

CLS Draft

**CITY OF SEATTLE
RESOLUTION _____**

A RESOLUTION calling for the development of a viable, long-term plan by the City of Seattle ("City") for homeless individuals living in the East Duwamish Greenbelt ("residents"); an assessment of the housing, health, safety and service needs of those residents and of the public health and safety needs of surrounding neighborhoods; and the formulation of a plan to extend public health and human services to the residents prior to removing them or their property from the area.

WHEREAS, the City lacks critical, affordable permanent housing, and transitional housing to meet the needs of the growing number of individuals, families, and children experiencing homelessness in the City of Seattle, leaving thousands unsheltered on any given night; and

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 200 to 500 homeless individuals residing in the East Duwamish Greenbelt, some for many years, and for a range of specific, individualized reasons; and

WHEREAS, outreach workers have not identified existing and available shelter spaces that can provide long-term, twenty-four hour shelter, proximity to necessary services, and engagement with support systems for the residents of the East Duwamish Greenbelt, which are actually accessible to those residents in light of the physical, psychological, financial, and historical circumstances of each individual; and

WHEREAS, the experience in other cities with long-established encampments has required approximately 18 months before all of the residents could be adequately relocated; and

WHEREAS, removing residents from the East Duwamish Greenbelt, without adequate and accessible alternatives that provide them long-term, twenty-four hour shelter and a place to store their belongings, will result in these individuals living unsheltered on the streets in downtown Seattle and other neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, future concerns about or threats to public health and safety in the East Duwamish Greenbelt can be prevented through the provision of waste disposal, sanitation, and harm reduction services, as well as a ban on propane tanks in unsafe areas of the East Duwamish Greenbelt; and

WHEREAS, the City is committed to protecting the civil rights, as well as the public health and safety of all people, including those experiencing homelessness, and has publically endorsed a Housing First model for ending homelessness;

NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1

The City may engage in a “clean-up” of the East Duwamish Greenbelt, but shall not require residents to vacate the area, unless the City offers the displaced residents a twenty-four hour a day housing option that is accessible to the individual based on the individual’s limitations and personal history, can accommodate the resident during the daytime, will allow residents to store their belongings, allow couples and families to remain together, and allow individuals to keep their pets.

Section 2

The City shall convene a taskforce consisting of organizations and individuals that have an established history of providing services to homeless individuals or other relevant expertise, such as social workers for the Veterans’ Administration, shelter providers, outreach service providers, advocates for the homeless, low-income housing providers, Seattle Police Department, public health experts, and [insert]. The taskforce will submit a draft plan that addresses and balances the needs of the residents living in the East Duwamish Greenbelt with public health and safety concerns by [date], taking into consideration the fact that many residents in the East Duwamish Greenbelt have conditions that pose significant barriers to shelter and housing. The draft plan shall include adequate time for outreach, which shall be informed by service providers with long-term expertise in providing outreach to individuals and families living unsheltered, and shall be consistent with the Housing First model. Except as provided in section 3, the City shall not remove residents, their shelters, or their personal property from the Greenbelt until the plan has become final and is ready for implementation.

Section 3

To address any current health and safety issues while the plan is being formulated, the City may undertake a clean-up of the East Duwamish Greenbelt on a section by section basis, and if it does so, shall assist those residents of the section undergoing clean-up who choose to remain there to temporarily move their tents and belongings nearby while the clean-up occurs, and shall assist them to reestablish their tents and move their belongings back once the clean-up terminates.

Section 4

To address potential future health and safety issues while the plan is being formulated, the City shall provide the residents of the East Duwamish Greenbelt with waste disposal, sanitation, and harm reduction services. The City shall also prohibit the use of propane cans in the area at dangerous locations, and provide fire extinguishers. The City shall also undertake measures necessary to provide the Seattle Fire Department and other emergency services with ready access to the area in case of emergency, and to require the Department to conduct regular inspections.

Section 5

Upon its completion, the draft plan shall be presented to the Human Services and Public Health Committee of the Seattle City Council, along with a proposed budget and timeframe for its implementation. The Committee shall work with the Mayor’s Office, the appropriate departments, and the full Council to adopt the plan as final and speedily implement it.