

Questions and Answers Submitted by the Public

Homelessness

1. **How does the mission statement address not only the quality of life for the homeless citizens in Longview but the housed taxpayers as well?**

The mission statement addresses quality of life for all residents in Longview – housed as well as unhoused.

2. **What is the purpose of providing shelter for these people? Shouldn't they secure housing on their own?**

The goal of the emergency shelter site is to ensure residents who are facing an emergency and don't have shelter, have a place to safely reside while they actively pursue permanent housing. The site should be safe, secure, and structured. Like many cities in the state of Washington, and throughout the US, the cost of living and lack of affordable housing has exacerbated the need for housing for low-income citizens. As a result, the number of unhoused citizens has increased.

3. **How does the city plan to guarantee a low or no impact on surrounding areas when the city has failed for three years with the unhosted site?**

It is recognized that the results with an unhosted site have not been acceptable. Goal is to replace the unhosted encampment with a hosted, safe, secure, and structured site that will not be adverse impact to neighboring businesses and residents. The goal of the hosted shelter site is for residents of the site to adhere to a code of conduct and rules that ensure the surrounding neighborhood is clean and not impacted by the shelter site or its residents.

4. **How will a hosted site / hosted safe parking at Alabama Street continue to affect the local neighborhoods, businesses, and the city shop? Where will the city shop worker's park?**

It is recognized that the results with an unhosted site have not been acceptable. Goal is to replace the unhosted encampment with a hosted, safe, secure, and structured site that will not be adverse impact to neighboring businesses and residents. Goal of the hosted shelter site is for residents of the site to adhere to a code of conduct and rules that ensure the surrounding neighborhood is clean and not impacted by the shelter site or its residents. City shop workers will park at redesignated and signed parking.

5. **Why should businesses have to pick up bags of trash in front of their business weekly, and why should they have to pay for the labor to pick this trash up?**

It is recognized that the results with an unhosted site have not been acceptable. Goal is to replace the unhosted encampment with a hosted, safe, secure, and structured site that will not have an adverse impact to neighboring businesses and residents. The goal of the hosted shelter site is for residents of the site to adhere to a code of conduct and rules that ensure the surrounding neighborhood is clean and not impacted by the shelter site or its residents.

6. **How will this program prioritize only citizens of Longview and not any person or persons who decide to come? How will we know that they are locals?**

To be eligible to stay at the site (beyond an initial emergency short stay) residents would require a referral from a case manager from a local social service agency and/or would be using an intake form. The intake form includes questions identifying where people are from.

7. **How are you determining a location?**

The committee asked City staff to evaluate all city-owned property and staff recommend the site at which we can be most successful.

8. **What happens to residents who choose not to accept the rules of a hosted camp?**

People who are unwilling or unable to follow the rules will not be allowed at the hosted Shelter. A Code of Conduct will be required for all residents and if violated, they will not be able to reside at the hosted site. The Longview Police Department will enforce existing codes, including the loitering and camping codes, to ensure the safety for all residents. For those who do not want to actively work towards permanent housing, and/or don't choose to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Good Neighbor Agreement, they will need to work with local support services to attain the needed services.

9. **What are the plans for the people who do not want to participate in this program?**

People who are unwilling or unable to follow the rules will not be allowed at the hosted Shelter. A Code of Conduct will be required for all residents and if violated, they will not be able to reside at the hosted site. The Longview Police Department will enforce existing codes, including the loitering and camping codes, to ensure the safety for all residents. For those who do not want to actively work towards permanent housing, and/or don't choose to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Good Neighbor Agreement, they will need to work with local support services to attain the needed services.

10. **How does the City plan to provide extra support to the Longview Police Department as this hosted camp is established and everything stabilizes?**

Longview Police Department will be getting two additional Behavioral Health Officers soon who will be dedicated to working issues with unhoused residents. We have also discussed utilizing a CSO (Community Service Officer) and Community Policing.

11. **Why doesn't the City of Longview just hire more police officers and arrest the homeless people at Alabama St and living in other parts of the community?**

Being homeless is not a crime. When crimes (theft, assault, malicious mischief, trespassing, drug possession, burglary, possession of stolen property, disorderly conduct, unlawful display of a weapon, bomb incident) occur in and around the Alabama Street camp, Longview Police Department has been arresting the suspects involved in those crimes. Also, the staffing needs of the police department are not singularly tied to the people living at the Alabama Street camp. The patrol staffing level for the police department has remained the same since 1980 – it is 1 supervisor and 4 patrol officers. Since 1980 we have seen a 40% increase in police calls for service and 0% increase in patrol staffing levels. In addition, we are not able to book every suspect into jail. Jail booking restrictions limit our ability to book on some offenses.

12. **Are residents allowed to enter another residents dwelling? How do we plan to keep this from happening?**

Will need to work with the Host Agency once they are selected to create detailed rules for residents of the site. In the interim, the City of Longview is asking all residents to sign a Code of Conduct and follow it. If not they will be removed from the site.

13. **What is the duration of this housing plan?**

The plan is for this to be a 1-year pilot project with regular reviews and adjustments to ensure success. Success is demonstrated by securing housing for our unhoused residents. If success is demonstrated after 1-year and the need is still present with our Longview citizens, continuation of the project will be considered.

14. **Is a resident in one of the “huts” no longer considered “unsheltered” or “homeless”?**

The huts are shelters, so the residents would be considered homeless but not unsheltered.

15. **Once the hosted shelter site opens, are we going to pass an ordinance against unhoused transients?**

The City has adopted [Longview Municipal Code 7.29 – Camping and Storage of Personal Property in Public Places](#).

16. **Are we just going to continue to ignore the destruction that is happening already?**

Based on the declaration of Emergency approved by Council August 23, 2022, City staff is working to get the current site cleaned up and focus on the security of the site and surrounding businesses and neighborhood to mitigate issues.

17. **Why aren't businesses held responsible for their shopping carts?**

Businesses are held responsible for their shopping carts; they pay fines and are required to have a plan for those carts. The carts continue to get stolen due to several factors, including most companies are having their workers not intervene in shoplifting and thefts, due to the perception that nothing will get done about it if they try to report the property thefts.

Encampment Cleanup

1. **What are the rules for conducting a clean-up and what do they entail?**

In summary, the Policy outlines the City’s process for:

- Prioritizing cleanup and removal of encampments.
- Providing notice when an encampment is scheduled for cleanup.
- Offering outreach and alternative shelter options.
- Cleaning up an encampment site.

- Collecting, cataloguing, and storing personal belongings and how individuals can recover their property.
- Immediately removing obstructions and immediate hazards.
- Identifying and specifying emphasis areas that will be subject to daily inspection and immediate removal of any encampment-related materials.

2. **When there is a clean-up, what level of outreach will be conducted and what services offered?**

In many cases, outreach occurs before notice of an impending cleanup and after cleanups. Outreach always happens after a cleanup notice has been posted and during the cleanup. The City works with community organizations and other providers to help identify and implement individual solutions that break down barriers preventing unsheltered people from moving indoors. These organizations are helping people with everything from getting legal IDs to finding shelter, from mental health and substance issue services to referrals to affordable housing programs.

The [Policy for Unauthorized Encampments on City Property](#), requires outreach providers to inform individuals in the encampment of alternative shelter options prior to encampment removal. Those options include housing programs, shelter programs with or without day programs, and “no-barrier” authorized shelter programs.

3. **What notice will be required before a scheduled encampment cleanup?**

No fewer than 72 hours in advance of a scheduled cleanup, notice will be posted throughout the encampment warning of the removal of all tents, structures and personal property. The notice will include the date it was posted, the dates of the scheduled cleanup, where personal property will be stored and how to retrieve it, and contact information for an outreach provider that can provide shelter alternatives.

4. **How and where will the City store personal belongings during the cleanup?**

On the dates of the cleanup, staff collect, inventory, photograph and store personal belongings whether or not the individual is present, unless the items are clearly hazardous, a biohazard or evidence of a crime. Information on how to retrieve items from storage is handed to campers (if on site) and posted at the site.

Items are stored for at least 60 days. Belongings may be recovered by calling 360-414-5002 and accurately describing the items.

5. **What are obstructions or immediate hazard encampments and how is their removal different than other encampments?**

An “obstruction” could be people, tents, personal property, solid waste or other objects related to an encampment that are in a City park or on a public sidewalk, interfere with the pedestrian or purposes of public rights-of-way, or interfere with areas that are necessary for or essential to the intended use of a public property or facility. An “immediate hazard” means an encampment where individuals occupying the encampment are at risk of serious injury or death beyond that caused by increased

exposure to the elements or their presence creates a risk of serious injury or death to others, or the encampment is causing imminent compromise to the structural and environmental integrity of the surrounding location. This includes encampments at roadway shoulders and off-ramps, areas exposed to moving vehicles, areas that can only be accessed by crossing driving lanes outside of a legal crosswalk, and landslide or flood prone areas, areas at high risk of fire, areas along or on top of river levees and other critical areas where the lack of sanitation facilities results in human solid or liquid waste being discharged in a manner that threatens public health.

6. **What are key points of the Policy regarding Unauthorized Encampments on City Property?**

The [Policy for Unauthorized Encampments on City Property](#) requires the City arrange for outreach resources to come to the encampment site to offer shelter and other services that would be an improved situation than living rough, but individuals have a choice as to whether they accept the offers. However, building relationships through repeated, intensive outreach can be successful in meeting people's individualized needs to find them a better alternative than an unsafe encampment.

The City is not required to provide additional alternatives to individuals who have been previously or are currently excluded from all usual and appropriate alternatives because of the individual's behavior.

7. **Does the Policy for Unauthorized Encampments on City Property require acceptance of alternative shelter before an encampment can be removed?**

The [Policy for Unauthorized Encampments on City Property](#) requires the City arrange for outreach resources to come to the encampment site to offer shelter and other services that would be an improved situation than living rough, but individuals have a choice as to whether they accept the offers. However, building relationships through repeated, intensive outreach can be successful in meeting people's individualized needs to find them a better alternative than an unsafe encampment.

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