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Restoring Seattle's Public Spaces

A Collaborative, Neighborhood Approach to Addressing Encampments

12/14/2023 Unified Care Team

City of Seattle

Agenda

- Background of City's Homelessness Response
- Overview of UCT
- Rules Governing UCT Work
- Neighborhood Teams
- UCT Citywide & D5 Data
- Working Together

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Background of City's Homelessness Response

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Seattle Homeless System:
Addressing Impact of Homelessness on People

2023 Funding through KCRHA

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The City's Homelessness Investments address two key areas:

People

Bring people indoors and support them on a pathway to housing and stability.

Response led by KCRHA

Places

Ensure public spaces remain clean, open for their intended use, and accessible to all.

Response led by Unified Care Team

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Rearview Timeline

How We Got to Today's Approach

2015
Murray Declares State of Emergency

- Growing national crisis
- Impact of crisis on West Coast cities
- City leadership prioritize response and allocate funding

2017

Navigation Team Launch

- Multi-departmental encampment approach
- Implementation of updated MDARs
- Key staff join homelessness work

2020
Global Pandemic & Shelter in Place Order

- *Stay Home* order vacates public spaces
- Growth of entrenched encampments
- Shelter system transforms
- Council defunds Navigation Team

Pandemic Encampments

2022

Harrell Admin Launches UCT

- Estimated 1,000+ tents and 300+ RVs
- Backlog of ~10K Customer Service Requests
- Mayor Harrell commissions new data infrastructure and announces Homelessness Action Plan
- Partnership with newly launched KCRHA takes form

2023

Neighborhood Team Rollout

- Biennial budget to staff neighborhood teams
- Geographic outreach contracts through KCRHA
- Full year of UCT data offers better insight into results and challenges

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Overview of Unified Care Team

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Unified Care Team - A *One Seattle* Approach

Ensuring Seattle streets, sidewalks, and public spaces are clean, open, and accessible to all.

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How We Organize Our Work

- Responding to Community Needs
- Coordinating Outreach Services
- Making Spaces Clean & Accessible
- Resolving Priority Encampments
- Restoring Public Places

UCT Work Cycle

Prioritization : Point Assignment

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Draft scoring calculation procedures

Points Assigned by Site Attributes (Inspections)

+2	Full mobility impact
+1	Partial mobility impact
+1	Blocking entrance
+1	Large amounts of debris
+1	Blocking sight line
+1	Within RSE Priority Area
+1	Insufficient clearance for a wheelchair
+1	Near children/playground
+1	Within public school walk zone
+1	Chemical/hazard
+1	Near waterway
+1	Per 5 RVs

Points Assigned by Proximity

+1	History of encampment fires in proximity within the last 6 months
+1	History of violent crime incidents in proximity within the last 6 months

Verified and Confirmed Public Safety

+3	Recent significant violent crime
+2	Recent non-VC shots fired
+2	Recent significant encampment fires

Rules Governing UCT Work

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MDAR 17-01 and FAS 17-01

Four Main Areas Governed by MDARs

- The amount of **notice** required prior to moving an encampment
- Guard rails around when and how we address **hazards and obstructions**
- Requirements for **offers of shelter** prior to a removal
- Storage of and access to **personal property** removed

Why Can't You Just . . .

Remove an encampment that blocks an entire sidewalk?

Resolve an encampment where a bomb detonated?

Address an encampment where a homicide occurred?

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WSDOT Properties with Encampments

- Current agreement requires permission before accessing site
- Resource allocation and budget considerations

Jan-Nov 2023 Stats for 28 currently active sites

- 2,215 SFD incident responses
- 2,917 SPD responses
- 845 crimes reported

Data does not include several large sites resolved prior to November.

Swimming pool at WSDOT encampment in Highland Park in July

Neighborhood Teams

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Neighborhood Teams

Theory of Change

When a community is informed, involved, and updated, they will have patience to engage in a person-centered process over time.

2023 Boundaries (aligns to data presented in next section)

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Neighborhood Teams Structure

- 5 teams
- 1 per geographic area
- Each team completes:
  - Outreach
  - Removals and Repopulations
  - General clean up
  - RV remediation, geo-cleaning
  - Ticketing and towing

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N/NE Neighborhood Team Staffing

Regional Manager

Oversees daily activities, daily deployment, responds to on-the-ground needs in coordination with UCT manager.
Beau, SPR (North region)

Regional Coordinator

Coordinates communication across teams, triages on-the-ground needs and issues. Coordinates contracted outreach and resources for site resolution.
Christine, HSD (N/NE)

Field Coordinator

Project manages removals through inspections, posting sites, coordinating and storage of personal belongings.
Jeremy, SPR (N/NE)

Community Liaison

Engages with neighbors at community meetings, shares updates, and develops community-led strategies to reactivate sites.
Tom, SPR (Citywide)

Contracted Outreach

Engages people experiencing homelessness through relationship development, offers of shelter, and connections to services.
N/NE: REACH (tent), U Heights (vehicle)

Maintenance Lead

Leads on-the-ground activities to keep the city clean and accessible.
Mao (N/NE)

Maintenance Workers

Perform on-the-ground activities to keep the city clean and accessible (trash mitigation, vegetation management, pressure washing, graffiti removal, etc.).
Multiple workers

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UCT Citywide & D5 Data

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2023 UCT Highlights

Through Q3

1,757 Referrals to Shelter, an increase of 26% over 2022	**8,400** Visits by UCT crews to clean sites	**4.9M** Pounds of debris removed from encampments
32K+ Customer Service Requests triaged < 3 days	**48%** Decrease in verified RV count citywide since Dec 2022	**33%** Decrease in verified tent count citywide since Dec 2022

Responding to Community Needs

Service request keyword counts

Working collaboratively, UCT provides timely responses to neighborhood concerns that span the work of multiple departments.

In Q1–Q3, UCT received over 32,000 service requests. 100% were triaged within 3 days.

Citywide tent count

Citywide Verified Tent Count: 475 (Sept 30)

Citywide Verified Tent Count: 235 (Sept 30)

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D5 Data Snapshot

As of September 30

- 31 active sites with 13 structures, 59 tents, and 20 RVs
- 3rd lowest district for active encampment sites
- 2nd highest number of Customer Service Requests received, after NW Neighborhood

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D5 Data: Removals and Referrals

2023 Q1 – Q3

- 25 Advanced Notice Resolutions
- 6 RV Remediations
- 152 Obstruction Removals
- 605 Offers of Shelter
- 130 Shelter Referrals Accepted

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D5 Data: Verified Counts

2023 Q1 – Q3

Between January and September 2023:

- 24% decrease in verified active sites
- 43% decrease in verified tent count
- 61% decrease in verified RV count

Working Together

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2024 Collaboration Opportunities

1. Organize CM/Neighborhood Team tour of District 5
2. Utilize UCT response templates for constituent requests
3. Partner on how to engage community **before** and **after** site resolutions:

   Before: Identify and convene key local businesses and community partners to better understand situation on the ground and prepare for drawing down sites

   After: Partner with community to develop strategies that prevent repopulation and encourage public use that benefits the neighborhood

What other opportunities do you see?

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Contacts for Community

A community member has an encampment request: →

Report Unauthorized Encampment Activity

Download the *Find It, Fix It* app for Android or iPhone

or call (206) 684-CITY

A community member wants to follow up on a report already submitted:

Refer to **UnifiedCareTeam@seattle.gov**

D5 Community Liaison for community partners:

Tom.VanBronkhorst@seattle.gov
Strategic Advisor for Encampments and Special Teams/ Clean City Initiative (SPR)