionately represented on the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) waitlist. Of the 1,027 households issued a voucher on the 2015 waitlist, 67.8% identified as people of color. The Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Program will help people at risk of homelessness on the SHA waitlist increase their housing stability while they wait for long-term rental assistance.

- g. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s).**

The goal of the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy is to address the immediate shelter needs of people living unsheltered by providing bridge shelter and/or housing options that are rapidly deployed, cost effective and that maximize the capacity of providing safer alternatives to living unsheltered.

The goal of the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Program is to prevent households from falling into homelessness while on waitlists for longer-term assistance. The program's success will be determined by its ability to prevent episodes of homelessness among the households it serves.

Both programs will be designed to incorporate data collection and analysis that will allow for the evaluation of whether these programs are efficient and effective in meeting these goals.

List attachments/exhibits below: