

# Homelessness Policy Advisory Committee Final Report

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## Acknowledgments

**Mayor Geoffrey Thomas**

**City Administrator Deborah Knight**

**Police Chief Jeff Jolley**

**Facilitator: Janice Corbin**

### **HPAC Members:**

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Monroe community member. Member of the faith community.

**Jim Bloss**

Monroe community member. Member of the faith community. NAMI advocate. Housing Hope.

**Jennifer Chavez**

Monroe community member. Member of the faith community. Homeless youth advocate.

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**Kyle Fisher**

Monroe community member. Planning Commissioner. First responder. Neighborhood advocate.

**Geoffrey Godfrey**

Ideal Options Treatment facility; health care provider and professor of nurse practitioners.

**Todd Strickler**

Monroe community member. Monroe Senior Center Board Member. Volunteer for Monroe Police Department.

**Bridgette Tuttle**

Monroe community member. Planning Commission Chair. Local business owner.

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Real Estate Services Agent IV for Snohomish County PUD coordinates with Monroe Police to address homeless encampments on property owned by PUD. Active member and certified NAMI teacher.

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Council Member.

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**Special Thanks to:**

**Pam Baker, Macey Haverly, Debbie Willis** - Meeting Minuets

**Willow Russell** - EnviroIssues Consultant

**Pietra Gaebel** - Legislative Research Consultant

**Guest Speakers:**

**Mary Jane (MJ) Brell-Vujovic** - Director of Snohomish County Human Services

**Sgt. Paul Ryan, Elisa Delgado, Anji Jorstad, John Alcorn** Monroe Police Department Embedded Social Worker and Diversion Programs

**Allison Warren-Barbour** – United Way Collective Impact Model

**Dave Summers** – Snohomish County Executive

**Mark Smith** – Director of Snohomish County Housing

MRSC Webinars – Limits of Law Enforcement & Legal Considerations and Case Studies in Affordable Housing.

**Calei Vaughn** - Tour of Carnegie Resource Center

## Homelessness Policy Advisory Committee Summary Report

In the spring of 2019 Mayor Geoffrey Thomas, in response to the community's growing concern regarding homelessness in Monroe, formed a committee to make recommendations on how the city should respond to issues relating to homelessness. An announcement was made about the formation of the committee. Community members applied and were interviewed by the Mayor, City Administrator and the Police Chief.

The committee was formed with representation of community members from local businesses, faith-based organizations, services experts in mental health, drug dependency, and local human service providers. The committee also had a member with personal experience of successfully exiting homelessness.

In April of 2019, The Homelessness Advisory Committee (HPAC) had its first meeting. Ten committee members: Rachel Adams, Jim Bloss, Jennifer Chavez, Sean Cramer, Kyle Fisher, Geoffrey Godfrey, Todd Strickler, Bridgette Tuttle, Heidie Waxham and Mary Wysocki, and two ad-hoc members Jason Gamble and Phil Spirito. Facilitator Janice Corbin was selected to facilitate the meetings. City Administrator Deborah Knight, and Police Chief Jeff Jolley were also present and participated in the majority of meetings. The HPAC met twice monthly over the course of the 2019.

The Committee's goals were to:

- Provide a forum for the coordination of information among local stakeholders.
- Seek thoughtful, effective, and lasting solutions to the City's homelessness crisis.
- Facilitate assistance for unsheltered persons in the Monroe community.
- And to provide the Mayor and City Council with nonbinding advice and recommendations regarding issues related to homelessness.

The committee continually kept in mind these guiding questions:

- What concerns and issues does the community have about homelessness within the City of Monroe?
- What are the underlying causes of Homelessness in Monroe?
- What do we need to know about the causes, resources, and strategies underway in Monroe and other communities that reduce homelessness?

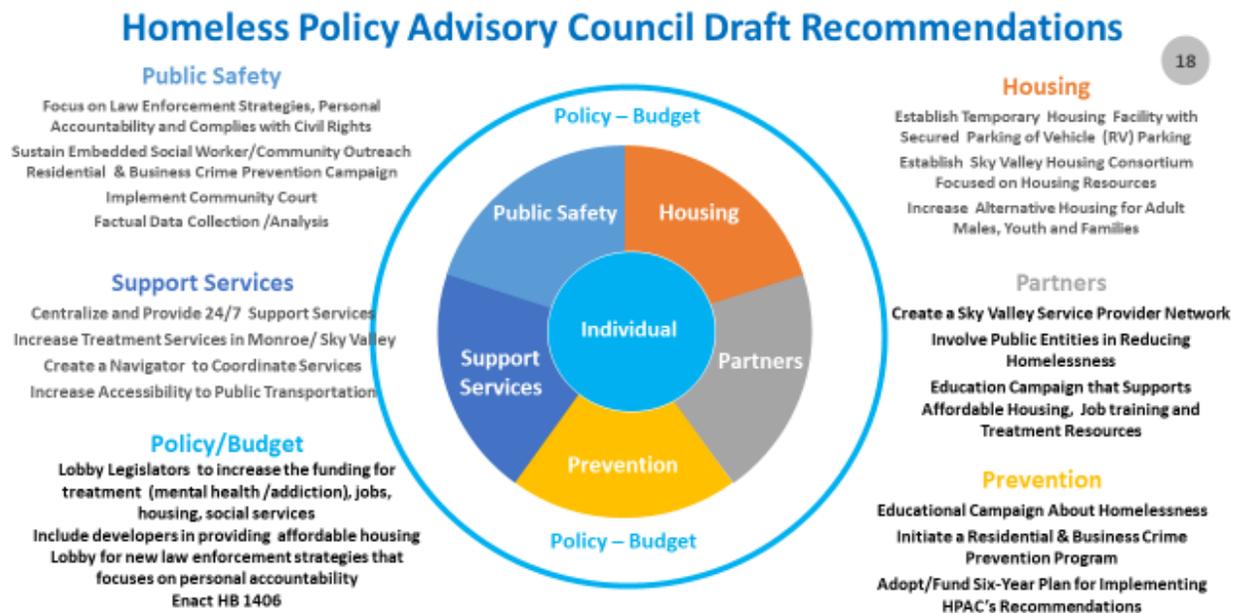
Over the past year the committee has been fully immersed in this topic. The committee has had experts come to give presentations, webinars, field trips to service organizations, and assigned take-home reading (*Appendix A*). From all of these informative and educational experiences, the committee began to hone in its focus into these areas: Housing, Partners, Prevention, Support Services, Public Safety, and Policy & Budget. In each of these categories the committee brainstormed and drafted recommendations to best express a balance of compassion

and accountability and a desire to enable people to choose a path out of homelessness. The committee has also always kept in mind that homelessness is a very complex issue that exists on a very broad spectrum (*Appendix B*). There is “no one size fits all” solution.

In November of 2019, the Committee hosted an Open House to ask for the community's feedback on the draft recommendations. The Open House use was extremely well attended and successful. The feedback from the community was very serious and thoughtful, and also encouragingly well-aligned with the HPAC vision (*Appendix C*).

The committee continued to meet and refine its recommendations, and in January of 2020 the final version of the Homeless Policy Advisory Committee recommendations were approved by the committee.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 the committee presented recommendations to the City Council. What follows are the HPAC recommendations and supporting documents.



\*A readers note: Please note in the footings of the document you are reading to show the most current month and year for the most accurate progress to be reflected in the Action Plan, and Gantt Mapp Project Management Tool sections.

## HPAC Final Recommendations

### Housing

- **Establish Temporary-Housing** in a permanent facility to serve Monroe residents with adjacent secured parking for those living in vehicles and RVs for overnight stay
- **Establish a Sky Valley Housing Consortium** to establish short, long-term, and alternative housing
- **Increase alternative housing that includes but is not limited to men, youth, LGBTQ, and families and pets**

### Partners

- **Establish Service Provider Networks** to provide services and housing 24/7 in Sky Valley
- **Increase public transportation** between Monroe & Everett
- **Involve other public entities** in a network to prevent and end homelessness in Sky Valley
- **Create an education campaign** that supports affordable housing, job training, and treatment options

### Prevention

- **Gather and analyze accurate data** about homelessness in Monroe
- **Create an education campaign** about homelessness: causes, prevention strategies, and alternatives
- **Promote social services networks** focused on youth and families

## Policy/Budget

- **Lobby legislators** at all levels to increase funding for addiction and mental health treatment, affordable housing, job training, and support services
- **Identify and lobby for new law enforcement** strategies focused on personal accountability
- **Engage developers** in building affordable and subsidized housing
- **Implement HB 1406** Explore all revenue options for housing, mental health, and chemical dependency
- **Continue HPAC as standing committee** Monitor progress towards implementing HPAC recommendations. Review Technical Committee recommendations.
- **Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan** to fulfill HPAC's recommendations

## Public Safety

- **Implement law enforcement strategies** and regulations that increase personal accountability and adhere to civil and personal rights
- **Gather and analyze accurate data** about crime in Monroe
- **Initiate a residential and business** crime prevention program
- **Continue to budget** for the Embedded Social Worker/Community Outreach
- **Use technology to increase public safety and protect infrastructure.**
- **Implement Community Court** so treatment for addiction and mental health can be offered as an alternative to jail

## Support Services

- **Create a coordinated homeless response center.**
- **Create a system of services** that responds to the homeless crisis 24/7
- **Establish more accessible mental health** and addiction services in Monroe
- **Obtain supportive services to navigate people through resources**
- **Support agencies that serve and promote self-reliance** among people in need

## 2020 Action Plan

Now that the HPAC has set forth its recommendations, the next step has been to set forth a plan for implementation. In the chart below you will see how each of the HPAC recommendations and their category are listed in the center. An action item is shown to the far left that expands on each recommendation.

A budget column exists not to show the complete cost of doing any item in full, but to show the available city contribution toward each. The Mayor earmarked \$100,000.000 in the 2020 budget toward implementation of the HPAC Recommendations. The budget also allows for additional funding to come out of the General Fund. The city will receive approximately \$46,000, the State's shared sales tax program, to support housing needs. Other funding sources may be identified.

The hope is that this Action plan will be accomplished by a team of Technical Advisory Experts that is being referred to as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Funding for human service projects also comes frequently in pieces put together and administered by a Non-Profit organization. The City will need to issue Requests for Proposals (RFP) to find the best fit for overseeing how to assemble the desired grants; along with the non-profit's budget; and the city contribution to implement the Action Plan once the HPAC recommendations are approved by the City Council.

The Action Plan is labeled for the year 2020. Homelessness is such a complex issue that initially a small scope was needed to take our first steps from the broad goals set forth in the recommendations into attainable action items. It is the intent that these action items become first steps toward small wins that start momentum into evaluating the scope of 2021 and beyond.

Many of the items show an "end date" of December 2020. There will be another Action Plan to define the scope of work for 2021 that will carry many of these items forward. It is the nature of homelessness to not be a static condition and it will need an adaptive approach to be able to plan, do, check, and adjust on services that are working, and those that need to be addressed further.

The TAC will be the group primarily responsible for determining performance measures, such as reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate; and a full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers. They will coordinate with the Non-profit overseeing the implementation process to Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan to fulfill HPAC's recommendations.

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
<b>Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing</b> (Crisis Housing, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Rehousing)	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Establish Temporary-Housing in a permanent facility to serve Monroe residents</b> with adjacent secured parking for those living in vehicles and RVs for overnight stay	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>1/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters
Evaluate Property Units				5/2020	12/2020	
Negotiate Lease – Master Leasing				6/2020	12/2020	
Write RFP and secure Program Manager through RFP				4/2020	12/2020	
Develop criteria with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)			<b>\$46,000</b> <b>(HB1406)</b>	1/2020	12/2020	
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP						
<b>Establish Sky Valley Housing Consortium</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Establish Sky Valley Housing Consortium</b> to establish short, long-term and alternative housing		1/2020	12/2020	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
		Increase alternative housing that includes but is not limited to <b>men, youth, LGBTQ, families, and pets</b>				
Inventory surplus property				5/2020	12/2020	
Identify housing needs				1/2020	06/2020	
Work with Technical Advisory Committee to identify partners and available funding				02/2020	06/2020	
<b>Form a Technical Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Establish Service Provider Networks</b> to provide services and housing 24/7 in Sky Valley  <b>Involve other public entities</b> in a network to prevent and end homelessness in Sky Valley		<b>1/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers
Identify non-profit stakeholders and partners				1/2020	3/2020	
Determine shared mission and vision				2/2020	4/2020	
Evaluate needs and resources for one-stop shop				3/2020	5/2020	
Write scope of work for Request for Proposal for one-stop shop				4/2020	6/2020	

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
<b>Establish Transportation service between Sky Valley and Everett</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Increase public transportation between Monroe &amp; Everett</b>		<b>1/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	Increase public transportation
Evaluate transportation needs with partners				1/2020	3/2020	
Evaluate existing transportation contracts with non-profits (e.g. Senior Center; SVT; DART)				1/2020	3/2020	
Apply for Community Transit GO (grant) program				3/2020	6/2020	
<b>Provide information about services</b> to remain housed, financial training, and incentives for businesses to hire employees with entry level skills, information about mental and behavioral health services.	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Create an education campaign</b> that supports affordable housing, job training, and treatment options		<b>1/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers
Work with partners to develop and promote annual “human service days” set up like a vendor show						

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
<b>Educational Campaign (Enviroissues Contract)</b>	<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Create an education campaign about homelessness: causes, prevention strategies, and alternatives</b>	<b>\$50,000 (Budgeted)</b>	<b>1/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	<b>Improved public perception and response</b>
Develop education and outreach communication plan				12/2019	12/2020	
Educate property owners about laws, enforcement, trespass - Chamber of Commerce & Downtown Monroe Association				2/2020	12/2020	
Educate public about aggressive panhandling, property crime, and personal safety.				2/2020	12/2020	
Educate public about safety regarding vigilantism and bullying				2/2020	12/2020	
Develop and implement Block Watch Program - residential and business buy in/education/communication - training & certification program.				10/2020	12/2020	

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
Develop working relationship with McKinney Vento liaisons, and other School District Programs & Persons, at Monroe School District	Prevention	Promote social service networks focused on youth and families		3/2020	12/2020	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals
Identify needs of homeless families	Prevention	Gather and analyze accurate data about homelessness in Monroe		1/2020	12/2020	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers
Work with McKinney-Vento Family Liaisons, and other School District Programs & Persons, in the Monroe School District to distribute flyers of local and county services for homeless students and families and encourage MSC to post flyers on school premises.				3/2020	6/2020	
Define 2021 Work Plan, Priorities, and Implementation Model	Prevention/Policy & Budget	Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan to fulfill HPAC's recommendations		6/2020	12/2020	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
<b>Implement law enforcement strategies</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>Implement law enforcement strategies</b> and regulations that increase personal accountability and adhere to civil and personal rights		1/2020	12/2020	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals
Review Solicitation Regulations				2/2020	4/2020	
Evaluate bail fees				4/2020	9/2020	
Develop and implement Block Watch Program - residential and business buy in/education/communication - training & certification program.		<b>Initiate a residential and business</b> crime prevention program		10/2020	12/2020	
<b>Continue Embedded Social Worker Program</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>Continue to budget</b> for embedded social worker/community outreach team		1/2020	12/2020	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals
Police Department (Existing program)			\$73,000			
Public Defender (New level of services)			\$20,000	3/2020	12/2020	
<b>Leverage Technology to increase safety in public spaces and problem areas, including but not</b>		<b>Use technology for public safety and to protect infrastructure.</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>	<b>1/2020</b>	<b>6/2020</b>	Reduction in the number of homeless individuals

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
<b>limited the use of remote systems to allocate resources more efficiently.</b>						
<b>Collect data</b> on court cases. Determine with Monroe Municipal Court the costs/benefits of community court model	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>Implement Community Court</b> so treatment for addiction and mental health can be offered as an alternative to jail  <b>Gather and analyze data</b> about crime in Monroe		<b>6/2020</b>	<b>12/2021</b>	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers
Identify partners to develop community court model						
Determine with Monroe Municipal Court and partners the costs/benefits of community court model				<b>1/2021</b>	<b>12/2021</b>	
<b>Coordinated Services – One Stop Shop</b>	<b>Support Services</b>	<b>Create a coordinated homeless response center</b>  <b>Create a system of services</b> that responds to the homeless crisis 24/7	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>4/2020</b>	<b>12/2020</b>	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
		<b>Establish more accessible mental health and addiction services in Monroe</b>				
Develop scope of work with Technical Advisory Committee				1/2020	5/2020	
Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)				3/2020	6/2020	
Award RFPs				6/2020	7/2020	
Establish Homeless HMIS/By name lists				6/2020	12/2020	
Work with Technical Advisory Committee and Snohomish County to identify resources to provide housing and mental health navigators in the Sky Valley	<b>Support Services</b>	<b>Obtain supportive services to navigate people through resources</b>		1/2020	12/2020	A full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers
Provide facilities and funding for non-profits		<b>Support agencies that serve and promote self-reliance</b>		<b>On-going</b>		Reduction in the number of homeless individuals
Work with Take the Next Step and Volunteers of America to designate a family resource center and/or services in Monroe				3/2020	12/2020	

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
Identify performance measures, such as reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate; and a full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers.	<b>Policy &amp; Budget</b>	<b>Create a Six-year Plan</b> , which includes performance measures		6/2020	9/2020	Data driven results and evaluation of programs
<b>Lobbying for changes to State and Federal law</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Budget</b>	<b>Lobby legislators at all levels</b> to increase funding for addiction and mental health treatment, affordable housing, job training, and support services  <b>Identify and lobby for new law enforcement strategies</b> focused on personal accountability of homeless		1/2020	12/2020	reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate
Collaborate with Affordable Housing Consortium (AHC) on writing new housing chapter for the city's	<b>Policy &amp; Budget</b>	<b>Engage developers</b> in building affordable and subsidized housing		6/2020	12/2020	reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
comprehensive plan update.						emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate
Continue HPAC as a standing committee						
	<b>Policy &amp; Budget</b>	<b>Implement HB 1406 and explore all revenue options</b> for housing, mental health, and chemical dependency.		<b>7/2019</b>	<b>3/2021</b>	reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate
Identify needs			<b>\$46,000 (HB1406)</b>	4/2020	9/2020	
Develop criteria with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)				9/2020	12/2020	
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP				12/2020	12/2021	
Evaluate program				6/2020	12/2020	
		<b>Continue HPAC as a standing Committee</b>				Consistent community engagement;

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End	Performance Measure
						Community human services program governance structure.
Define 2021 Work Plan, Priorities, and Implementation Model	<b>Policy &amp; Budget</b>	<b>Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan</b> to fulfill HPAC's recommendations		6/2020	12/2020	

**Total 2020 Investment \$312,000**

## 2020 HPAC Action Plan - Gantt Map Chart

This next section is a project management tool that was used to help organize the Action Plan’s projected dates.

The Gantt Map Chart key reflects steps started with an “X,” and steps to complete with an “O.” This will be a helpful system in the plan, do, check, adjust phase of the TAC’s work to see how the execution of the action plan is measuring up to the projected scope of work and where there will need to be more focus and where we are already seeing success.

This tool will be used monthly to help us track completion of the Action Plan and the dates in the footings of these pages will be able to change to reflect the most up to date information.

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
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X – Started; O – Not Started.

<b>A. Housing</b>												
Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing (Crisis Housing, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing)	O											
Evaluate Property Units												
Negotiate Lease – Master Leasing												
Write RFP and Secure Program Manager through RFP												
Develop criteria with TAC	O											
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP	O											
Establish Sky Valley Housing Consortium	X											
Inventory Surplus Property												
Identify Housing Needs	O											
Work with TAC to identify partners and available funding												
<b>B. Partners</b>												
Form a TAC	X											

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
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Identify non-profit stakeholders and partners	X											
Determine shared mission and vision												
Evaluate needs and resources for one-stop shop												
Write scope of work for RFP for one-stop shop												
Establish Transportation service between Sky Valley and Everett	O											
Evaluate transportation needs with partners	X											
Evaluate existing transportation contracts with non-profits	X											
Apply for Transit Go (grant) program												
Provide information about services to remain housed, financial training, and incentives for businesses to hire employees with entry level skills, information about mental and behavioral health services.	O											
Work with partners to develop and promote annual "human services days" set up like a vendor show.	O											
<b>C. Prevention</b>												
Educational Campaign (Enviroissues Contract)	X											
Develop education and outreach communication plan	X											
Educate Property Owners about laws, enforcement, trespass – Chamber of Commerce & Downtown Monroe Association												
Educate public about aggressive panhandling, property crime, and personal safety												
Educate public about safety regarding vigilantism and bullying												
Develop and implement Block Watch Program – residential and business buy in/ education/ communication – training & certification program.												

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
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Develop working relationship with McKinney Vento liaison at Monroe High School												
Identify needs of homeless families	O											
Work with McKinney-Vento Family Liaisons in the Monroe School District to distribute flyers of local and county services for homeless students and families and encourage MSD to post flyers on school premises												
<b>D. Public Safety</b>												
Implement law enforcement strategies	O											
Review Solicitation Regulations												
Evaluate Bail Fees												
Develop and implement Block Watch Program – residential and business buy in/ education/ communication – training & certification program												
Continue Embedded Social Worker Program	X											
Police Department (Existing Program)	X											
Public Defender (New level of services)												
Install Cameras in Parks	O											
Collect data on court cases. Determine with Monroe Municipal Court the costs/benefits of community court model												
Identify partners to develop community court model												
Determine with Monroe Municipal Court and partners the cost/benefits of community court model												
<b>A. Support Services</b>												
Coordinated Services – One Stop Shop												
Develop scope of work with TAC	X											

	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
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Issue RFP												
Award RFP												
Establish Homeless HMIS/by name lists												
Work with TAC and Snohomish County to identify resources to provide housing and mental health navigators in the Sky Valley	X											
Provide facilities and funding for non-profits	O											
Work with Take the Next Step and Volunteers of America to designate a family resource center and/or services in Monroe												
<b>A. Policy &amp; Budget</b>												
Define 2021 Work Plan, Priorities, and implementation Model												
Identify performance measures, and a full HMIS utilized by service providers.												
Lobby for changes to State and Federal law	X											
Collaborate with Affordable Housing Consortium (AHC) on writing new housing chapter for the city's comprehensive plan update.												
Continue HPAC as a standing committee	X											
Implement HB1406 and explore all revenue options for housing, mental health and chemical dependency.	X											
Identify needs												
Develop criteria with TAC												
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP	O											
Evaluate Program												

## Communication Plan – EnviroIssues

The following is a communications plan. The city has hired a Communications Consultant to help package how the city shares this information and how the recommended education campaigns will be handled. Please see below.

### Purpose & Context

In November 2019, the City of Monroe hired EnviroIssues to develop a plan that would help the City and its partners communicate proactively, clearly, and consistently with Monroe residents about homelessness. The plan aims to dispel misinformation around this complex and charged issue. It also provides guidance for when and how to respond to social media posts and will include supportive web content and a sample social media calendar once the plan is approved.

This plan was informed by communications best practices, research regarding public response to homelessness, a review of existing materials and social media content produced by and about the City of Monroe, feedback from the Homelessness Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC), public comments provided at the HPAC Open House, and deeper conversations with the following City staff and HPAC members:

- Bridgette Tuttle, HPAC Member
- Debbie Willis, Administrative Bureau Director
- Deborah Knight, City Administrator
- Geoffrey Thomas, Mayor
- Jeff Jolley, Chief of Police
- Rachel Adams, HPAC Member
- Ryan Irving, Deputy Chief of Police

The activities outlined in this communications plan are intended to support the Draft HPAC Action Plan. In particular, the Action Plan recommends that the City create an education campaign about homelessness, including causes, prevention strategies, and alternatives. This communications plan is the first step towards that campaign.

### Goals & Audiences

The activities outlined in this plan are designed to reach Monroe residents (whether housed or unhoused) and business owners. Our communications goals for 2020 include the following. Monroe residents and business owners will ...

- Have a reality-based and unexaggerated understanding of homelessness in Monroe.
- Understand what the City is doing to ensure public safety and to help people experiencing homelessness.
- Understand individual constitutional rights and the City's legal limitations.
- Understand the varied and systemic factors that can lead to homelessness.
- Feel heard and know what to do if they ...
  - Feel unsafe.

- Are experiencing homelessness and need help.
- Want to help someone who does not have a home.

There are also broader goals that were discussed by City staff, including decreasing the number of illegal encampments, reducing property crime, and increasing the number of people who receive services and housing. These important goals will be addressed as the City moves forward on the HPAC recommendations. This plan builds a foundation for future campaigns to seek funding and support to implement those recommendations.

## Approach

Shifting the narrative to fact-based information about homelessness in Monroe is a complicated task because public perception may be rooted in emotions and beliefs rather than facts. Those who are housed have any number of reactions to someone experiencing homelessness – fear, guilt, shame, anger, empathy, helplessness, frustration – and thus, our communications must address those base responses and foster a sense of shared humanity as well as provide clear and accurate information. The following combination of activities aims to strike that balance.

### Ambassadors

Ambassadors will be everyday Monroe residents and business owners who represent a cross-section of the area and collaborate with a member of the City staff. Ambassadors will carry the City’s message and bolster it with their own stories and experiences, dispelling misinformation – whether over coffee, on social media, or as a speaker at an event.

The ambassador group should include former HPAC members who are already incredibly knowledgeable about regional homelessness and who led a successful and well-attended open house. Former HPAC members shall help recruit others to join, focusing on under-represented groups and community leaders – ultimately building a team of 20-40 people.

The group will be formally trained and supported with:

- Consistent messaging that is adaptable so ambassadors can speak with their authentic voices.
- Constructive conversation training and practice (e.g. active listening, acknowledging the other person’s point of view, sharing how your own experience is different, knowing when to walk away if needed, etc.).
- Storytelling training and practice, so ambassadors are ready with examples that resonate.
- Opportunities to learn from police officers, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness.

EnviroIssues will provide initial training and support to establish the ambassadors program and recruit participants. We will also work with the City and former HPAC members to identify co-leaders who will carry the work forward, convening ambassadors monthly to support one another, share success stories and challenges, and refine approaches.

In addition to responsive communications, the ambassadors will also lead a “Get to Know Monroe” campaign. This campaign will elevate the commonalities among all Monroe residents and foster community. Similar to the [Humans of New York](#) series, Get to Know Monroe will feature a wide variety of community members – sharing quotes, values, fun facts, photos, and/or short videos.

Ambassadors will conduct the interviews for the campaign, ideally over coffee or a pint, so that in addition to gathering stories, they are making connections. The stories they gather will be featured on social media and possibly in local publications, on radio programs, or on a stand-alone website. Stories will feature both housed

and unhoused residents, and while the campaign may eventually touch on the issue of homelessness, it will never disclose the housing status of those featured. And that will be the point. Because at the end of the day, we are all Monroe.

## **Consistent Outbound City Communications**

In addition to the ambassadors program, the City of Monroe and nonprofit partners should increase their own proactive storytelling. This effort has already begun with regular social media posts, media coverage of the outreach team, the HPAC Open House, and the Monroe This Week newsletter. We recommend building on this and diversifying the types of stories that are shared, including stories and social media posts that:

- Highlight bright spots and successes from the City’s Outreach Team, municipal courts, and service providers.
- Share steps people can take if they feel unsafe, if they’re worried about their business, if they are experiencing homelessness and need help, or if they want to help someone who is unsheltered.
- Demonstrate what it means to be a Monroe community member (e.g. a series from ambassadors that highlights why they are involved in solving homelessness and/or cross-promoting Get to Know Monroe stories).
- Combat stereotypes of people experiencing homelessness by featuring them – with their consent and input – as people, not just circumstances ([Facing Homelessness](#) does this well).
- Highlight the City’s good work to ensure public safety, without stigmatizing those experiencing homelessness or being perceived as having “rose-colored glasses.”

The City’s outbound communications should also include specific content that supports the recommendations made in the HPAC Draft Action Plan, including:

- Educate property owners about laws, enforcement, and trespassing.
- Educate public about aggressive panhandling, property crime, and personal safety.
- Educate public about safety regarding vigilantism and bullying.

The City is currently using Facebook ([City of Monroe](#), [Monroe Police Department](#), and community-led [You Had Me at Monroe](#)), [Twitter](#), [Monroe This Week](#), word of mouth, flyers, events, and their [website](#) to reach their audience. These are a solid base that could be augmented by working with local publications and radio stations. To identify other channels, we recommend surveying Monroe community members and asking how they want to hear from the City).

Once this plan is finalized, EnviroIssues will provide graphic design support to ensure all City communications about homelessness have a consistent look and feel. We will also make recommendations for photographs and imagery.

## **Volunteer and Learning Opportunities**

Many people shut down when confronted with the complex challenges of homelessness. Research shows that individuals are more willing to help if there’s just one person in need. But when there are hundreds or thousands of people to help, they feel overwhelmed. How could they possibly make a difference? So why do anything at all?

It is important to fight this feeling of helplessness – which can quickly turn to anger and frustration – by giving people simple things to do:

- Promote volunteer events and mentorship, coaching, or job training opportunities with local service providers.
- Share opportunities for people to donate food, essential items, or money to local shelters and service providers.
- Post reading lists and organize book clubs or discussion sessions where people can learn about systemic causes of homelessness and how to advocate for change. The Monroe library could be a good partner in this.
- Encourage civil behavior and to treat everyone, sheltered and unsheltered, the way we would like to be treated.

In terms of the last bullet, it is also important to ask people who are experiencing homelessness what would be helpful to them – what are they hoping for from their neighbors?

## **Annual Report**

Producing and distributing an annual report (in print, online, or via video) could be an excellent way for the City to report back to community members, particularly if the HPAC recommendations are implemented using public funds. It doesn't need to be long or complex – in fact, shorter and simpler will be more successful.

The report could include one or two success stories, data that demonstrates how the City has made progress (e.g. the growing number of people successfully housed thanks to new investments), lessons learned, and plans for the coming year. To keep it manageable, the report could be a compilation of existing stories and data. (It's okay to repeat stories!)

## **Foundational Web Content**

While most Monroe community members will not spontaneously visit the City of Monroe's webpages on homelessness, it is important to provide foundational messaging that serves as a resource for City staff and ambassadors (e.g. easy links to share in response to public concerns). This web content should include core messages about the City's beliefs and approach, answers to frequently asked questions, stories that demonstrate the City's efforts, stories and data that combat stereotypes and misperceptions about homelessness, and resources for those seeking help. EnviroIssues will provide foundation content once this place is approved.

## **Managing Social Media Comments**

### **State a Clear Policy**

The first step in managing social media comments is posting a clear policy around conduct and language. The City of Monroe may have this already, but it was not readily accessible. Here is an [example of a comment policy](#).

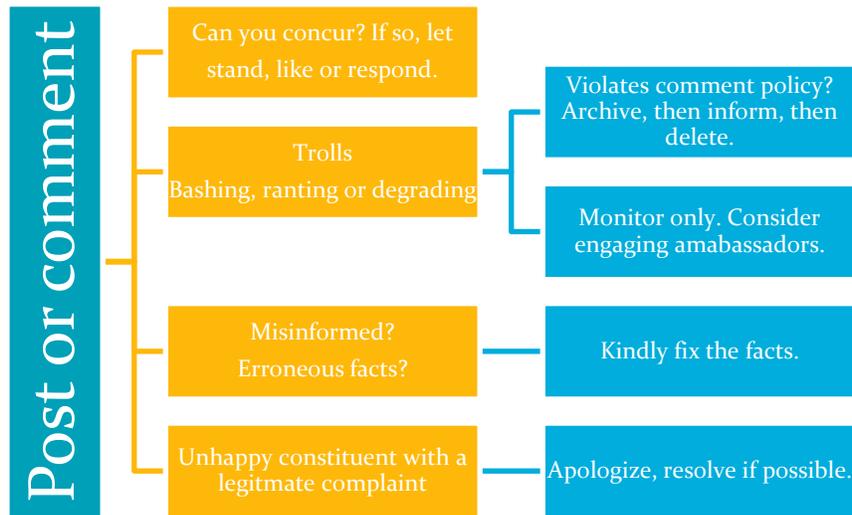
### **Assign Roles**

Identify who will be responsible for monitoring and responding to comments. Here is one option:

- Assign a City staff member and two alternates to monitor social media comments daily.
- Identify a team of 6-12 ambassadors who are available to provide supportive comments or help dispel misinformation when needed.
- Create a schedule so not all ambassadors need to be on call all the time (e.g. weekly rotations of three).

## Establish Criteria

Establish clear criteria for when and how to respond. Here are some guidelines:



Please note that this applies to City of Monroe social media sites, not to private Facebook groups. It is prudent to monitor private groups, but do not engage.

## Draw on Existing Resources

When the assigned person encounters a comment that needs a response (based on the criteria above):

- Review existing web content, FAQ, and key messages to inform response.
- Respond with relevant content and a link if helpful within one to three business days (if possible)
- If the comment is charged and could benefit from community confirmation, alert the ambassadors on-call and ask them to chime in with their experience to help shift the tenor of the conversation.
- Reminder about negative posts:
  - Treat negative comments and posts just as you would if you were talking face to face.
  - Respond to negative posts with a positive tone. Thank people for sharing their concerns or opinions.
  - You do not need to respond to every criticism or barb.

## City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table By Audience & Goal

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
Monroe residents and business owners	Understand what the City is doing to increase public safety and to help people experiencing homelessness.	We believe that everyone in Monroe deserves to feel safe and supported. Our officers and Outreach Team are out every day, working to reduce crime and connect our unhoused neighbors with services and resources.	City of Monroe	City webpages that describe ongoing efforts Weekly social media updates (e.g. featured outreach stat, opportunity for Monroe residents to volunteer) Police blotter that tracks responses to public safety or disturbance and Outreach Team connections
			Outreach Team	Weekly bright spots: short personal reports that celebrate a success from the field (share on social media and embed on the website) Periodic bright spot features in local or regional media
			Ambassadors	Share above bright spots and other updates through personal social media and conversations.
	Have a reality-based and unexaggerated understanding of homelessness in Monroe.	There are many factors that contribute to someone losing their home: the gap between wages and rising rents, illness or injury, domestic violence, struggles with addiction and/or mental health.  The City of Monroe is working hard to help our unsheltered neighbors while holding them accountable for the steps they need to take.  Criminal activity is not tolerated, but keep in mind that it is not a crime to be homeless.	Ambassadors	Conversations with other Monroe community members to dispel misinformation. Acknowledge their feelings and what is true in their statement. Ask questions. Share personal experiences and real-life stories to challenge and replace their narrative. Don't rely on data alone – a false story must be replaced with a more powerful true story.  Respond to comments on social media using consistent messages (in your authentic language) and share links to relevant webpages to dispel misinformation.
				City of Monroe

## City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table By Audience & Goal

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
				<p>are people who experience chronic homelessness, who are very visible, and sometimes refuse services. However, many people experiencing homelessness are hidden, but are nonetheless affected by stereotypes and need help.</p>
<p>Monroe residents or business owners who are frustrated that the City doesn't arrest people who panhandle or live in public spaces</p>	<p>Understand individual constitutional rights and the City's legal limitations.</p>	<p>Every person in Monroe has constitutional rights. It is not a crime to be homeless and panhandling is protected as free speech. However, trespassing, aggressive behavior or blocking someone's path is not legal. If you experience this, please call 911.</p>	<p>City of Monroe</p>	<p>City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages)                      Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses                      Responses to social media and public comments</p>
<p>Monroe residents or business owners who are frustrated and scared of people experiencing homelessness</p>	<p>Feel heard and know what to do if they feel unsafe.</p>	<p>Everyone in Monroe deserves to feel safe and supported. If you feel unsafe, please call 911.</p>	<p>City of Monroe</p>	<p>City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages)                      Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses                      Responses to social media and public comments</p>
<p>Monroe business owners or employees who are affected by homelessness</p>	<p>Feel seen and know what to do to reduce crime.</p>	<p>Thriving businesses are a vital part of our community. Please take these steps to reduce crime: (e.g. lock dumpsters, provide bright lighting, report trespassing)</p>	<p>Ambassadors</p>	<p>Responses to social media and in conversations with fellow Monroe community members</p>
			<p>City of Monroe</p>	<p>City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages)                      Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses</p>

## City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table By Audience & Goal

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
Monroe residents who are experiencing homelessness	Feel supported and know where and how to find help.	Everyone in Monroe is welcome. If you need help, please call 211 or contact Take the Next Step.	City of Monroe	City website Flyers in public places (e.g. libraries) Resource card (see an <a href="#">example from Redmond</a> ) Conversations with partner agencies and organizations to ensure everyone is sharing the same information
Monroe residents or business owners who tend towards empathy for people experiencing homelessness	Understand the varied and systemic factors that can lead to homelessness and are willing to help.	Monroe is a place where we help each other. Together we can ensure all our neighbors are supported, housed, thriving, and accountable for their actions.	Ambassadors	Semi-weekly Get to Know Monroe stories on social media Monthly or periodic Get to Know Monroe stories in local publications and other media Monthly stories, photos, and experiences from volunteering with shelters or helping someone in need. Ambassador led book clubs, discussion sessions, and service days (or recruitment for local volunteer opportunities with service providers).
			City of Monroe	Weekly cross-promotion of Get to Know Monroe stories Website with information about systemic factors and the varied ways people can lose their home. Share posts, stories, volunteer opportunities, and events from service providers.
Monroe residents or business owners who want to help	Feel less helpless and know how they can make a difference.	We all have a part to play in ending homelessness. Here's how you can help: [e.g. donate to or volunteer/partner with a homelessness service provider, hand out resource care]	City of Monroe	Share posts, stories, volunteer opportunities, and events from service providers.
			Ambassadors	Share volunteer opportunities, fundraising drives, and events from service providers. Resource card (see an <a href="#">example from Redmond</a> )

**Homelessness Policy Advisory Committee**  
**Draft Work Plan and Meeting Schedule**  
**(Revised 12/10/2019)**

## Appendix A – HPAC Meeting Schedule

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Agenda Topic</b>
April 4, 2019	City Hall	Introduction, Icebreaker, OPMA and PRA
April 18, 2019	PW Conference Room	Homework Results Overview of Homelessness Mary Jane (MJ) Brell-Vujovic Director, Sno Co Human Services Dept
May 2, 2019	City Hall	Discuss assigned reading ( <i>Strategic Plan and Collective Impact</i> ) Who experiences homelessness Monroe Service Providers Service Model and Gaps
May 16, 2019	PW Conference Room	Monroe Police Department Embedded Social Worker and Diversion Programs Legal Restrictions and City Ordinances
June 6, 2019	City Hall	Allison Warren-Barbour, United Way Collective Impact Model (see assigned reading 5/2) Reading Assignment for 6/20– Housing Snohomish County Proj. Report
June 20, 2019	PW Conference Room	Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers – Housing Alternatives Permanent Housing Alternatives – Mark Smith, Director Sno Co Housing
July 11, 2019	City Hall	Limits of Homelessness Enforcement – MRSC Webinars Legal Considerations and Case Studies in Affordable Housing - Webinar
July 18, 2019	PW Conference Room	Vision for addressing homelessness in Monroe What goals do we need to adopt to achieve vision Discuss Recommended Pillars
August 1, 2019	City Hall	City Funding Sources Public/Private partnerships State and Federal programs
August 15, 2019	PW Conference Room	Cancelled?
Sept 5, 2019	City Hall	Carnegie Resource Center Tour
Sept 19, 2019	PW Conference Room	Vision for addressing homelessness in Monroe What goals do we need to adopt to achieve vision
October 3, 2019	City Hall	Develop recommendations
October ?	City Hall	Open House Public comment on recommendations
October 17, 2019	PW Conference Room	Finalize recommendations to Mayor and Council Develop recommendations
Nov 7, 2019	City Hall	Develop recommendations
Nov 14, 2019		Open House Public comment on recommendations
Nov 21, 2019	PW Conference Room	Discuss public comment Discuss draft recommendations
Dec 5, 2019	City Hall	Finalize draft recommendations
Jan 16, 2020	PW Conference Room	Approve final recommendations
Jan 30, 2020	PW Conference Room	Final Meeting

## Appendix B – Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	housing that consumes < 30% of the household income
<b>Carnegie Center (Everett)</b>	a centralized support services facility in Everett that provides addiction and mental health services to the homeless
<b>Diversion Center</b>	a program that offers addiction or mental health treatment as an alternative to jail
<b>Family Wage</b>	same criteria as the living wage, but the costs are calculated based on what is needed for a family to live and be housed
<b>Living Wage</b>	is the hourly wages needed to pay for rent, food, transportation, childcare, health care, and taxes for a single person to live and be housed
<b>Homeless</b>	individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
<b>Risk of Homelessness</b>	persons that have an annual household income that is < 30% of the median family income in the area and cannot afford both housing and the basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care
<b>Subsidized Housing</b>	government sponsored housing provided to those with limited income
<b>Temporary Housing</b>	housing and support services that help persons move to independence
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	living in temporary housing for 90+ days so the person can achieve financial independent

## Appendix C – Open House Public Comments

# HPAC Open House - Community Feedback

November 14, 2019

## Housing

There must be someplace for people to sleep - it is the humane thing to do - look at Camp Hope in Yakima

Secure parking for RVs and cars hasn't worked well in other areas

Use the back lot of City Hall

Adopt a code that allows ADU adoption. (accessory dwelling ot - secondary housing on single lot with other house)

Feel temporary housing should require mandatory drug testing

HPAC should not focus on building affordable housing - not responsibility of taxpayers

Empty building next to dollar store would be a good temporary housing

Have a foundation that has sufficient zoning which should include multi-family. (x2)

Make education about prevention a condition of temporary housing

Sky Valley Consortium is a good idea - support regional thinking, planning, and implementation

don't allow resell of junk RVs

Can religious shelter exist if they don't force religious practices on homeless

I am a developer and interested in developing subsidized housing

There are developers interested in developing 22 beautiful cottages in village setting in Monroe

Solicit donation of public/private property - at below market prices

Implement a community clean-up

No to RV/car parking - too many issues with sanitation and health

## Partners

Centralized work and services is more effective, but must be a regional approach - a more global approach. e

Think globally - include others - work collaboratively

Hire out clean up of trash - don't expose city workers to biohazardous materials

Partners must hold homeless accountable to be sober or deny services

PTSA - School District team up for donations, education and education to students and families

Reach out to the prison for land, support, and coordination of services

Agree there is a lack of public transportation between Monroe and Everett - needs to be addressed

Include childcare for those children impacted by mental health

HPAC must work with City and County governments

Increase support for children missing school because of homelessness

## Prevention

Crime Prevention education can be done by volunteers - not solely the PD's role

Share information about burglaries throughout the region

Great job! I think education is great. I didn't know about the committee - love 211 concept

Thank you for recognizing that homelessness is a complex and multi-pronged approach

Feels homeless should have an ombudsman that isn't the police

## Support Services

Create an ombudsman that will serve as a "go between" police and the community

Incorporate all of the voluntary services in Monroe - increase awareness of resources

I am not homeless, but I need assistance with medical expenses and general life

What is the difference between vagrant and homelessness? City should be address panhandling - Al Brolin park

Addiction is a spiritual problem and not a government issue

Treatment services didn't work in Seattle

Didn't hear about anything about Cocoon services for children. (center in Everett that support youth and children)

## Public Safety

Police are not social workers, nor are social workers police

how will accountability occur for those in treatment?

Public cameras are a bad idea - I installed my own camera

Seattle had a 10-year plan and that didn't work - a six year plan is impossible

Limit the City's plan to one year. business/residents are on the defense and not responsible for homeless

We shop in Duvall because we don't feel safe in Monroe

Implement law enforcement - like panhandling laws

The embedded social worker should be able to get a good count about the number of homeless

Work with prosecutors to increase penalties for sale and use of drugs

MPD is very responsive

Get vagrant homeless - repeat offenders - out of Monroe

Monroe to Everett is a drug highway - I am not willing to pay the transportation expense

Please enforce the panhandling laws - the homeless intimidate my elderly mother

Greater police presence in known areas - "best cops"

Work with courts to increase penalties for drug dealing and dealers

Do not shop in town - use Amazon instead

I am afraid for my elderly mother to shop in town (She is longtime resident - very frustrated)

Weekly police visits

## **Policy/Budget**

Community Court is effective with personal accountability and treatment as an alternative to jail

Look at Redmond that has a Community Court

Delicate line between providing resources to individuals who are active members in the community and raising taxes

Use large vacant building in the City to establish an emergency shelter

Include solar lighting and camera for JVM food bank and garden

Delicate line between providing resources to individuals who are active members in the community and raising taxes

Concentrate on shelters/emergency housing - fill large building vacant - provide incentives

Increase incentives to developers to build affordable housing donation of surplus land

Implement code to discourage "short-term" housing like Airbnb

Seniors are not fixed income and cannot afford an increase in taxes

Include the homeless in the process so, they can help identify what help they need

Ensure there is personal accountability for those that want to be homeless - so they don't abuse resources

Thank you for all of your hard work

Some homeless do not want help and should be held accountable