



New Authorized Encampments for People Experiencing Homelessness

Fact Sheet and FAQ - December 8, 2016

City of Seattle Response to Homelessness Crisis

- **Pathways Home:** In September, the Human Services Department released new reports and a plan to transform our homeless service delivery system so that it may better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness by focusing on longer-term solutions. Read more about these reports, action plan, and the City's current investments of over \$50 million in shelter and services at www.seattle.gov/homelessness.
- **Bridging the Gap Interim Action Plan:** While transforming our system will take time, there are thousands of individuals who are in crisis now. In August, the Mayor convened a *Task Force on Unsanctioned Encampment Cleanup Protocols* to provide recommendations on how the City can best respond to the needs of people who are unsheltered in our community and the impacts that unsanctioned encampments have on our businesses and neighborhoods. A central principle recommended from the Task Force was that the City should offer specific safer alternative spaces in order to remove existing unsanctioned tent encampments.

Additional Sanctioned Encampments

- In 2015, the Mayor and City Council passed legislation to permit three sanctioned encampments on City-owned or private property. Three locations were permitted: Interbay and Ballard in November 2015 and Othello in March 2016.
- On December 1st of this year, the City announced three new sanctioned encampment locations to provide additional capacity for individuals who are unsheltered:
 - 1000 S. Myrtle Street with capacity to serve 60-70 people
 - 8620 Nesbit Avenue N. with capacity to serve 60-70 people
 - 9701 Myers Way S. with capacity to serve 60-70 people
- A fourth location will be determined as the City continues to review available land parcels.
- Each encampment will be permitted for 12 months with an option to renew for an additional 12 months.

The Low Income Housing Institute will operate the sites at Nesbit Ave N. and S. Myrtle St. The City is in discussion with potential operators for the Myers Way site.

How were the sites selected?

The City evaluated dozens of sites, largely those that are City-owned and could be available very quickly. The assessment included a concerted effort to geographically distribute the sites across the city and to ensure that no encampment was within 1 mile of any other sanctioned encampment. The sites also had to meet the requirements of the existing encampment ordinance, including location in non-residential zones, proximity to transit, and minimum lot size of 5000 square feet, among others.

When will these encampments open?

The Myers Way encampment would expand the number of tents starting in January. The Myrtle Street site would begin serving residents in January. The Nesbit Ave site would begin serving residents in March.

What is a low barrier encampment and how will be it different from the other sites?

One of our new encampment locations, the 86th & Nesbit site, will operate as a low barrier encampment. Low barrier sites are designed to meet people as they are and have fewer restrictions than traditional shelters. Residents may bring their partners, pets and possessions. Residents with substance use disorders are not barred, but they must agree not to use alcohol or drugs on site. Because we are relaxing restrictions in this location we will also increase staffing to increase access to critical services and provide security.

Does an authorized encampment result in an increase in neighborhood crime?

A review by the Seattle Police Department on managed encampments, sited at faith-based organizations, showed no significant uptick in crime, nor have the authorized, managed encampments in Ballard and Interbay seen an increase in criminal activity.

What will the City do to ensure the encampments and surrounding communities are safe and clean?

The Seattle Police Department will increase patrols in the immediate area, and the Community Policing Team will work closely with staff and residents and neighbors of the encampments. All sites will have regularly scheduled garbage pickup. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is stepping up its efforts to pick up garbage in rights of way, and has initiated a program to pick up needles within 24 hours of notification. Citizens can report garbage or needles in rights of way to the City's 24-hour reporting line for illegal dumping at 206-684-7587.

Are encampments an effective way to address homelessness?

Encampments are emergency survival services and not a solution for homelessness. As laid out in our Bridging the Gap plan, we must provide a safer alternative for individuals who are not ready to come inside and in the interim as the city implements its Pathways Home plan to address the homelessness crisis.

Who can community members contact if they have questions or want more information?

While the encampments are being planned, please contact George Scarola, Director of Homelessness. Direct line is 206-684-0969. Email: george.scarola@seattle.gov. Once an encampment is opened, the community may contact the operator directly. Each encampment will have a Community Advisory Council, whose members will include the operator, community members and encampment residents. The meetings will be monthly and open to the public.