

ASPIRATIONAL VISION/GUIDING PRINCIPLES; DESIRED SHORT AND LONGER TERM OUTCOMES; PROPOSED STEPS IN A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY Urban Camping Work Group - May 1, 2024

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

1. Collectively define the problems created by and associated with urban camping in Missoula and address critical questions related to those problems.
- 2. Find general agreement on desired outcomes related to the urban camping situation.**
3. Recommend actionable, incentivizing solutions, regulatory tools, and monitoring metrics that support the safety and accessibility of our community.

This Work Group product is intended to respond to Process Objective #2 (in bold type above). The document reflects Work Group member comments on the original Vision draft received at the end of the April 17 Work Group meeting. Those comments are shown below in *bold italics*. (At their May 1 meeting, not all Work Group members supported all or specific parts of the edited Vision document while others want it to include more specifics; those not in general agreement with the Vision, etc., will submit additional comments to the Mayor's Office upon further review of this document)

Vision, Guiding Principles and Desired Outcomes

The City of Missoula *works with community partners including Missoula County* to implement and expand a tailored, structured program for people ready to begin processes to transition into housing *and strategies for those not ready to transition*.

- The City actively *fosters and* pursues committed partnerships/*MOU's/and other appropriate binding agreements* with Missoula County, the State of Montana, the federal government, non-profit organizations, *and private entities*.
- The City works *with committed partners* to expand diverse shelter and housing opportunities that meet varied identified needs.
- The City strives to reduce the impacts of the unhoused/unsheltered situation in the community at large *and improve quality of life for those individuals living unhoused/unsheltered. The City monitors indicators to track results.*
- *The City commits to seeking partnerships to get people housed.*

(Aspirational) Desired short-term outcomes:

- *Significant decreases in impacts resulting from encampment are observed and reported by housed and unhoused members of the community*
- *Clear, established guidelines and terms are in place for where and when* urban camping can occur within City limits including locations, cleanliness, density, availability of safe parking, and access to services; *annual budget and other estimated costs are determined and monitored*
- *Clear definitions regarding encampment versus unhoused shelter service are in place and understood*
- *Clear established terms for people getting services in a tailored, structured program are in place*
- *Well-defined buffer zones are established and enforced*

- ***There is shared responsibility across the City*** for greater availability of restroom and trash services and ***sharps disposal***.
- ***Parks, trails, rivers/riparian zones are clean with safety measures in place and enforced***

Reasonably achievable Metrics/measures for short-term outcomes

- ***Measureable*** decrease in number of people camping (***which is also a long term metric***)
- ***Measureable*** decrease in the number of people who are unhoused/unsheltered (***which is also a long term metric***)
- ***Measureable*** decrease in ***number of*** complaints about specific ***kinds and locales of impacts***
- ***Tracked*** decrease in City staff hours related to the unhoused ***situation (Recognition that there could be a shorter term increased before a decrease)***
- Increase in ***identified, well-defined positive actions by the State and service providers*** other than the City
- ***Non-City service providers demonstrate increased efficiency with faster measureable response for cases with patients/clients identified and engaged***
- ***Needs and concerns of people who don't approach the issues through the same lens as this Work Group are recognized and ongoing communication occurs***

(Aspirational) Desired long-term outcomes:

- ***Measurably*** increased services for the chronically unhoused/unsheltered (***medical health, substance and mental health case work, and social and legal services***) are ***accessible*** through established, ***committed*** partnerships with Missoula County, the State of Montana, the federal government, non-profit organizations and private philanthropy
- ***The*** portion of the ***year to year*** City budget for the unhoused issue is sustainable
- Increased dependable capacity occurs across the issue through more local public/private (businesses, non-profits) and faith community established partnership
- ***There is commitment/demonstration of increased response rate from service providers***

Metrics/measures for longer term outcomes

- The metrics cited for short-term outcomes continue
- There is general public agreement and ***ongoing*** support for actions taken

Strategy and Actions intended to support and achieve the City's Vision

In support of the City's Vision/Guiding Principles and to ***successfully*** achieve ***needed immediate***, short and long term outcomes, develop and commit to a 1 to 5 year comprehensive strategy ***and process addressing the City's houseless situation. (Taking houselessness into consideration, an overall strategy should include an ordinance with clear camping rules; spouse shelters, TSOS, identified parking areas, automated camping fees; communication and engagement with houseless individuals; clearly defined, committed partnerships and coordinated responses; community funding for long term solutions; and well-defined enforcement protocols.)***

A comprehensive strategy could include and be implemented through the following actions:

- Refine and document data to better understand the demographics of the houseless/unsheltered population in the Missoula area - year round as well as seasonal.
- Identify and develop understanding of specific impacts associated with houseless/unsheltered people in Missoula.
- **Re-convene and work to partner with non-government health, social science, faith-based and legal organizations to seek actionable and accountable efforts outside the City's budget and not within the legal framework of the City (e.g., expansion of current sites/facilities/TSOS capacity; emergency shelter in-place strategies and capacity; support for houseless/unsheltered people leaving incarceration, pathways to work, etc.). Work to problem-solve around specific organization issues and their hesitancy to increase their involvement.**
- Come to general agreement and seek City Council approval of a City Ordinance that includes enforcement expectations and realistic mitigation specifics (e.g., *appropriate, realistic buffers, safe parking program for those living in vehicles, legal locations for camping, etc.*).
- **Identify and seek City Council approval of City locations (specific and varied) where people can safely camp/shelter (i.e., authorized camp sites and safe parking zones)**
- **Consistently enforce existing laws that address criminal behavior.**
- **Seek out/implement realistic strategies/actions that address needed houseless services and syringe collection.**
- **Identify and seek out private entities that have interest in supporting the City's vision financially and with other resources in the short and longer term (i.e., regulated areas in large commercial parking lots, private garbage companies, regulated enterprise like marijuana dispensaries, liquor distributors, etc.). Work to problem-solve around their issues and any hesitancy to be involved.**
- Continue to explore realistic funding within the City's budget process as well as outside that framework to include soft-money foundation grants, federal and state grants (**still taxpayer dollars**), and the "out of the box" thought about a capitol campaign. (**Tread carefully in seeking out grant dollars – unintended consequence might be ending up in an ARPA situation; need to find sustainable budget line items for continued costs.**)
- Starting with the development of the comprehensive strategy **and actions to implement**, begin intentional communication **and outreach** to the public about houselessness in Missoula and as a community-wide responsibility.
- Work with the Governor's office and the Legislature to address the state-wide responsibility for houselessness in Montana.