KOMO questions from today's UCT committee presentation

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Good afternoon, Chair Moore and CP Nelson,

Upon leaving today's UCT committee presentation, we received questions for Deputy Mayor Washington from Chris Daniels at KOMO. We wanted to share our answers with you, as questions related to committee content and one specifically referenced CP Nelson's remarks.

Please let us know if you have any questions about the responses below, which we sent to Chris.

How does she generally view the data, which appears to show some positives and negatives?

UCT's first full year of data shows that more people came inside, public safety incidents at encampments went down, and fewer tents and RVs are now on Seattle sidewalks, streets, and other public spaces. UCT has built a strong foundation for continued improvements over time, and this is good news for the city.

On the Scoring System, what is the number that is needed to clear a site?

The objective scoring matrix UCT uses to measure the level of public impact at an encampment is not the sole determinant of how a site is scheduled for resolution; UCT meets each week to look at high priority sites and plan for resolutions based on available resources. This planning is done in consultation with Neighborhood Teams, including outreach providers, field teams, and neighborhood stakeholders. While higher scoring sites are more likely to be addressed sooner, there is no set number that determines a resolution date.

What did she mean by "I don't know if we need more shelter?"

Emergency shelter is meant to provide a temporary solution between living unsheltered and moving into a permanent housing option. As mentioned during the committee presentation, the shelter system has, over a number of years, been revamped to almost exclusively support 24/7 enhanced shelter options with wraparound onsite services – moving away from the basic shelter model that are: first come, first served; overnight only; and often times mats on the floor. These improvements help individuals more successfully stabilize as they transition to permanent housing options.

By working with shelter providers and housing navigators to improve the rate at which people move through the emergency system into permanency, we can better utilize the shelter resources currently online. The City will continue to work with KCRHA in supporting service providers on these types of system improvements.

In response to the COVID pandemic, and with the support federal relief dollars, the City was able to quickly expand the number of shelter spaces from pre-pandemic levels and now funds over 3,000 shelter spaces. The

City will continue to work with KCRHA and other partners to maintain current shelter capacity and utilize opportunities to invest in new units as funding and resources allow.

What did she mean by "behavior changes" at night and that outreach workers don't feel safe? How has that impacted response?
Outreach work has typically been conducted during daytime hours, when there are fewer safety considerations to account for. Some best practices of outreach are to work in pairs, be familiar with your surroundings, and be trained in de-escalation techniques. When it is dark, it can be difficult to be fully aware of your surroundings, and to employ effective de-escalation techniques.

How does she respond to Sara Nelson claims of "failure"?
We agree that leaving people to live outside in what are often dangerous encampment conditions is unacceptable. That's why Mayor Harrell is focused on expanding the supply of affordable housing and helping more people move indoors. The Unified Care Team will continue their efforts to address encampments with both urgency and compassion, beginning with those with the highest public impact, and bring more people out of the conditions that Council President Nelson is rightfully concerned about.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share with the committee today. We appreciated the conversation with you and your colleagues about the work of the Unified Care Team and look forward to our continued work together.

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