

(Refined) Guiding Principles

Draft for discussion

We believe that:

1. Homelessness is a crisis in Seattle that demands urgent action by the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The city's approach to unsheltered homeless should do no further harm.
2. Action must be taken to enhance and reform the effectiveness of our current human services system to achieve better outcomes and a significant reduction in the number of people sleeping outside. The City needs a transition plan for this systemic transformation with timelines and measurements.
3. The City of Seattle's current approach to managing and removing encampments has negatively impacted homeless individuals and neighborhoods and new protocols and approaches are needed to make sure that our actions match our community values.
4. Any future approach to managing encampments needs to establish a mechanism to measure and substantively respond to community impact from encampments—both for locations that are determined unsuitable and suitable.
5. Increased funding and resources for mental health and drug treatment are needed from the State and Federal levels to expand treatment housing and capacity.
6. A majority of local resources dedicated to addressing homelessness should be focused on helping people move into permanent housing and treatment. At the same time, enhancements must be made to the current shelter system—to improve the safety and conditions, to lower barriers to entry, and to allow for 24 hour access.
7. The City should prohibit encampments in unsafe, hazardous or unacceptable locations, as well as locations that already have defined public uses. Excluding school grounds, parks, and natural areas with the exception of portions of certain park properties that might be deemed suitable for temporary use. The current sit lie ordinance should be reaffirmed.
8. Outreach to people living in encampments should be well documented, incorporate robust and consistent engagement, inter-agency communications and data sharing.
9. The City should provide support services to help maintain clean and safe encampments in suitable locations.
10. When required due to unsafe or unsuitable locations, the moving of people should be respectful of individuals and their belongings, but also administratively and logistically feasible to complete in a reasonable period of time.
11. Any action that is taken in the near-term should be considered a temporary action and as such must have a sunset—as to not lose track of the greater systems reforms that will be needed to dramatically improve the outcomes of our efforts: moving people into stable, permanent homes.