

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Joint Session with Human Rights Commission on Homelessness

Meeting Date: December 9, 2015
Department: Central Services
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: A
Staff Contact: Michael Kinnison
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ISSUE STATEMENT

Councilor Greg Evans, as the City Council liaison to the Human Rights Commission (HRC), requested this work session.

The HRC is interested in strategically aligning its efforts on the issue of homelessness with the priorities of the council. By having a conversation on this complex topic it is hoped that a shared understanding of desired policy objectives related to homelessness can be reached and direction given to how the HRC can best serve as a resource to achieving those objectives.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness has been a focus for the HRC for years. The council-approved Human Rights Commission FY2016 Work Plan contains the following objective: *Respond to and advocate on community issues of economic inequality, poverty and homelessness*. The HRC has formed a workgroup comprised of commission members and community representatives who meet regularly to implement action items related to homelessness. There is a high interest and appreciation among the HRC to be able to have this opportunity for dialogue with the council and to find ways to increase their effectiveness as a citizen advisory body on this particular issue.

The HRC is greatly appreciative of the steps taken thus far by the City of Eugene in concert with the broader community to address some of the pressing needs of those who are homeless (see Attachment A). The HRC is active with national organizations working on the issue of homelessness, strongly supports the Housing First Model (see attachment B) and has done extensive research on best practices for local governments seeking alternatives to criminalization (see attachment C). Through this research, and community conversations with advocates, stakeholders and impacted communities, the HRC can be a valuable resource to the council on complex issues such as homelessness.

The Human Rights Commission is asking the council to consider endorsing the following policy principles (see Attachment D):

1. The City of Eugene will seek to eliminate barriers that have unintended and negative human rights consequences, including making it more difficult for people who are

homeless to access housing and jobs.

2. The City of Eugene is committed to working with other jurisdictions and the Eugene community to provide safe and legal places to be for all who lack shelter as well as those who have the capability of self-sheltering.
3. The City of Eugene is committed to the Housing First Model. This model prioritizes placement of all homeless persons in permanent housing, thereby recognizing the human right to housing.

The Human Rights Commission also suggests a motion of the council to request the City Manager return with a resolution declaring the City of Eugene's commitment to a Housing First Model.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

Council Goal for Safe Community: A community where all people are safe, valued and welcome.

Resolution Declaring the Urgency of the Housing and Homelessness Crisis and the Need for State Assistance to Address It (Ordinance #5142)

STAFF ATTACHMENTS

- A. Update on Efforts to Address Homelessness

ATTACHMENTS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

- B. What is Housing First?
- C. Criminalization Undermines Real Solutions
- D. Human Rights Commission Proposed Policy Principles

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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