

Redmond Community Homelessness Task Force

Mission: to “...seek to better understand the scope and causes of homelessness in Redmond, the systems in place to address homelessness, and...consider[ing] the range of concerns and potential solutions identified by the community...identify and recommend a set of short- and longer-term actions that our community can undertake to address these issues.”

Members: Fourteen residents, business and property owners, representatives from the faith community, and local human services providers. Convened by Mayor Marchione.

Process: Initial community meeting on concerns, ideas, attended by over 100 residents. Task Force created the following month. Task Force met six times, from April through August, 2015. All attended at least one “site visit.” Reviewed five transcripts from meetings with different groups of local homeless individuals, and one from other local business people. Task Force members nominated, and voted on, potential action items. Independent outside facilitator developed agendas, ran meetings, wrote task force report.

Cornerstones for engaging the Task Force:

- **Humanize homeless individuals, their diversity, and their challenges.**
- **We cannot arrest our way out of this problem: expensive and ineffective.**
- **Systems context: local action is necessary but not sufficient. Shared obligation burden of local, regional, state and national government.**
- **Effective local action requires engaging all parts of the community—residents, faith community, business community.**

Task Force Recommendations -- September 2015¹

“Redmond can and should be a safe and compassionate community.”

1. Improving public safety and reducing crime

- a. Increase police bike patrols in downtown, by retail properties and on trails (C)
- b. . Implement a community awareness campaign and include posting signs that encourage donations to helping organizations instead of giving directly to panhandlers. (C)

2. Expanding and improving services to sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness

- a. Provide job training and positions for homeless individuals in the community. Explore partnership with DSHS or Workforce Development Council to create public works projects to employ and train homeless individuals. (R)
- b. Increase the number of transit passes available to the homeless. (R)
- c. Create additional day center resources on the Eastside to meet regional needs/ open a regional day center. (C)

3. Expanding, improving and mitigating impacts of shelter and housing options for the people experiencing homelessness, people with barriers to market housing

¹ Items marked with “(C)” are Consensus items supported by 80 or more of the Task Force. Items marked with “(R)” are Recommendation items supported by 60-79% of the Task Force members.

- a. Partner with King County Housing Authority to provide housing opportunities for lower income households not currently benefitting from the incentive zoning program. General approach would involve KCHA providing subsidies to families at 30% AMI in order to allow them to afford currently units priced at 50% or 80% AMI. (C)
 - b. Extend City's inclusionary zoning ordinance to require some units affordable to households making 50% or less of Average Median Income (down from current 80% AMI).(R)
 - c. Create storage lockers for homeless individuals. (R)
 - d. Increase affordable housing options.(R)
 - e. Create a City "Flexible Funding Pool" that can help people stay in their homes with emergency loans, grants. (C)
- 4. Improving public (business, residents) understanding/ability to assist**
- a. Expand funds to help those living in shelters to secure 1st & last month's rent, security deposits, in order to move into permanent private housing. (C)
Improving public (business, residents) understanding/ability to assist
 - b. Develop printable literature/public education program for Redmond residents to identify how to help the homeless, who to call for various issues.(C)
 - c. Create/Support a periodic "day of caring" in the City where service providers (City, library, nonprofits, etc.) private businesses and residents can come together and provide services to the homeless (haircuts, job search, healthcare, etc. -- based on Bothell model)
- 5. Advocacy**
- a. Support the County's Best Starts for Kids Levy.(R)
 - b. Engage significant advocacy at the state and national level to restore funding for a robust mental health system. (C)
 - c. Advocate with the state to make it easier to access and distribute Community Housing Grant (CHG) and Housing Support Program (HSP) funds.(R)
- 6. Other**
- a. Convene an ongoing commission of Redmond stakeholders to meet at least quarterly to review progress & discuss ongoing issues (C)

Task Force adopted a "roll-out" plan to reach out to over a dozen community groups with their recommendations. The Task Force also asked to be reconvened quarterly to review progress and recommended creating "implementation committee" to move forward on recommendations (four task force members have agreed to serve on the implementation committee, together with two city staff).

For more information:

http://www.redmond.gov/Residents/HomelessnessInRedmond/task_force_on_homelessness or contact Colleen Kelly, Asst. Dir. of Community Planning, City of Redmond ckelly@redmond.gov (425)-556-2423