



July 29, 2016

Seattle City Council

Seattle City Hall
600 4th Ave, 2nd floor
Seattle, WA 98124:

Dear Councilmembers,

As you know, addressing the crisis of homelessness in our community has been a top priority for this administration. As the State of Emergency continues and the City's investments toward this issue remain at an all-time high, and as our departments continue with a high volume of system-wide work, we remain committed to continued improvements in our systems of service delivery and internal operations.

The City's practices on cleaning unsanctioned encampments, established in 2008 by the Multi-Departmental Administrative Rules (MDAR), have been improved during my administration. With more intensive and coordinated outreach to connect individuals with services – we have seen an acceptance of services that has been unprecedented by investing in this practice more deeply. This process is far from perfect and we are constantly trying to find improvement in our practices that will best serve the needs of everyone in our city. That being said, there continues to be great disagreement about these protocols among many in our community.

I believe there are improvements to be made to the MDAR. I believe we can do better for the individuals living on our streets. I believe that people should not be living in areas that are an imminent threat to their own health and safety or that of the public. I believe we can find a balanced approach that meets the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the needs of our neighborhood and business districts. But we need to bring all perspectives together.

In partnership with Councilmember Bagshaw, I am convening a group of stakeholders to review the MDAR and deliver recommendations to myself and council. I will then be delivering legislation to Council by the end of the year. The task force will include representatives from a range of interests, including homeless advocates, service providers, and neighborhood and business leaders. I welcome each of your suggestions for individuals and organizations to participate in this task force. Furthermore, in addition to Councilmember Bagshaw, I also welcome Council Central staff participation in this process so that Councilmembers are able to stay up to date. While this process is underway, the established MDAR practices must continue.

More detail will be shared in the following weeks and my staff will be reaching out to brief you as this process begins. I appreciate your partnership in this effort and remain committed to addressing the crisis of homelessness in our region.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray
Mayor, City of Seattle