

MEMO

To: Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith
From: Al Poole, HSD Division Director
Subject: HSD Encampment and Outreach Summary
Date: April 30, 2010

The following information reports HSD activities to date and issues to address regarding homeless encampments and outreach.

WORK TO DATE

I have identified and implemented two changes to the encampment protocols that reflect a more humane approach to Seattle's Encampment Policies. City departments participating in encampment clean-ups and our outreach provider are now operating with the procedural changes. Some changes to the protocols were suggestions by community advocates and providers.

The following has occurred:

- Expanded outreach. Outreach is no longer limited to only sites with three or more structures. Outreach is called for camps at the discretion of the HIBGA director.
- Required notification of clean up at permanently posted sites. Previously, permanently posted sites did not require a 72 hour notice of clean up if a site had been cleared three times with-in 60 days. Now, property owners must post notice for clean-up regardless of how many times it's occurred.
- Improved coordination between outreach and clean up. I am working with department property owners to communicate to outreach the exact time and date of clean up so outreach staff can provide accurate information. Some departments can easily execute a clean up as scheduled. But SDOT, for example, relies on the schedule of the Department of Corrections (DOC) who performs all of SDOT's clean up. SPD must accompany the DOC work crew at all times. If a change in schedules occurs by DOC and SPD, it can cause a delay. The purpose of an exact date can motivate campers to accept services and leave a site more quickly with their belongings.
- Expanded the use of shelter beds at Roy Street. Roy Street opened and was designated as a shelter for campers who were referred there by outreach only. Now the shelter can fill unused beds by other people who need shelter on a nightly basis.
- Maintain communication with city departments through monthly interdepartmental team meetings to discuss issues relating to encampments. Those in attendance include HSD, DON, SDOT, SPD, OH, Parks, and CSB.
- Worked with IT staff from DEA to modify the Seattle Encampment Response Information System (SERIS). SERIS is a database used to track complaints of encampments, identify camping and encampments sites, coordinate outreach and cleanup of sites. Improvements were made to ensure encampment clean ups were approved by HSD first.

I have also worked with the community on the following:

- Identify issues and changes to encampment protocols. I convened the HSD Encampment Policy and Protocols Advisory group consisting of outreach workers, and members of the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness. We will meet on a regular basis to ensure the community has an avenue to provide recommendations during the policy review.

- Discussed the policy of volunteer outreach work with providers. I have met with Union Gospel Mission's President and staff from the UGM Men's Shelter who are interested in assisting the city with outreach to campers. I will continue to meet with them to strategize outreach.
- Provide and gain information on outreach services with the Seattle Outreach Committee (SOC). The SOC meets monthly to discuss outreach activities in Seattle by a variety of homeless outreach providers and includes Union Gospel Mission, DESC, Compass Housing Alliance, Metropolitan Improvement District, YouthCare, and Catholic Community Services.
- Provide information about clean-ups to business owners and residents who feel they are being directly impacted by encampment sites, and follow up with the status of clean ups by the property owners.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS:

- The current facilities used for storage of personal property taken from encampments are not located on a bus line and not very accessible for people who are homeless. I have identified a more accessible location at the Fleets and Facilities Department surplus facility in the SODO area. I have met with the Mayor's staff to consider the issue of moving the storage facility to the FFD location.
- With the expansion of outreach, the need for more shelter beds may be required in the near future. My staff and I would like to meet with you and Elliott Day to discuss options.