

**STRATEGIES
TO ADDRESS**
Homelessness



**TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE CITY MANAGER**

REPORT Summary

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS PLAN

In JUNE 2020, City staff presented a Strategies to Address Homelessness Plan (Plan) to the Mayor and City Council. This initial draft served as an outline for strategies and goals for City efforts moving forward. Under City Council direction, staff presented the Plan to the public to gather community input.

In OCTOBER 2020, the City Council adopted the Plan along with several recommendations gathered during the public meetings. Among them was the creation of a City Manager's appointed task force (Task Force) to prioritize and provide ongoing feedback on the City's efforts to deploy the Plan. In late 2020, with recommendations from the Mayor and City Council, staff invited 19 community members to join the Task Force.

In JANUARY 2021 a task force made up of neighborhood leaders, service providers and homeless advocates began meeting to prioritize and provide recommendations on the City's efforts to deploy the Plan. Throughout 2021, the Task Force met to review and evaluate the City's Strategies to Address Homelessness Plan. The recommendations presented below were made in consensus among the Task Force members and are presented to the Phoenix City Manager.

THE Process

The Task Force began with training on interest-based problem-solving techniques and an overview of group dynamics. The meetings were facilitated by a third party using best practices in interest-based facilitation and with sensitivity to creating positive group dynamics, full participant engagement and a shared vision of how the Task Force would approach its work. All decisions regarding recommendations, processes and logistics were made by consensus among the Task Force members.

In **FEBRUARY 2021**, Task Force members were assigned to smaller workgroups to review the strategy sections of the plan and respond to **FIVE QUESTIONS**:

- Are the strategies in your section functioning;
- What is useful in each strategy;
- What is not useful in each strategy;
- Do you see connections between your section(s) and any other sections in the plan;
- What elements are missing from the section(s) you are reviewing?

THE Process

The Task Force then engaged in evaluation, prioritization and adding new items to the strategies as outlined in the Plan. Throughout the year, the Task Force met and identified several recommendations in the deployment of the Plan.

KEY TAKEAWAYS from the recommendations are that they:

- **Distribute** shelters and services throughout the community;
- **Use** all opportunities to provide additional shelter beds and permanent supportive housing;
- **Work** closely with neighborhoods when establishing new shelter opportunities;
- **Recommend** better use of data to drive and improve services;
- **Recommend** improved outcome measures;
- **Provide** more transparency with respect to services and outcomes;
- **Replace** the concept of “service resistant” individuals and instead recognize a Service Readiness Continuum to describe the concept; and
- **Prioritize** tailoring City responses to the unique needs of those being served and the communities impacted.



Recommendations



OUTREACH AND RESOURCES STRATEGIES

In reviewing the Outreach and Resources strategies of the Plan, the Task Force aligned many of their recommendations with the Plan’s existing strategy to provide more focused, unique, and individualized resources and referrals to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Task Force focused discussions on street outreach resources for criminal justice diversion, cross training of outreach teams and identifying resources to better connect with families. Additionally, the **PLAN’S GUIDING PRINCIPLE** of using Evidence-Based Practices guided the Task Force discussions revolving around the sharing of best practices across outreach providers and the need for better data tracking and metrics to guide outreach efforts. The Task Force also convened a work group to identify new terminology for the term “service resistant” (**Attachment A**).

Recommendations

OUTREACH AND RESOURCES STRATEGIES

- 1. Coordinate** criminal justice diversion with specially trained navigators at all points of the Sequential Intercept Model.*
- 2. Develop** an enhanced Community Outreach Practice Profile to guide best practices and consistency across community street outreach providers.
- 3. Cross-train** other workforces (i.e., CHW and Peer Support Specialists) to serve as homeless outreach teams.*
- 4. Identify** “hotspots” in the Valley to target the delivery of services based on unique needs of community (understand, analyze hotspots to tailor location specific interventions).
- 5. Establish** meaningful quantitative and qualitative success metrics and outward facing data dashboard for community outreach (including data quality and reporting and focused outreach workforce training).*
- 6. Identify** new methods (in addition to public schools) to connect with families on the edge of homelessness.*
- 7. Increase** outreach teams and intensive engagement to encampments to encourage engagement with services – which hopefully leads to entering available shelter.

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

Recommendations



HOUSING & SHELTERS STRATEGIES

Within the Housing strategies, the Task Force focused their discussions and recommendations on the Plan's goals for smaller, accessible and specialized shelters. Particularly, the need for more low barrier facilities. Following the Plan, the Task Force provided guidance for the development and implementation of future no/low barrier shelters and more accessible temporary solutions.

Additionally, the Task Force convened a small work group to collect and analyze Housing data from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) to guide their recommendations related to affordable and permanent supportive housing (PSH). Using this data, the Task Force made recommendations related to additional shelter beds and permanent supportive and affordable housing units in the City of Phoenix (**Attachment B**).

Recommendations

HOUSING & SHELTERS STRATEGIES

SHELTERS

- 1. Provide** guidance on an effective spectrum of supportive services to ensure new/existing shelters or sites can create environments that adopt SAMHSA Principles for trauma-informed design for their customers and the surrounding community.*
 - Task Force Identified Guidance:
 - Defining No/Low Barrier Shelter – **Attachment C**
- 2. Recommend** the City Council commit to rapid development of additional temporary housing capacity by placing beds and services in every City Council district.
 - Work with providers to overcome transportation/physical barriers to accessing services.
- 3. Increase** new temporary housing beds as soon as possible.
- 4. Provide** safe storage with a hot box available for personal property available at any shelter and clean, safe restrooms.*
- 5. City** commitment to multiple, smaller pocket shelters.*
- 6. Develop** at least one structured campground to provide temporary and rapid relief to people who cannot, or will not, enter a traditional shelter.*
 - Considerations for Structured Campground Implementation – **Attachment D**

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

Recommendations

HOUSING & SHELTERS STRATEGIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Task Force reviewed the nine initiatives of the Housing Phoenix Plan and recommended the following components of the Housing Phoenix Plan to be prioritized to help address the need for affordable housing.

- 1. Initiative 2** – Amend Current Zoning Ordinance to Facilitate More Housing Options
 - a. Recommend City Council and staff to pursue a Voluntary Inclusionary Zoning and adopt accessory dwelling unit housing options.
- 2. Initiative 3** – Redevelop City-owned Land with Mixed Income Housing
 - a. Identify list of city-owned parcels in each Council district to use for affordable housing ensuring citywide equity.
- 3. Initiative 7** – Expand efforts to preserve existing affordable housing stock
 - a. Support the landlord incentive program with additional funding.
 - b. Implement a tracking tool to analyze affordable housing preservation.
- 4. Initiative 9** – Education Campaign
 - a. Education for Village Planning Committees (VPCs) on how affordable housing benefits communities.
 - b. Tracking tool outlining how affordable housing initiatives benefit the community (measures such as home value, crime rates, etc.).
 - c. Advocate for more housing representation on the VPCs.
 - d. Outreach to communities.

Recommendations

HOUSING & SHELTERS STRATEGIES

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The Task Force discussed permanent supportive housing and recommended the following:

- 1. Increase** project-based vouchers by 50 percent with the City of Phoenix responsible for 150 additional project-based vouchers.*
- 2. Provide** supplemental funding to ensure multi-disciplinary supportive services for individuals in PSH to ensure retention and positive outcomes.
- 3. Partner** with community agencies to provide PSH services in alignment with national best practices and other local community/culturally sensitive models.
- 4. Recommend** City research supportive service methods/models to assist vulnerable clients in PSH who are struggling in housing or are not receiving or accepting supportive services.
- 5. City** research best practices/models for exit strategies from PSH.*

EVICITION PREVENTION

- 1. Designate** funds for more flexible financial assistance to prevent evictions- specifically for financial needs that remain unmet by current City of Phoenix programs (i.e. car repairs, a one-time visit to urgent care, help with paying a speeding ticket, support for cox/phone bills).
- 2. Gather** data from Eviction Prevention to advocate for more rental/mortgage funding.*
- 3. Partner** with community-based organizations and businesses (schools, landlords, etc.) to target those at risk of eviction.*

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

Recommendations

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

The Task Force recommendations related to the Neighborhood strategies aligned with the Plan's core strategies of increased City/provider engagement, increased supportive infrastructure and the continued promotion of healthy giving.

- 1. Targeted** resources to surrounding neighborhoods where shelters and services are provided:
 - a. Neighborhood specific multidisciplinary outreach teams and coordinated service teams with the expectation of regular, on-going communication with neighborhoods and businesses, towards neighborhoods with a high concentration of encampments.*
 - b. Neighborhood Plan for surrounding community including city and provider resources.
 - c. City should incentivize collaborations through RFP and contract processes to: Increase communication and outreach to engage smaller organizations, faith-based groups and community groups; and include an in-depth neighborhood outreach plan as an expectation for city funding prior to awarding funds.
- 2. Expand** the Gated Alley Program throughout the city.*
- 3. Support** in identifying shelter locations with wrap around services that are equitably distributed in all parts of the City with best opportunity for success (ties to regional / citywide distribution goals).*

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

Recommendations

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

4. Public safety plans, within and surrounding neighborhoods where shelters are located, with measurable commitment.

Providers:

- 24/7 Public Safety Plan
- Detailed site planning process for facility.
- Detailed planning process for surrounding area.
- Closed campus/services on-site/24-hour access.
- Engage with City departments to effectively address issues that may occur at the facility.
- Specify provider contacts for City and community.
- Clean property i.e. feces, trash and adequate lighting.

City:

- Work with provider and community to provide city resources and services to ensure facility and community are supported.
- Issues include blight, bus stop cleaning, encampments, alley/street trash pickups, and business support and outreach.
- Facilitate a coordinated approach with Police, City Prosecutor's Office and other stakeholders within the criminal justice system to ensure issues related to crime in neighborhoods and safety of residents and businesses are addressed along with support from NSD, HSD, Streets, Public Works, and Public Transit.*
- Prioritize and provide additional resources and funding to Police in neighborhoods that suffer disproportionately.

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

Recommendations

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

5. **More** support for the Healthy Giving Council and education to the public.*
 - a. Public education campaign (intersection signs, language for Givesmartaz.org, focused outreach to organizations/faith-based institutions, increased collateral such as transit ads, social media, year-round messaging).
 - i. Focused messaging to specific groups.
 - b. Identify sources of funding to support and grow the work of the Healthy Giving Council.

ENCAMPMENTS STRATEGIES

1. **Provide** private property clean-up program.*
2. **Support** the implementation of a Phoenix Works program.*
3. **Define** Encampment : “Encampments can include makeshift shelters outdoors such as a lean-to, tent, cardboard box, etc., housing one or more persons; that habitually sleep with or without shelter structures in a public space.”
4. **Commitment** that encampments located near the HSC are treated the same as encampments located in other areas of the city.

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

ATTACHMENT A:

SERVICE RESISTANT TO SERVICE READINESS CONTINUUM*

The Task Force convened a work group tasked with identifying new terminology for the term “service resistant” as well as identifying possible solutions for the Task Force to consider for those who do not want to accept services. The workgroup recognized the first step to identifying possible solutions was to acknowledge individuals may be at different levels of service readiness when it comes to accepting services. The term “service resistant” does not fully encompass all individuals experiencing homelessness who may not accept services. The Task Force identified the continuum below that may be used in replacement of “service resistant” when determining an individuals readiness to accept services.

- **The Service Readiness Continuum:**
 - **Individuals not ready to accept service** - individuals who may not have the mental capacity to accept services and need further assistance.
 - **Individuals who don't have access to appropriate services due to a gap in the homeless response system**
 - **Individuals Refusing Service** – Those who truly do not wish to accept services.

* denotes a recommendation aligned most closely to existing strategies

ATTACHMENT B: Housing Data Recommendations

The City of Phoenix is a leader in reducing homelessness in our community by providing additional shelter and housing units for persons experiencing homelessness, low-income individuals and families, and persons in the workforce. Lack of shelter and affordable/workforce housing is a valley wide problem, and the City is a leader in this effort.

- Shelter-** The City of Phoenix currently has 1,492 active shelter beds and has approximately 530 beds in development. Additionally, Maricopa County has approximately 172 beds in development. The Homelessness Taskforce recommends that the City continuously monitor the amount of active shelter beds and evaluate the need for additional units with the goal of adding new beds equal to 35 to 50 percent of new units of the Phoenix unsheltered Point in Time count over the period of three years. Please consider using the following Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) data in determining costs associated with addition of these beds.

MAG DATA:

Intervention Type	Capital Cost-	Annual Operation Costs	
	One time	Individual	Family
	Per unit	Units	Units
Emergency Traditional Shelter	\$34,666.67	\$22,648.10	\$26,120
Low-Barrier Shelter	\$34,667	\$22,648.10	\$26,120
Bridge Housing-Purchased Hotel	\$83,337.62	\$25,256.62	\$38,556
Bridge Housing-Leased Hotel	\$-	\$51,629.42	\$54,060

ATTACHMENT B: Housing Data Recommendations

2. The City of Phoenix Housing Department has made remarkable progress towards its goal of creating or maintaining 50,000 housing units by 2030. Currently there have a been a total of 19,318 units added (see below graph for breakdown of units). The current rate of addition of units indicates 10.76 percent of units are affordable. Per HUD AMI income levels cited in the Housing Phoenix Plan, 46 percent of Phoenix families fall within the Affordable Housing Range, 19 percent fall within the workforce range and 35 percent fall within the Market range. A greater percentage of units added or maintained should be for affordable or workforce households as defined by the Phoenix Housing Plan. As such a panel of affordable housing experts should be convened to evaluate the current housing landscape to determine specific recommendations on affordable and workforce housing to the City Manager.

Housing Type	AMI	Number of units*	Percentage
Affordable	0-80%	2,080	10.76%
Workforce	80-120%	3,379	17.48%
Market	120% and above	13,859	71.76%
Total		19,318	100.00%

*As of September 2021

ATTACHMENT B: Housing Data Recommendations

We recognize that the cost of adding affordable units can be burdensome. The Task Force recommends a focus on renovations, projects with no land costs, or other creative ideas that reduce the cost of development/renovation. The costs below indicate the rate for development annual operations per MAG Data points. The table below indicates the cost for development and annual operations per MAG data.

MAG DATA:

	Capital Cost- One time	Annual Operation Costs	
PSH-New Build	\$264,767.33	\$9,899.76	\$9,899.76
PSH- Purchase Hotel/ Renovations	\$83,337.62	\$9,899.76	\$9,899.76

3. **City** to prioritize and equitably distribute city-owned vacant land for affordable and workforce housing.
4. **Recommend** policy to preserve affordable housing units.
5. **Identification** of additional non-government funding to fund on-going shelter and affordable housing operations.

ATTACHMENT C: Defining No/Low Barrier Shelter for the City of Phoenix

Background: Of the many conversations and areas of focus for the City of Phoenix’s Homelessness Task Force, the need for additional shelter beds emerged as a top priority. Task force members were concerned about how to provide additional shelter beds that served people who struggle to engage in shelter services. National best practices surrounding shelter operations suggest that no/low-barrier shelters are a service option for this population. According to the National Alliance to Homelessness, a no/low-barrier shelter is one in which “the most acute, highest need people are prioritized for shelter such as unsheltered individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered.” While we recognize that not all shelters will be no/low barrier, this guidance aims to reduce barriers to shelter access in the City of Phoenix.

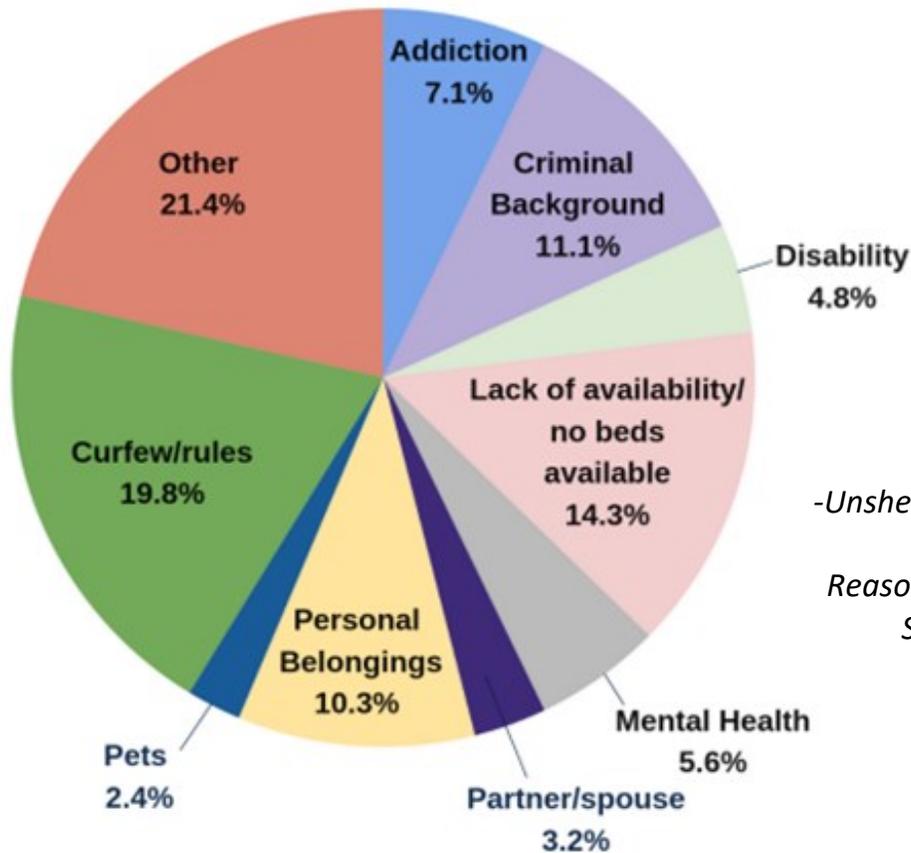
Recognizing that we need a diverse spectrum of shelter services within Phoenix, a workgroup was formed to:

- a. **Define** no/low-barrier shelter for the City of Phoenix, in alignment with national best practices
- b. **Ensure** that any no/low-barrier shelter provider would work in coordination with neighborhoods, residents, and local businesses to avoid issues of blight, crime and safety
- c. **Create** a framework or understanding of no/low-barrier shelters for use by City of Phoenix staff and councilmembers when considering funding for shelter programs through the RFP and zoning process

ATTACHMENT C:

UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS IN PHOENIX

- According to the most recent point-in-time report for Maricopa County, there were roughly 3,767 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Maricopa County on a single night. 2,380 of those individuals were in the City of Phoenix. In a [research study](#) involving 100 unsheltered individuals in downtown Phoenix, we learned that there are diverse reasons why people are not currently in shelter:



-Unsheltered Perspectives, 2019, Reasons for Not Being in Shelter n=100

GOAL: Provide guidance on an effective spectrum of supportive services to ensure new/existing shelters or sites can create environments that adopt SAMHSA Principles for trauma-informed design for their customers and the surrounding community.

ATTACHMENT C:

SUMMARY OF NO/LOW BARRIER SHELTER PRACTICES

Category	Practice
Case management and service provision	Trauma-informed care training for all staff
	Transportation to and from off-site services
	Co-locate services like workforce development/employment services, medical care, etc. so clients can engage with the shelter as much as possible
	Encourage clients to drive their case plans and develop their own goals for obtaining housing
	Some people need time to rest /heal before participating in intensive case management
	Shelter staff are well-trained in additional community resources and can make referrals and connections to mental health and substance use treatment
Exits to permanent housing	Identify a sustainable housing plan for each client
	Clear messaging to clients that the goal is to return to permanent housing
	Soon after entry, every person is assisted to create a plan to rapidly exit to housing
Safety and order	Smaller in size; ideally 150 beds or smaller
	Develop a 24/7 public safety plan, with community input, to include inside the shelter campus as well as the surrounding neighborhood area
	Staff trained in conflict resolution, mediation and de-escalation techniques to encourage continued shelter stay
	Adequately funded staffing plan that provides enough security and staff to keep clients safe

ATTACHMENT C:

SUMMARY OF NO/LOW BARRIER SHELTER PRACTICES

Neighborhood engagement	Detailed planning process involving surrounding neighborhoods and businesses
	Detailed site planning process involving surrounding neighborhoods and businesses (lighting, landscaping, environmental design)
	Providers engage with city departments to effectively address issues that may occur at the facility/to ensure that facility and community are supported by City resources
	Specify service provider contacts for City and community members for on-going relationship management
	Regular neighborhood meetings will be held with a neighborhood advisory committee that will discuss challenges, suggestions, improvements
Access	Ensure processes are in place at shelters to prevent or eliminate queuing or camping outside the facility
	No drop in or walk-up services provided to individuals not residing in the program but referrals made for other services
	Have a system for evaluation and referrals to available and appropriate beds
	Screening people in not out
	Protocol for accommodating new shelter guests onsite 24-7, even if they have to wait until the next business day or morning to meet with case management staff
	Limited criteria for refusal of entry/work with prospective clients to navigate barriers to entry (pets that are not service animals, personal belongings, any barriers that do not directly impact the safety and well-being of staff and shelter guests)
	Every resident must stay on-site after 8:00pm until 5:00am other than those excused because of employment or other valid reasons
	Accommodation for partners/families/care takers
	Provide homeless outreach services in the area around the shelter

ATTACHMENT C:

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT NO/LOW BARRIER SHELTERS

Below are several case studies and national resources which offer data to support the role of low-barrier shelters within the shelter system:

1. Gainesville, Florida- Grace Marketplace

a. 114 bed low-barrier emergency shelter

b. Since becoming low barrier in 2016:

i. There is a 36 percent decrease in PIT count

ii. 48 percent decrease in the unsheltered population

iii. One major safety incident in five years

iv. “This programmatic environment encompasses a much greater degree of tolerance for disruptive behaviors than would be found elsewhere in the shelter system”

c. gracemarketplace.org/

d. fchonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Making-the-Case-for-a-Low-Barrier-Shelter-1.pdf

2. Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

a. Formed a matrix comparing the differences between low-barrier and high-barrier shelter programs in the areas of:

i. Safety and order

ii. Substance use

iii. Exits to permanent housing

iv. Case management and services

v. Access

b. cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Shelter-Philosophy-Matrix.pdf

ATTACHMENT C:

3. National Alliance to End Homelessness

a. Published a graphic with 10 steps to evaluate your shelter rules



ATTACHMENT D: Structured Campground Implementation Considerations

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Members of the Task Force acknowledge the timing required to build or acquire new shelters may take one to two years. The Task Force recognizes that allowing unregulated camping to occur in neighborhoods, commercial business properties, parks and other public areas is not good for either the person experiencing homelessness nor the area where the unregulated camping is occurring. There are many people who are not ready to enter a traditional shelter and the rules associated with traditional shelters. Nonetheless, every person experiencing homelessness is entitled to a safe, humane place to call home that provides adequate sanitation, availability of food and access to services. The Task Force is recommending the City of Phoenix develop at least one structured campground to provide temporary and rapid relief to people who cannot, or will not, enter a traditional shelter. The size of the campground should be proportionate to the amount of space available and the safety needs of residents and community members nearby.

ATTACHMENT D: Structured Campground Implementation Considerations

The City of Phoenix shall set up at least one very-low-barrier campground. These campground facilities shall:

- be open to all (singles, couples, individuals with pets/possessions, and other groups) that can't be accommodated in traditional shelters;
- have clean drinking water, sanitary facilities, food services, shaded areas, security, and communal areas;
- include outreach resources (behavioral health, work force development, homeless ID, mental health, substance abuse etc.);
- have no time limits on length of stay (goal will be to move individuals to housing as quickly as they are willing and able); and
- operate with basic behavior ground rules for short- or long-term stay.

During the discussion of this recommendation, the Task Force identified the following factors to be considered by the City during the development and implementation of the campground:

- Proximity to other services and support systems;
- Maintaining choice into entry;
- Heat relief protocols;
- Ensuring humane approach;
- Transportation to and from;
- School districts outreach;
- Specifications of structures;
- Vehicle parking; and
- Focus remains on investment in permanent housing solutions.

ATTACHMENT D: Structured Campground Implementation Considerations

FURTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION:

- [Camp Esperanza](#)
- [Responses to the Problem of Homeless Encampments](#)
- [Shelton, WA Temporary Homeless Encampments](#)
- [Vancouver “Safe Stay Community”](#)



ATTACHMENT E: Task Force Members

Dawn Augusta	Arizona State University
Jessica Bueno	Oakland Neighborhood Association
Sonora Crittenden	Dignity Health, St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center
Ken Curry	Southwest Behavioral Health
Dr. Sheila Harris	PHX Community Alliance
Matt Kelly	Mercy Care
Barbara Lewkowitz	Private Consultant
Caroline Lobo	Hatcher Urban Businesses (theHUB)
Bill Morlan	Madison Pioneers Coalition
Darlene Newsom	Former CEO, United Methodist Outreach Ministries (UMOM)
Jerome Parker	Healthy Giving Council
Geraldo Pena	Chicanos Por La Causa
Julie Reed	Neighborhood Leader
Nate Rhoton	One-n-ten
Nathan Smith	PHX Rescue Mission
Jeff Spellman	Neighborhood Leader
Craig Tribken	Central Arizona Shelter Services
Ash Uss	From the Ground Up Consulting
Dede Yazzie Devine	Native American Connections