

Auburn Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

**Draft Task Force Report Outline**

1. Executive Summary (1 p)
2. Introduction (1 p)
  - a. Creation of Task Force
  - b. Members
  - c. Process / Work plan / Timeline
3. Task Force Adopted Problem Statement and What Success Looks Like (3 pp)
4. Criteria for Task Force Recommendations (1 p)
5. Recommendations (3-5 pp)
  - a. Presented in Matrix Format, with additional comments as agreed at Meeting 7—  
focusing on rationale for recommendations
6. Next Steps (1 p.)
7. Attachments:
  - a. List of Task Force Members
  - b. Complete Ballot Results (Tally of votes on all items, not just those recommended)
  - c. *Other?*

## **Auburn Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness:**

### **Written Public Comments from March 3, 2016 Meeting**

- Stop torturing the Homeless. Stop Deproavation, starvation and physical exhaustion.
- Why would people be worried about the homeless at the library in terms of being safe, we are their doing the same thing they are? What about the people who have homes who attack the homeless just because of their situation? You know what about all that?
- City residents and homeless are part of community. Business and churches have personal agendas.
- Declare state of emergency like Seattle Mayor. Please thank you.
- Partner with other cities to provide shelters and tent cities By the people 4 the people.
- Shuttle service to services.
- The Seattle Mayor and Dorothy Day have remended U.S "Love in Action is A Harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in Dreams." Quote from Dostoevsky
- Self Reliance and Immoral law Makes it a Man's Duty to Break it @ Every Hazard. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

*\*All comments were anonymous*

# **Auburn Mayor’s Task Force on Homelessness**

## **DRAFT Problem Statement v.3.10.16**

Auburn residents, business owners, nonprofit service organizations, the faith community, and those in City Hall have all observed an increase in the number of homeless individuals in the City over the past few years. Their presence is seen and felt in downtown Auburn, the Library, City parks and open spaces, in other commercial areas of town and in neighborhoods.

The January 2016 One Night Count of the homeless reported 110 homeless individuals in Auburn. This was a decline compared to the 132 people counted in 2015, but service providers attribute this to heavy rains flooding out traditional encampment sites along the Green River. And, of significant concern, the South King County Region<sup>1</sup> saw a 53% increase in the homeless count compared to 2015. Countywide, there was a 19% increase in the number of homeless individuals reported in the One Night Count in January 2016 as compared to January 2015,

The City’s public works department reports a constant stream of homeless encampments in City green spaces. “Unwanted person” calls have become the second highest call category for the City Police Department, second only to traffic issues. The Valley Regional Fire Authority reports a growing increase in the number of visible homeless in the City, particularly young adults.

The homelessness in our City are people of all ages. The Auburn School District reports it had 265 students identified as homeless in the 2014-2015 school year—a 26% increase over the 2013-14 school year. And the 2013-14 school year had 17% more homeless students than the 2012-2013 school year.

A growing number of families in Auburn are at risk of homelessness. Indicators of this trend are found in data about poverty levels, comparing income to rent and looking at the growing use of the Auburn Food Bank and the number of families seeking subsidized housing:

- Over 10% of families in Auburn were below the federal poverty line in the 2010 census.<sup>2</sup>
- Over 41% of Auburn households pay more than 30% of their income for housing.<sup>2</sup>
- 4,495 families are registered with the Auburn Food Bank this year – some 118,000 people were served last year, up to 145 people a night at weekly community meals.<sup>3</sup>
- 35-50 individuals per night are staying at the cold weather shelter operated by the Auburn Food Bank.<sup>3</sup>
- Rental costs in South King County have increased 27% since 2010. A person earning minimum wage, or on TANF (welfare), or receiving social security disability income cannot afford an average one bedroom apartment in South King County.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Of that increase, 91% can be attributed to areas counted last year, most of which have been counted for many years. The South King County Region consists of areas in: Federal Way, Kent, Renton, Auburn, and Southwest King County (select areas of Burien, Des Moines, SeaTac, Tukwila, and White Center). Source for One Night Count data: Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness.

<sup>2</sup> Source: All Home.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Auburn Food Bank.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, reporting 2015 information from Dupre & Scott Apartment Advisors

- In Auburn last year, 871 families applied for public housing assistance – seeking to get on the King County Housing Authority Section 8 Voucher waiting list. Only 98 of those applicants were fortunate enough to get a slot on the waiting list—and they can expect to wait as 5 years for space in public housing to open up.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the City hears growing frustration from businesses and homeowners. They ask what is being done to address the number of homeless individuals panhandling, or sleeping in doorways, or loitering in commercial areas. There is a high degree of community concern about homelessness, as evidenced by the number of comments on the City’s web-blog on homelessness which has received more comments than any other City blog. Most, but not all, of the input from the community expresses support for helping the homeless in our community find the services and shelter they need. Over half of the comments received online stated there is significant need for more supportive services including emergency shelters, mental health and substance abuse services and policy or system changes.

And, while the fear and frustration registered through public comments is growing, we are also clear that the City cannot arrest its way out of homelessness. Being homeless is not a crime. And, cycling individuals through short jail stays on trespassing or public nuisance charges only to have them released back in to the community doesn’t address the underlying causes of homelessness or solve the problem.

What we are seeing in Auburn is not unique. Across King County, Washington state, and nationally, we are seeing the suburbanization of poverty, as the poor are priced out of housing in urban centers. In Washington State, decades of underinvestment in mental health care, developmental disabilities services, and substance abuse treatment are translating into increasing homelessness. In King County we combine those systemic failures with an alarming increase in the cost of housing and the problem is further exacerbated.

**The Task Force understands that the following conditions are being experienced and observed in the City, by residents and business owners:**

- Problem behaviors of homeless individuals, including loitering, trespassing in private buildings to use restrooms, get clean and sleep
- Property damage including breaking of locks on buildings to gain access to private buildings, or dumpsters
- Increasing number of visible homeless individuals throughout our City, particularly of younger individuals
- Customers and employees of local businesses being frightened of or confronted by homeless individuals
- Residents wanting the City to “fix” the problem of homelessness.
- Residents afraid to use the library due to groups of homeless adults loitering in the entryways and in the Library
- Residents afraid to visit public parks, trails and open space due to groups of apparently homeless individuals living or loitering in these areas
- Trash, debris, belongings, drug paraphernalia left behind by the homeless
- Increasing numbers of homeless encampments in open space within the City

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<sup>5</sup> Source: King County Housing Authority.

- Mental illness and substance abuse issues suffered by the homeless
- Significant increases in the cost of housing
- Growth in poverty

**As a result of these issues and conditions, community concerns include:**

- Auburn becoming less safe and less attractive for residents, workers, and visitors
- Negative community views about the homeless, a lack of public understanding and tolerance for the homeless
- Concern for the safety of the homeless in the City and concern about their human suffering
- A lack of services and housing available for the homeless – either in Auburn or in nearby cities

**Constraints and obstacles to addressing these concerns and issues include:**

- **Lack of Places for Homeless Individuals to Be**
  - No shelter for youth under 18 anywhere in South King County.
  - One shelter for young adults (ages 18-24) in all of South County, here in Auburn (Auburn Youth Resources).
  - Other than a limited winter shelter in severe weather conditions, there are no emergency shelter beds to house homeless adults in Auburn.
  - Very few transitional shelter beds in the City.
  - Lack of approved places for the homeless to stay anywhere in the City (e.g. parking lots or “tent cities”)
  - Lack of day centers where homeless individuals can be during the day, other than limited hours of service in a facility for youth provided by Auburn Youth Resources.
  - No hygiene center anywhere in the City where homeless individuals can get clean, or take care of basic bodily functions
  - Rents increasing far faster than incomes, and already beyond the reach of those at the bottom of the income scale.
  - Insufficient public housing and shelter capacity to meet the needs of the population (housed and unhoused)
  - Lack of housing with supportive services to meet the needs of the homeless
  - Lack of sites where new homeless facilities can locate, and it is unclear whether there is public support for siting.
- **Difficult for the Homeless to Help Themselves**
  - Limited family and social networks.
  - Lack of transportation to get to services and jobs.
  - Lack of knowledge on the part of both the homeless and the public about resources available to assist the homeless.
  - Lack of service capacity, including medical care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, job training.
  - Lack of enough outreach services to connect homeless to services they need.
  - Lack of places for the homeless to securely store their belongings.

- **Hard for Supportive Agencies to Help Homeless Families and Individuals**
  - Lack of public understanding of the complexity of homelessness.
  - Some homeless opt out of staying in shelters or using services available to them.
  - Growing poverty in the region, increasingly generational poverty.
  - Growing housing costs place more at risk of homelessness, and make it more expensive to find new housing for the homeless.
  - Lack of adequate resources to address the challenges.

## What does success look like?

The challenge of homelessness in Auburn is growing. The Task Force believes there is an urgent need for action. But what does success look like? Here are some of the ways we think our community should define success in addressing homelessness:

- **For the homeless:**
  - More shelter beds in our community.
  - A place in our city where the homeless can care for their personal needs—get clean, do laundry.
  - Greater access to “Housing First” resources—safe housing with wrap-around services, that people can live in without abandoning their pets, or without the expectation that they will be addiction-free overnight.
  - Greater access to health services and better health outcomes, including but not limited to greater access to substance abuse treatment
  - Greater access to transportation
  - Ultimately, everyone who wants a home or shelter can have one.
  - Greater visibility of services available to assist homeless individuals.
  
- **For our community:**
  - Greater perceived and actual feeling of safety.
  - A cleaner city, with less debris left behind by the homeless, and no unauthorized encampments
  - Expanded engagement of the business community and of the entire community in constructively addressing homelessness
  - Greater understanding of the complexity of homelessness and how we can each help to meet this challenge
  - Boarder awareness that homelessness and crime are not synonymous.
  - An acknowledgement that the homeless are part of our community.
  - More landlords open to renting to individuals and families with Section 8 housing certificates.
  
- **For our public and nonprofit service providers:**
  - Stronger connections between service providers across South King County
  - A seamless system that works to help the homeless and those at risk of homelessness—understanding the barriers to homeless and efficiently and quickly connecting people with resources.
  - A reduction in emergency room visits by the homeless
  - Increased resources
  - Police, fire/emergency medical and public works resources are able to apply more of their resources to their core missions.
  - Collaborative engagement in securing grants

We will not end homelessness. But there is much we can and should do to address this challenge in our City. One size does not fit all, in terms of solutions. While there are some actions we can take that will result in immediate improvement, others will take much longer. We need to think strategically, and be committed to sustaining our efforts over the long haul.

## Criteria for Task Force Recommendations

Recommendations would be included for consideration by the Task Force if they meet all these criteria:

- **Actionable** – Recommendation is feasible to implement as a community. Stakeholders needed are part of Auburn/South King County community and have means to take action necessary to accomplish the change sought. Financial feasibility should be included as a consideration (without setting a specific dollar threshold for what is feasible).
- **Positive Community Impact** – It is reasonable to expect that implementation of the recommendation will result in overall positive community impact, and respond to the community’s concerns.
- **Consistent with federal law** – (But recommendations could include advocating for changes in state law and funding)
- **Sustainable**—phased roll-outs of solutions may be needed, but sustained action is required.



## Draft Framework for Recommendations

STAKEHOLDERS: Lead?	City	Business Community	Residents	Faith Community	Nonprofit Service providers	Low Income Housing Providers	Other Local/Reg'l Gov't Agency	Homeless Individuals
CATEGORY OF ACTION ITEM:								
Improving public safety, sense of wellbeing								
Expand Emergency shelter								
Expanding services								
Expand Permanent Housing (& service capacity)								
Improve public understanding, ability to assist								
Advocacy								
Other								

Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness: Draft Ballot Template -- to Develop Initial Rating on Action Items v.3.8.16

CATEGORY	Item #	Action Items Proposed By Task Force Members/Support Staff Team	<b>TF Member Rating</b> 5 – I strongly support 4 – I support 3 – I neither support or oppose 2 – I oppose 1 – I strongly oppose	<b>Estimated Cost</b> \$ = <\$25K \$\$ = \$25-50K \$\$\$ = \$50-100K \$\$\$\$ = \$100 – 500K \$\$\$\$\$ = > \$500K	<b>Timeframe to Implement</b> Short Term = 1-2yrs. Near Term = 2-5 yrs. Long Term = > 5 yrs.	<b>Stakeholder Groups – Which should lead implementation? Who are necessary partners?</b> Lead = L Other partners needed = P								
						City	Business Community	Residents	Faith Community	Nonprofit Service /Shelter Providers	Housing Providers	Low Income	Other Cities, local gov't agencies, County	Homeless Individuals
A. Improving public safety, sense of wellbeing	A.1	More patrol and control of parks and library area by City Police to ensure safe access for families and kids		\$-\$\$\$\$ (depending on whether new staff required)	ST	L	P							
	A.2	Outreach and education to homeless people to encourage good conduct (obey laws, respect other's property) and environmental stewardship in order to improve community sense of safety, reduce impacts to the environment and improve public health.		\$	ST	L	P			P				P
	A.3	Create a program where homeless are hired daily to help clean the community		\$\$\$	ST	P	P			L				P
B. Expand emergency shelter options	B.1	Partner with agencies (businesses, governments, churches, etc.) that have parking lots to make them available for overnight for "safe parking" that is time limited, policed, kept clean and has a restroom facility		\$-\$\$\$	ST	P	L		P	P				
	B.2	Find a location to host a Tent City in Auburn, to offer community to homeless. Provide showers and laundry facilities		\$\$\$\$	ST	P			P	L				
	B.3	Provide short-term Shelter Housing in the City by partnering with - motels willing to reduce price with open rooms, and with Landlords with unrented apartments		\$	ST	P	P			L				
	B.4	Provide additional outdoor restroom facilities at existing available parking lots at businesses like gas stations		\$\$	ST	P	L			P				
	B.5	Open additional Shelter in City –more than just the existing winter shelter for cold nights		\$\$\$\$\$	ST-NT	P	P	P	P	P	L			

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			Task Force Members Complete This column: Rate <b>every</b> idea 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. You can rate <b>everything</b> a “5” or a “1” or something in between.			City	Business Community	Residents	Faith Community	Nonprofit Service /Shelter Providers	Low Income Housing Providers	Other Cities, local gov't agencies, County	Homeless Individuals	
	B.6	Provide transitional housing in immediate area		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P			P	P	L			
	B.7	City should support Arcadia House		\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	ST	P				L		P		
	B.8	Expand shelter services to youth under the age of 18		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P			P	L	P	P		
	B.9	utilize school facilities as overnight shelters for the currently underserved like under 12 youth		\$\$-\$\$\$	ST				P	P			L	
C. Expand services	C.1	Hygiene center / Day center with storage, showers, laundry and access to resources. Explore siting in an existing vacant building		\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$	ST-NT	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P	
	C.2	Engage owners of private but vacant buildings in City to host locations for needed services		\$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P			L		P		
	C.3	Coordinated meal programs for each day. A hot meal, a place for companionship, and safety each and every day.		\$-\$\$\$	ST	P	P	P	L	P		P	P	
	C.4	Expand Health Care services available for homeless - Basic and beyond with follow-up and case management		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P	
	C.5	Expand Services for addicted homeless: detox, long-term treatment. Receive more money from the state for this. (Advocacy?)		\$\$\$\$\$	ST-LT								L	
	C.6	Expand programs and facilities, outreach to address behavioral health issues of homeless (Behavioral health = substance abuse, addiction, mental health).		\$\$\$\$\$	ST-LT	P				P			L	
	C.7	Work with other cities and agencies to create Diversion/Crisis solution centers in SKC.		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P	P	P			L	
	C.8	Expanded wrap-around services for homeless that will assist them in		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P	P	L	P	P		

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		addressing their barriers to stable housing.											
	C.9	Expanded one-stop referral to resources –“soft hand” from agency to agency so the person doesn't get lost in the system of agencies meant to provide help and assistance.		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P				L		P	
	C.10	Updated, brochure providing information about resources in the community (city, professional, nonprofit, etc.) available to help homeless.		\$	ST	L	P		P	P	P		P
	C.11	Easier access to detox (especially for high risk populations and high utilizers) and inpatient rehab		\$\$\$\$\$	NT					L		P	
	C.12	Provide pre-paid cell phones to homeless, pre-programmed with numbers and addresses of resources/agencies and their hours of operation.		\$\$\$	ST	P	P		P	L		P	P
	C.13	Transportation - Free valley floor bus. Centralized around Auburn to help get from one end to the other		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P		P		L	P
	C.14	Expand access to transportation services for homeless individuals.		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P				L	P
	C.15	Copy City of Burien's effort to assist homeless residents with laundry (one day a week in an existing private laundromat)/		\$\$\$\$	ST	P	P	P	L?	L?		P	P
	C.16	Create a clothing bank		\$-\$\$\$ (depending on location)	ST	P	P		L?	L?			
	C.17	Create Storage facilities for homeless individuals to place their belongings: secure, accessible and locked		\$\$\$\$	ST	P	P		L?	P			P

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						City	Business Community	Residents	Faith Community	Nonprofit Service / Shelter Providers	Low Income Housing Providers	Other Cities, local gov't agencies, County	Homeless Individuals
<b>D. Expand permanent housing (&amp; related service capacity)</b>	<b>D.1</b>	Housing First - find cooperative ways to fund, staff, build and operate low barrier shelters, transitional housing and resources to address needs.		\$\$\$\$	NT-LT	P				P	L	P	
	<b>D.2</b>	Convene SKC regional planning group and/or SKC homeless advisory group to: (1) Assess what housing and services currently exist and are currently available to homeless populations; (2) Determine gap between need and available resources' and (3) .coordinate where and housing will be located: Each city should agree to locate specific housing and service program in their locality, spreading resources across SKC		\$\$\$	ST	P				P	P	P	
	<b>D.3</b>	Provide housing for everyone who would like it-- not temporary housing-- a permanent place to call home.		\$\$\$\$\$	LT	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	<b>D.4</b>	Build new low-income/subsidized housing located close to resources and services		\$\$\$\$\$	NT-LT	P	P	P			L	P	
	<b>D.5</b>	Organize shared housing placement and services. Make list or audit of all existing, available or potentially available housing that could be used to house the homeless.		\$\$	ST	P	P	P	L?	L?	L?		P
	<b>D.6</b>	Provide additional subsidized housing for Single adults w/o disabilities, children, or Veteran status. Currently, there are very limited resources for this population.		\$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P	P	P	L	P	P
	<b>D.7</b>	Build communal / micro-housing: i.e. dormitory-like apartment, private rooms for sleeping, individuals or couples with shared kitchen and living rooms. 4-6 people to a pod.		\$\$\$\$\$	NT-LT	P	P				L	P	
	<b>D.8</b>	Create a fund to help offset costs of rent or purchase of housing for qualified homeless.		\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P	L?	L?		P	
	<b>D.9</b>	Landlord assistance for damages as well as rent guarantee / support countywide Landlord Liaison Program		\$\$\$\$	NT	P	P	P			P	L	

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E. Improve public understanding, ability to assist	E.1	Bring knowledge to public. A Citizens Academy/Awareness or other == ways to make the community more aware of the issues of homelessness and shed some light on reasons why people become homeless. Being homeless doesn't make you less of a person but rather just person who may need a hand up.		\$	ST	L	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	E.2	Residents reaching out to relatives, friends of the homeless to help with underlying reason of homelessness possibly will direct help to the proper outlet.		--	ST			L					
	E.3	Parish sermons during worship services to help parishioners with understanding and helping the homeless		--					L				
	E.4	Central place well known in the community where homeless can come and be connected to resources.(Christ Community Clinic possible location)		\$\$	ST	P	P	P	L?	L?			
	E.5	Continue to expand city's involvement with county, state and feds to better support money and awareness in SKC as a whole.		\$	ST	L					P	P	
	E.6	Clarify availability of resources to help homeless on single website		\$	ST	P	P		P	L	P	P	
	E.7	Fundraiser to build public awareness of issues, barriers, provide public opportunity to provide input. Use proceeds to fund programs.		\$	ST	P	L	L	P	P	P		

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F. Advocacy	F.1	Find funding to provide more services		\$	SN-NT	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	F.2	Advocate for more state funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment		\$	SN-NT	P	P	P	P	P	P	L	P
	F.3	Advocate for funding for individuals without state insurance/on disability to access mental health and substance abuse treatment		\$	NT	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P
	F.4	Support medicaid transformation waiver/supportive housing services benefit (Bill pending in state legislature)		\$	ST	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P
	F.5	Support tenant screenings and evictions compromise bill (Bill pending in state legislature)		\$	ST	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P
	F.6	Contact legislators		\$	ST	L	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	F.7	Provide training or tools to homeless individuals to share their story during legislative session		\$	NT	L	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	F.8	Advocate to require utilities to expand subsidy for low income customers		\$	NT	P	P	P	P	L	P	P	P
	F.9	Advocate for expanded funding available to transporting homeless students		\$	NT	P	P	P	P	P	P	L	P

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G. Other	G.1	A greater sense of partnership between all nonprofit agencies.		--	ST	P				L	P	P	
	G.2	Accurate data using yourgov app, first responders document all contacts, include photo and create a census. 1-2 month concerted effort police fire, code and parking to get real numbers and accurate data.		--	NT	L						L	
	G.3	City should develop partnerships with service providers whose programs serve homeless individuals		--	ST	L				P			
	G.4	Create best practice training for all systems. Employees trained together to build connections.		\$	NT	P				L	P	P	

Results will be tallied to show frequency distribution of TF member ratings of each idea, (& retain staff/stakeholder screen info), e.g.,

- % rating 4-5
- % rating 3
- % rating 1-2
- **Greater or equal to 80% voting 4-5 = consensus item 60-79% voting 4-5 = recommendation item**