

Scenario 2 - Discussion Notes:

Overarching Direction

- Do not be specific on dates.
- Develop an internal timeline and coordinate with Base Camp to allow them to be ready for readmission and/or overflow.
- All proposed action will be “soft touch.” Strive not to accelerate emotions, but be calm, persistent and focused. However, it is acknowledged that ultimately, some individuals may not voluntarily leave the encampment.
- Use all of the communication techniques available to the City to push out the facts and a common narrative that “tells the story.” This may include:
 - Press releases and a mass e-mail communication to all City mailing lists and employees
 - Actively respond to misinformation on social media
- Need to coordinate messaging with the County.
- Acknowledge the volunteers and community support associated with the protest. Encourage continued involvement with existing organizations.
- Communicate clearly why the encampment is being ended by the City.
 - Public health and safety – especially with COVID
 - Illegal activities increasing and risk to the public (assaults, arson, vandalism)
 - Reasonable choices available for those camping – capacity exists.
 - Tried to work with the protestors offered funding and a site....
- Support Council in advance of 1/11 meeting and 1/15 Homeless Strategies meeting. **Mayor (or Staff) to meet with Councilors prior to both meetings?**
- Anticipate legal action to block end of encampment

Telling the Story:

- City and partners have significantly increased shelter capacity this year...and there is available space (see narrative).
- City facilitated the opening of additional options – Geri Field (25 tiny houses)
- City will be partnering with LIHI/Road2Home to establish an additional encampment (25-40 tiny houses). This facility will likely open in May.
- City and its partners are actively working to address the needs of Bellingham’s unsheltered residents. However, this challenge is more than just local – it is a nation-wide issue.
- Whatcom County is the lead agency in the effort to address homelessness. The City supports and supplements these efforts and have committed over \$4.9 million dollars per year towards developing projects and programs that serve the unsheltered and provide long-term affordable housing. Approximately 25,000 people are helped per year with services.

Actions to be further developed:

- Consider using the Library meeting room as an outreach location for Base Camp, OC, Homeless Service Center, others. Open and staff for a couple of afternoon’s after the end of encampment is announced?
- Details and timeline