

CITY OF TIGARD



**TASK FORCE FOR THE HOMELESS
DEFINING THE CITY'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS**

Report to the City Council

December 19, 2017

The Task Force for the Homeless

The Tigard City Council set a goal in 2016 to define the city's role in homelessness. As part of the goal, the Task Force for the Homeless was created to develop immediate and future actions that the city could take to address homelessness. The city council directed the task force to focus on solutions that could be implemented with minimal assistance from other stakeholders. The scope of work for the task force did not include affordable housing.

The task force has met monthly since July 2017. The task force received briefings from:

- Marc Jolin, Initiative Director, A Home for Everyone (an effort including Multnomah County, the City of Portland, the City of Gresham, and Home Forward)
- Heather Wakem, Tigard Police Officer
- Schuyler Warren, Tigard Community Development, Associate Planner

The source material for this report is drawn from Task Force deliberations, background materials and handouts, and presentations from public meetings convened by the Task Force. Meeting agendas, background materials and handouts, and presentations are available to the public on the internet: http://www.tigard-or.gov/city_hall/homelessness_resources.php.

The Reality of Homelessness

Homelessness in the United States increased in 2017 for the first time since 2010. The number of homeless individuals in Oregon increased by 6%, from 13,176 in 2015 to 13,953 in 2017. The increase is largely due to a surge in homelessness in West Coast cities, including Portland, facing shortages of affordable housing, according to data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Homeless individuals and families are defined as people who “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence,” and includes people who may be living in places like motels or campgrounds, shelters or cars, or abandoned buildings or who might be staying with friends, doubling up or sharing housing.

The Task Force for the Homeless recognizes:

- The problem of homelessness in Tigard is serious, and it is complex.
- Everyone has a role in improving the situation. The task force has identified a wide range of opportunities for the City to address homelessness.
- While whole-heartedly agreeing that federal and state engagement is necessary for long-term reduction and elimination of homelessness, Tigard cannot stand aside and wait for other governments to solve our problems.
- The situation won't be fixed in a day, or a year, but substantial progress can and should be made over the next one to five years.

Role of Washington County and Metro

The Washington County Department of Housing Services engages in efforts to prevent and end homelessness in the county. Their efforts include:

- Shelter Resources. When the temperature drops below freezing, Washington County's Severe Weather Shelters may activate, providing homeless persons with a warm place to stay overnight.
- 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. A Road Home, Washington County's 10-year plan, was approved on June 3, 2008.
- Housing and Supportive Services Network (HSSN). This group, made up of nonprofit organizations, public sector social service agencies, government representatives and the faith based community, implements the Continuum of Care, and ensures integrated and coordinated access to affordable housing and services.
- Homeless Data and Point-In-Time Activities. Reports of homeless counts, including the Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Street and Shelter Count and the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR).
- Homeless Programs and Events. The Department of Housing Services works with social service and nonprofit agencies, as well as faith-based partners, to promote programs and events that serve homeless individuals and families.

The majority of Metro's efforts in addressing homelessness is focused on increasing a diversified housing stock, including affordable housing. Metro is also considering a November 2018 ballot measure which would focus on creating affordable housing solutions in the region.

Data on Homelessness in Washington County, Oregon

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is used to measure the extent of homelessness in communities. It's widely accepted PIT data undercounts the homeless population. Point-In-Time data is contingent on volunteer turnout and homeless participation. Volunteer crews are often understaffed and have difficult time reaching everyone.

PIT numbers give an idea of the breadth of the situation. In Washington County, the PIT count found:

- 544 sheltered (temporary shelter/housing) and unsheltered individuals,
- 369 Adults (over age 24 years), 47 Youth (age 18 to 24 years), and 128 Children (less than 18 years)
- 203 Female, 241 Male, and 2 Transgender
- 474 Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino and 70 Hispanic/Latino

Police data on homelessness is equally difficult to track because,

- Dispatch responds to requests in a number of formats
- Any call can be because of, or turn into, a homeless related call
- A call involving a homeless individual is not always noted in the call remarks.
- Dispatch does not capture socioeconomic status.

While it is difficult to track calls involving the homeless, dispatch is able to track calls that are most commonly associated with homeless individuals. Calls for police officer holds, detoxification, and warrants for other crimes are most frequently associated with homelessness. Data in Table 1 shows an increase in the number of calls where the individual self-identifies as homeless. Total number of calls for all three call types has increased by 58.7%, and the 2017 data is not yet complete.

Table 1: Police Data – Calls for Service Since 2013

Reason	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Police Officer Holds	15	12	20	12	14
Detoxification	13	29	14	12	18
Warrant	81	96	112	139	141
Total	109	137	146	163	173

*2017 data from Jan. 1 – Nov. 20.

Task Force for the Homeless – Recommendations

The Task Force for the Homeless submits these recommendations to the Tigard City Council for consideration. Our recommendations are focused on four objectives:

1. Expand and improve services to homeless individuals by working with local nonprofits.
2. Expand shelter and housing options for the homeless and others facing housing barriers.
3. Improve public understanding and community capacity to respond to the needs.
4. Advocate for Regional, State, and Federal Support.

The task force's top priority is for City to assist Just Compassion with the funding of a permanent day shelter. Just Compassion is the organization most capable, with the necessary experience to operate a day shelter. Just Compassion has provided services to homeless adults in the area for the last seven years. The services have ranged from temporary warming shelters to once-a-month laundry days, but the area homeless are in desperate need of a safe, friendly and welcoming space year-round. A Just Compassion day shelter would provide a more integrated approach to providing homeless services in Tigard.

The task force is aware of the City's current fiscal challenges; however, the task force believes investing in the day center will be offset by the current and future costs of addressing homelessness in Tigard.

1. Expand and improve services to homeless individuals by working with local nonprofits.

a. The City should assist Just Compassion in securing property for a day center.

Just Compassion is a coalition of religious, service, civic, and business organizations that have joined together to respond to the needs of those without homes and those living in poverty in Tigard.

Just Compassion, since 2015, has operated a day center (open one day a week) at Tigard Four Square. While operating in this temporary space, the coalition has been looking to purchase property where they can open a seven day a week day center.

A permanent day center would enable Just Compassion to:

- Partner with other entities for job training and apprenticeships;
- Initiate sustainable businesses employing current and former clients;
- Assist with applying for or reinstating the Oregon Health Plan;
- Assist with applying for housing opportunities and provide rent-well training;
- Provide overnight emergency shelter;
- Facilitate the moving of adults into permanent housing; and
- Provide resource information to adults for eyeglasses, dental work, physical and mental health care.

In recent months, Just Compassion entered into a lease-purchase agreement on a property located on 12260/12280 SW Hall Boulevard (near The Knoll). The coalition has two years, beginning in the summer of 2017, to secure funding for the purchase of the property.

Just Compassion is in the midst of a fundraising campaign to purchase the property and complete the renovations. Ownership of the property would increase Just Compassion's competitiveness for funding from the federal government, private sector, and foundations. For instance, the Home Builders Foundation donated in-kind support to assess the Hall Boulevard property and decide whether to renovate or demolish the current structure. The Home Builders Foundation, which assisted with the recent addition to the Good Neighbor Center, is reluctant to provide additional resources until Just Compassion owns the property.

Based on numbers served in Tigard, Tualatin and Sherwood through overnight severe weather shelters and the Showers and Laundry program, Just Compassion expects to serve at least 125 homeless adults at the Tigard Day Center.

Cost: \$60,000. This one-time assistance will provide approximately 50% of the down payment required for Just Compassion to purchase the properties. The City could allocate \$30,000 in the current fiscal year and \$30,000 at the beginning of fiscal year 2017-18.

b. The City should fund an annual Project Homeless Connect event.

Project Homeless Connect is a one-day, one-stop project connecting those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to critical services and resources. Attendees are offered assistance with dental, medical, vision, foot care, clothing, food, employment, an agency resource fair, and more.

In a one-time effort, Leadership Tigard raised \$5,000 to host the 2017 Project Homeless Connect event in Tigard. The city council contributed a one-time donation of \$2,500. The event drew 118 individuals (89 of who had not attended a previous Project Homeless Connect). The task force believes the substantial number of first time attendees demonstrates the need for an annual event in Tigard.

Cost: \$5,000/year.

c. The City should continue to provide in-kind support (printing, graphics, design) to nonprofits addressing homelessness.

In 2017, the city printed more than 1,500 resource cards for distribution by nonprofits, local businesses, Tigard Police, and Tigard Library. Resource cards provide information on shelters, food pantries, hot meals, showers, and laundry

Cost: \$1,000.

d. The City should continue to fund a post office for Just Compassion to use for their homeless clients.

In 2016, the City Council allocated funding for a post office box for homeless individuals. Just Compassion purchased and manages the post office box.

Cost: \$100/year. This funding would not be necessary if Just Compassion begins operating a permanent day center.

e. The City should provide public bathrooms and/or portable restrooms that are available 24 hours/day in the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.

Among the homeless community there is an obvious need for 24-hour a day access to bathrooms. Such access would improve sanitation in the local ecosystem and hygiene for homeless individuals. The City should consider replicating Oregon City's "Arta Potties" program. The City could partner with local artists to add artwork to the outside of the portable toilets. Access to public restrooms would also be a draw for individuals looking to visit Tigard, patronize area businesses, and enjoy the downtown area. A permanent restroom facility is proposed in the current design for the Tigard Street Heritage Street Trail. A final decision on the facility will be made at a later date.

Cost: \$2,000/year per portable restroom. Partnering with local businesses could lower the costs. Oregon City partnered with Clinkscapes Portable Toilets and Septic Service. The company split the cost of servicing both portable toilets.

2. Expand shelter and housing options for the homeless and others facing housing barriers.

a. The Tigard Police and Luke-Dorf should partner on homeless outreach.

Luke-Dorf employs two outreach counselors for Washington County. The counselor positions are funded through federal and county funding.

A Luke-Dorf outreach counselor hosted office hours twice a month at the Tigard Library this year. The counselor connected those in need with information about resources. This approach achieved minimal success. The city did not provide additional funding for this outreach. Recently, Luke-Dorf has refreshed its approach to homeless outreach. The nonprofit is increasing “street outreach,” where outreach counselors visit known homeless encampments.

The task force recommends Luke-Dorf and the Tigard Police Department collaborate on street outreach in Tigard. A paired outreach team would visit encampments throughout the city to help identify and implement individual solutions that break down barriers preventing unsheltered people from moving indoors. Luke-Dorf outreach workers would assist with project planning, street outreach, and administrative tasks such as interview summary preparation.

Cost: \$5,000/year for four hours of dedicated outreach each month with the Tigard Police or \$10,000/year for eight hours of dedicated outreach a month with Tigard Police.

b. The Tigard Police should fund four hours of overtime for outreach to the homeless.

Tigard police officers spend time (when possible) connecting the homeless with services. Their increasing workload has limited the time available for officers to spend on outreach. Previous outreach from the police has proven effective at limiting large encampments, finding housing for the homeless, and connecting the homeless with services. Dedicated overtime would allow the officers to resume outreach work.

Cost: \$600/week for two police officers to work four hours of overtime.

c. The City should appoint a Homeless Services Coordinator.

The coordinator would be a consistent point of contact for the city on homelessness issues. This would include carrying out the City Council’s direction on the implementation of task force recommendations, serving on county and regional committees on homelessness, and working with nonprofits serving the homeless.

Cost: Varies. The City could add this responsibility to a current staff member or request additional resources through the budget process.

3. Improve public understanding and community capacity to respond to the needs.

a. The City should approve a guiding statement for their approach to homelessness.

A guiding statement will signal to the community the City's approach to addressing homelessness. The task force believes providing an official position to both internal and external stakeholders in a key component of defining the cities role in regards to homelessness.

Cost: Minimal. Staff could work with the task force, city council, and city departments to draft a statement representative of the city's approach to homelessness.

b. The City Council should host an annual service event focused on homelessness.

The City Council should devote a "5th Tuesday" meeting or quarterly outreach event to volunteering with a nonprofit addressing homelessness.

Cost: Less than \$500.

c. The City should create an internal tracking system to track homeless related incidents.

The Tigard Police receives more than 4,000 calls for service monthly. Quality data on the number of those calls related to homeless is unavailable.

A variety of calls for service can be related to homelessness including; routine stops, suspicious circumstances, suspicious vehicle, welfare checks, thefts, and mental health issues. Any call can be related to, or turn into, a homelessness related call. Due to the variability in call types, combined with the earlier mentioned difficulties in tracking calls related to homelessness, the task force recommends examining ways the city can better track homeless related incidents.

An improved tracking system would allow the city to monitor both the extent of homeless related incidents and the effectiveness of service and resources to mitigate those incidents.

Cost: TBD. Staff has identified a possible method of tracking this data. It will require additional staff time to implement but will allow the city to better record homelessness related incidents.

d. The City should participate in the annual Point-in-Time Count.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a census of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. The data is used for:

- housing and service planning,
- demonstrating need,
- raising public awareness,
- accurately identifying the needs population, e.g. chronically homeless, and
- measuring performance in reducing/ending homelessness

The task force recommends the City encourage up to ten staff participate in the PIT count. It's important, the task force believes, for city staff to see first-hand the face of homelessness in Tigard. Staff participating would increase their understanding of why individuals are homeless, where they are encamped, and what assistance do they need.

Cost: Two to four hours per staff member.

- e. The City Council should issue a proclamation for [Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week](#).**

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is an annual program in November where people come together across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness. Along with a proclamation, the city would partner with non-profits to offer educational and service events during the week.

Cost: Less than \$500.

- f. The City should create a GIS map with resources available in Tigard and Washington County for people experiencing homelessness.**

Service providers, governments, and the community would have a clearer picture of what is going on, where. This would help the city allocate and track resources, examine the extent of the situation holistically, and keep up to date resource information that can be readily accessed by both internal and external stakeholders.

Cost: Minimal. The city's IT division could lead the effort.

- g. The City should tell the stories of police officers and other staff who interact with the homeless community.**

The task force recommends replicating Oregon City's approach to developing a narrative around homelessness. Oregon City has a webpage devoted to outreach stories from police interactions with homeless individuals.

Tigard's police community engagement officer should work with officers to highlight the successes and challenges stemming from interactions with homeless individuals. The stories should be highlighted on the city's website, in Cityscape, and social media.

Cost: Staff time.

4. Advocating for Regional, State, and Federal Support.

a. The City should prioritize homelessness assistance on their legislative agenda.

For the last several years, the city has included support for homelessness assistance grants on their legislative agenda. The task force recommends continuing this advocacy.

The city should also continue working with their federal lobbyist, CFM, to pursue public and private grant funding. For example, in 2017, CFM assisted Just Compassion in completing a grant application for Wal-Mart funding.

Cost. Minimal. The City Council approves a federal and state legislative agenda each year.

b. The City should support the continuation of the Task Force for the Homeless.

The Task Force for the Homeless feels strongly that we should continue to meet to strengthen the voice of our recommendations. The task force would meet quarterly and once a year with the City Council.

Cost: Staff time.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Christina Graslie, co-chair, Luke-Dorf
- Jeanne-Marie Ritter, co-chair, Luke Dorf
- Bianetth Valdez, HomePlate
- Carol Herron, Severe Weather Shelter
- Carolyn Poach
- Christopher Fanning
- Darla Tillman-Samuelson, Just Compassion
- Dennis Moonier
- Donna Krauthoefer, Just Compassion
- Kim Marshall, Project Homeless Connect
- Lexi Hallum, Resident
- Linli Pao
- Marquesa Calderon, High School student
- Pat Rogers, Washington County Community Action
- Rachael Duke, Community Partners for Affordable Housing
- Ruby Buchholtz, Tualatin Riverkeepers
- Rose Browning, Good Neighbor Center
- Sue Stephens, Just Compassion
- Tom Anderson, City Council Liaison

City Staff

- Heather Wakem, Police, Officer
- Molly Carlisle, Library, Reader Services Manager
- Schuyler Warren, Community Development, Associate Planner

Staff Liaisons

- Kent Wyatt, Senior Management Analyst, City Manager's Office
- Nic Westendorf, ELGL Management Fellow, City Manager's Office