



801 228th Avenue SE • Sammamish, WA 98075 • Phone: 425-295-0500 • Fax: 425-295-0600 • web: www.sammamish.us

March 15, 2023

Marc Dones, Chief Executive Officer
King County Regional Homelessness Authority
400 Yesler Way
Seattle WA 98104

Dear Marc,

The City of Sammamish would like to thank the King County Regional Homelessness Authority for its work in developing the draft Five-Year Plan to reduce homelessness in our county. Homelessness is an extremely complex issue that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach, and the Authority's plan represents a significant step in the right direction.

Overall, the City is supportive of the draft Five-Year Plan as well as comments submitted by our partner cities on the Eastside. Before adopting the final plan, we urge the Authority to add support for sanctioned encampments and tiny homes (also known as micro-modular shelters).

Tiny Homes

The draft plan's modeling indicates there are more tiny homes currently available than will be needed in five years, and therefore does not call for any expansion. At the same time, the plan calls for a significant increase in safe parking for those living in vehicles, a form of "unsheltered" homelessness. The plan should focus on transitioning these unsheltered residents from vehicles into temporary housing, such as tiny homes, and ultimately into permanent housing. We recommend that tiny homes be utilized as a viable temporary option while additional permanent housing is built.

Sanctioned Encampments

The draft plan includes little discussion of encampments outside of the background section, which reads in part:

Recent data indicate that encampments are often used by housed criminal elements to engage in human trafficking, distribution of stolen goods, and other forms of illegal enterprise. These activities are often tolerated by encampment residents who feel they do not have the power to remove these elements and may create substantial risk of serious harm to residents if they speak out.

This may be true for some unsanctioned encampments; however, the City has experienced the opposite with the sanctioned Tent City 4 encampment.

Tent City 4 is currently located in Sammamish and previously called the city home for more than one year during the initial Covid-19 outbreak. During this time the police department never received a call regarding the encampment despite it being located adjacent to residential areas, and the two host locations (both churches) considered them to be great neighbors. The City recently spoke with camp residents and heard they were happy with this safe, permitted, and well-organized camping option.

The City strongly recommends that the plan differentiate between the encampments described in the background section and the organized, sanctioned encampments like Tent City 4. Ultimately the City would like to see all unsheltered residents transition into temporary and permanent housing. While that transition occurs, there is a need for sanctioned encampments much like there is a need for safe parking programs.

Thank you for considering the City's feedback. We look forward to continuing to partner with the Authority in support of this vital work.

Sincerely,

Sammamish City Council