



Legislation Text

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CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

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.

WHEREAS, Seattle is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis, and the number of residents experiencing homelessness in both sheltered and unsheltered living arrangements has grown dramatically; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Point-In-Time count identified nearly 4,000 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the number of households exiting from homelessness to permanent housing annually in King County has increased 50 percent since 2013 with more than 7,500 exits in 2017; and

WHEREAS, approximately 18,000 households in King County became homeless in 2017, representing a 27 percent increase over 2013; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle (City) recognizes that there are limited resources to address the housing needs of everyone who is experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and therefore seeks to invest in new bridge housing strategies that address the immediate needs of people living unsheltered or at risk of homelessness until housing stability or affordable permanent housing can be secured; and

WHEREAS, The City must develop a range of strategies to address the homelessness crisis; and

WHEREAS, in September 2016, The City established a policy framework and action plan that articulates a strategy for addressing homelessness with renewed urgency and envisioned a coordinated, effective, and person-centered crisis response that invests in what works and addresses racial disparities in order to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence in residents' lives; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Pathways Home, the City embraces the evidence-based Housing First philosophy, which recognizes the basic necessity of stable housing as a foundation for successful engagement in supportive services and other appropriate supports. This is a commitment critical to investing in what works and with a singular focus of moving people to stable housing, and shifting to a system able to nimbly respond and invest resources across interventions based on current need and best-practices; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Housing has funded nearly 2,500 new income- and rent-restricted apartments that will be available for occupancy over the next three to four years; and the Human Service Department projects over 7,000 households will exit from homelessness to permanent housing in 2018 according to the contracts awarded through the competitive Pathways Home RFP process, an increase of more than 120 percent from 2017; and

WHEREAS, nearly half of the 1,027 households issued a Seattle Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher between 2015 and 2017 experienced homelessness at some point during their time on the waitlist, and over 150 of these households (15 percent) were housed when placed on the waitlist and became homeless prior to receiving a voucher that would provide long-term housing stability; and

WHEREAS, there are 956 housed households on the current Seattle Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher waitlist that reside in Seattle and that could be at risk of homelessness before being issued a Housing Choice Voucher over the next three years; and

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2017, Mayor Jenny A. Durkan issued Executive Order 2017-12 that directed an interdepartmental team to develop a pilot Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Program that urgently addresses the housing stability needs of households currently waiting for a Seattle Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher with the primary goal of preventing homelessness by bridging to long-term housing assistance; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2015, the City Council unanimously passed Ordinance 124747 to allow new

permitted sanctioned encampments on public or private property; and

WHEREAS, on November 2, 2015, the Mayor issued a Proclamation of Civil Emergency to address the homelessness crisis in the City; and

WHEREAS, since November 2015, the City has opened six City-sanctioned encampments under the authority of Ordinance 124747 and using emergency powers granted to the Mayor pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 10.02 and chapter 38.52 RCW; and

WHEREAS, a July 7, 2017, evaluation of the first three City-sanctioned encampments dated found that the encampments are helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness meet their immediate shelter needs and are exceeding the 2016 contracted performance goals of moving people out of the encampments into transitional or permanent housing; and

WHEREAS, all six of the existing City-sanctioned encampments are operating at or near capacity and the Navigation Team finds that shelter at a City-sanctioned encampment often better meets the needs of people living unsheltered by providing the access, safety, and supportive case management that is necessary to help people living unsheltered find their path to housing; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to finding innovative solutions to addressing the crisis of homelessness and will look to provide a bridge to long-term housing stability by: increasing the supply of quick-to-deploy bridge shelter and bridge housing options for people living unsheltered; and by preventing homelessness for people awaiting longer term assistance; and

WHEREAS, companion legislation authorizes the sale of City real property at 1933 Minor Avenue and designates \$7.5 million of net proceeds from the sale for innovative programs to address the crisis of homelessness; NOW, THEREFORE;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR

CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle Rental Assistance Pilot:

A. The Office of Housing and Human Services Department shall implement the Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot, in partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), which will target households on the Seattle Housing Authority’s Housing Choice Voucher waitlist that are most at risk of becoming homeless. The pilot will proactively deliver a package of rent assistance and case management services to stabilize vulnerable households with the goal of preventing households from becoming homeless and providing a bridge to the long-term housing stability provided by a Housing Choice Voucher. This pilot program will be funded using \$2,000,000 of the proceeds from the sale of property identified in Council Bill 119195, commonly known as the “Communication Shop.”

B. The Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot program’s success will be determined by its ability to prevent episodes of homelessness among the households it serves, and the program design will incorporate data collection and analysis to allow for the evaluation of whether the program is efficient and effective in meeting this primary goal. This pilot program will also generate information that will inform the future deployment of City resources on homelessness prevention programs.

Section 2. Innovative Housing Strategies Subcabinet and Bridge Housing Investment Strategy

A. The Mayor shall create an Executive-level Innovative Housing Strategies (IHS) subcabinet that includes the Human Services Department, the Office of Housing, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, the Office of Planning and Community Development, the Department of Finance and Administrative Services, the Department of Neighborhoods, and the City Budget Office. The first priority of the IHS Subcabinet shall be to develop a Bridge Housing Investment Strategy (BHIS) to increase the supply of bridge shelter and bridge housing options for people living unsheltered.

B. The IHS subcabinet’s work on the BHIS shall be anchored around prioritizing innovative solutions using the following core principles and objectives to meet the goal stated in Section 2A:

- a. Rapid Deployment;

- b. Cost Effectiveness; and
- c. Maximizing Capacity of Safe Alternatives to Living Unsheltered.

C. Analysis of bridge shelter and bridge housing options shall include, but not be limited to, mass shelter tents, hard-sided tents, wood-frame sheds, portable modular bunkhouses or cabins, backyard cottages, and the master leasing of existing apartments. Each option should be evaluated based on cost, speed to deploy, land use and building code issues, and potential obstacles.

D. The IHS subcabinet shall prioritize the implementation of at least one immediate bridge housing project with a goal of serving residents no later than May 31, 2018.

E. In addition to this one immediate project, the BHIS shall center around the implementation of one or more innovative demonstration project proposals that shall include a site and operations plan, budget, service delivery model, and approach to evaluation. The BHIS shall include a capital and operating budget for phased implementation and appropriations detail for the \$5,250,000 designated for the BHIS from the sale of property identified in Council Bill 119195, commonly known as the “Communication Shop,” and delineation of other additional funding necessary for full implementation of the BHIS.

F. The IHS subcabinet should commence its work as soon as possible with a goal of completing its analysis and making recommendations, including a budget proposal for the BHIS, by June 30, 2018.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2018, and signed by
me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2018.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2018.

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2018.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk