



Seattle
Finance &
Administrative Services

Date: November 1, 2017

To: Patricia Lally, Seattle Office for Civil Rights Director

From: Fred Podesta, Director *FP*

Subject: October Encampment Monitoring Report

Thank you for the work of your office in monitoring the compliance of the Navigation Team with City rules for removing hazardous encampments, and sharing with us your concerns about encampment removal operations. We have worked hard to make sure that all City employees follow the encampment removal rules in the MDAR, and are pleased that you observed they are being followed. We are impressed by the performance of the Navigation Team in making effective contact with unsheltered people, assisting them to safer alternative living arrangements, and abating hazardous conditions. However, we remain very concerned about the plight of people living unsheltered, and look forward to continuing the City's progress in helping unsheltered people move to safe, supportive and appropriate places.

The Navigation Team has improved the City's ability to connect people living unsheltered in hazardous conditions with services and relocation to safer locations like shelter or managed encampments. Between Feb. 20 and Oct. 18, 2017, the Navigation team made 5,806 contacts with a total of 1,484 individuals. Of the 1,484 individuals, 946 (64%) accepted some sort of service, including case management and mental health support/referral; substance use disorder treatment referral; ID acquisition assistance; medical referrals; coordinated entry housing assessment (VISPDAT), other services and basic needs. A 64% acceptance rate for services is a significant improvement over previous outreach efforts. For example, prior to the implementation of the Navigation Team, outreach to residents of the East Duwamish Greenbelt had a successful engagement rate of 19% for any services and 18% for alternative living arrangements.

Most importantly, the Navigation Team is significantly increasing the number of people willing to relocate to a safer alternative, in part because it has desirable, low-barrier options to offer. Between February and October 2017, 581 individuals (39%) accepted relocation to safer spaces, including shelter, managed encampments and reconnecting with family or another support system. For comparison, during the entire year of 2016, outreach related to encampment response resulted in only 214 people accepting referrals to an alternate living arrangement (an estimated acceptance rate of 17%).

These accomplishments are due to the close collaboration between the Human Services Department, Finance and Administrative Services and the Police Department in the Navigation Team. This interdepartmental approach leverages the strengths of each department to design and enact personalized offers and interventions with homeless individuals. The strength of this same interdepartmental approach is responsible for the rapid implementation of the new suite of safe alternatives that were opened this year.

We share your desire to improve outcomes and offers. Your report notes the challenge of providing sufficient low-barrier safe alternatives for unsheltered people. While such options are available now, the most popular 24x7 versions with supports such as case management are very limited. We agree that these 24x7 options are highly attractive to many unsheltered individuals, and more would be very helpful. We are engaged in continuous improvement. We are hopeful that our work applying the Racial Equity Toolkit will help adjust our procedures in areas where necessary, such as recovery of stored items, to remove barriers and minimize or mitigate negative impacts.

Fred Podesta, Director

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