



City of Monroe
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Homeless Policy Advisory Committee Agenda

Thursday, January 30, 2020 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Monroe Coordination Center

Call To Order

Roll Call

Old Business

1. Review the final recommendations
2. Review draft action plan

Documents:

[HPAC FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS 01162020 V3 \(ACCEPT COMMITTEE CHANGES\).PDF](#)
[2020 HPAC ACTION PLAN DRAFT V3 RMA EDITS 01062020.DOCX](#)

New Business

3. Review draft communications strategy
4. Recognition of Committee members (Mayor Thomas)

Documents:

[2020_0115_DRAFTV2_CITYOFMONROEHOMELESSNESSCOMMUNICATIONSPLAN.DOCX](#)

HPAC Goal

- Provide a forum for the coordination of information among local citizens and stakeholders.
- Seek thoughtful, effective, and lasting solutions to the City's homelessness crisis,
- Facilitate assistance for unsheltered persons in the Monroe community.
- Provide the Mayor and City Council with nonbinding advice and recommendations regarding issues related to homelessness

HPAC's Three Questions:

1. What concerns and issues does the community have about homelessness within the City of Monroe?
2. What are the underlying causes of homelessness in Monroe?
3. What do we need to know about the causes, resources, and strategies underway in Monroe and other communities that reduce homelessness?

Housing

- **Establish Temporary-Housing** in a permanent facility to serve Monroe residents with adjacent secured parking for those living in vehicles and RVs for overnight stay
- **Establish a Sky Valley Housing Consortium** to establish short, long-term, and alternative housing
- **Increase alternative housing that includes but is not limited to men, youth, LGBTQ, and families and pets**

Partners

- **Establish Service Provider Networks** to provide services and housing 24/7 in Sky Valley
- **Increase public transportation** between Monroe & Everett
- **Involve other public entities** in a network to prevent and end homelessness in Sky Valley
- **Create an education campaign** that supports affordable housing, job training, and treatment options

Prevention

- **Gather and analyze accurate data** about homelessness in Monroe
- **Create an education campaign** about homelessness: causes, prevention strategies, and alternatives
- **Promote social services networks** focused on youth and families

Policy/Budget

- **Lobby legislators** at all levels to increase funding for addiction and mental health treatment, affordable housing, job training, and support services
- **Identify and lobby for new law enforcement** strategies focused on personal accountability
- **Engage developers** in building affordable and subsidized housing
- **Implement HB 1406** Explore all revenue options for housing, mental health, and chemical dependency
- **Continue HPAC as standing committee** Monitor progress towards implementing HPAC recommendations. Review Technical Committee recommendations.
- **Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan** to fulfill HPAC's recommendations

Public Safety

- **Implement law enforcement strategies** and regulations that increase personal accountability and adhere to civil and personal rights
- **Gather and analyze accurate data** about crime in Monroe

HPAC Final Recommendations

Approved January 16, 2020

- **Initiate a residential and business** crime prevention program
- **Continue to budget** for the Embedded Social Worker/Community Outreach
- **Use technology to increase public safety and protect infrastructure.**
- **Implement Community Court** so treatment for addiction and mental health can be offered as an alternative to jail

Support Services

- **Create a coordinated homeless response center.**
- **Create a system of services** that responds to the homeless crisis 24/7
- **Establish more accessible mental health** and addiction services in Monroe
- **Obtain supportive services to navigate people through resources**
- **Support agencies that serve and promote self-reliance** among people in need

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing with Services	Housing	Establish Temporary-Housing in a permanent facility to serve Monroe residents with adjacent secured parking for those living in vehicles and RVs for overnight stay	\$50,000	1/2020	12/2020
Evaluate Properties				5/2020	12/2020
Negotiate Lease				6/2020	12/2020
Write RFP and secure Program Manager through RFP				4/2020	12/2020
Develop criteria with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)			\$46,000 (HB1406)	1/2020	12/2020
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP					
Establish Sky Valley Housing Consortium	Housing	Establish Sky Valley Housing Consortium to establish short, long-term and alternative housing		1/2020	12/2020
		Increase alternative housing that includes but is not limited to men, youth, LGBTQ, families and pets			
Inventory surplus property				5/2020	12/2020
Identify housing needs				1/2020	06/2020

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Work with Technical Advisory Committee to identify partners and available funding				02/2020	06/2020
Form a Technical Advisory Committee	Partners	Establish Service Provider Networks to provide services and housing 24/7 in Sky Valley Involve other public entities in a network to prevent and end homelessness in Sky Valley		1/2020	12/2020
Identify non-profit stakeholders and partners				1/2020	3/2020
Determine shared mission and vision				2/2020	4/2020
Evaluate needs and resources for one-stop shop				3/2020	5/2020
Write scope of work for Request for Proposal for one-stop shop				4/2020	6/2020
Establish Transportation service between Sky Valley and Everett	Partners	Increase public transportation between Monroe & Everett		1/2020	12/2020
Evaluate transportation needs with partners				1/2020	3/2020
Evaluate existing transportation contracts with non-profits (e.g. Senior Center; SVT)				1/2020	3/2020
Apply for Community Transit GO (grant) program				3/2020	6/2020

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Provide information about services to remain housed, financial training, and incentives for businesses to hire employees with entry level skills, information about mental and behavioral health services.	Partners	Create an education campaign that supports affordable housing, job training, and treatment options		1/2020	12/2020
Work with partners to develop and promote annual "human service days" set up like a vendor show					
Educational Campaign (Enviroissues Contract)	Prevention	Create an education campaign about homelessness: causes, prevention strategies, and alternatives	\$50,000 (Budgeted)	1/2020	12/2020
Develop education and outreach communication plan				12/2019	12/2020
Educate property owners about laws, enforcement, trespass - Chamber of Commerce & Downtown Monroe Association				2/2020	12/2020
Educate public about aggressive panhandling, property crime, and personal safety.				2/2020	12/2020
Educate public about safety regarding vigilantism and bullying				2/2020	12/2020

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Develop and implement Block Watch Program - residential and business buy in/education/communication - training & certification program.				10/2020	12/2020
Develop working relationship with McKinney Vento liaisons at Monroe School District	Prevention	Promote social service networks focused on youth and families		3/2020	12/2020
Identify needs of homeless families	Prevention	Gather and analyze accurate data about homelessness in Monroe		10/2020	3/2020
Work with McKinney-Vento Family Liaisons in the Monroe School District to distribute flyers of local and county services for homeless students and families and encourage MSC to post flyers on school premises.				3/2020	6/2020
Define 2021 Work Plan, Priorities, and Implementation Model	Prevention/ Policy & Budget	Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan to fulfill HPAC's recommendations		6/2020	12/2020
Implement law enforcement strategies	Public Safety	Implement law enforcement strategies and regulations that increase personal accountability and adhere to civil and personal rights		1/2020	12/2020
Review Solicitation Regulations				2/2020	4/2020

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Evaluate bail fees				4/2020	9/2020
Develop and implement Block Watch Program - residential and business buy in/education/communication - training & certification program.		Initiate a residential and business crime prevention program		10/2020	12/2020
Continue Embedded Social Worker Program	Public Safety	Continue to budget for embedded worker/community outreach team		1/2020	12/2020
Police Department (Existing program)			\$73,000		
Public Defender (New level of services)			\$20,000	3/2020	12/2020
Install Cameras in parks		Use technology for public safety and to protect infrastructure.	\$17,000	1/2020	6/2020
Collect data on court cases. Determine with Monroe Municipal Court the costs/benefits of community court model	Public Safety	Implement Community Court so treatment for addiction and mental health can be offered as an alternative to jail Gather and analyze data about crime in Monroe		6/2020	12/2021
Identify partners to develop community court model					
Determine with Monroe Municipal Court and partners the costs/benefits of community court model				1/2021	12/2021

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Coordinated Services – One Stop Shop	Support Services	Create a coordinated homeless response center	\$50,000	4/2020	12/2020
		Create a system of services that responds to the homeless crisis 24/7			
		Establish more accessible mental health and addiction services in Monroe			
Develop scope of work with Technical Advisory Committee				1/2020	5/2020
Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)				3/2020	6/2020
Award RFPs				6/2020	7/2020
Establish Homeless HMIS/By name lists				6/2020	12/2020
Work with Technical Advisory Committee and Snohomish County to identify resources to provide housing and mental health navigators in the Sky Valley	Support Services	Obtain supportive services to navigate people through resources		1/2020	12/2020
Provide facilities and funding for non-profits		Support agencies that serve and promote self-reliance		On-going	
Work with Take the Next Step and Volunteers of America to designate a family resource center and/or services in Monroe				3/2020	12/2020

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
Identify performance measures, such as reduction in the number of homeless individuals; reduction in lengths of stays at emergency shelters; increase in rental vacancy rate; and a full Homeless Management Information (HMIS) utilized by service providers.	Policy & Budget	Create a Six-year Plan, which includes performance measures		6/2020	9/2020
Lobbying for changes to State and Federal law	Policy & Budget	Lobby legislators at all levels to increase funding for addiction and mental health treatment, affordable housing, job training, and support services Identify and lobby for new law enforcement strategies focused on personal accountability of homeless		1/2020	12/2020
Collaborate with Affordable Housing Consortium (AHC) on writing new housing chapter for the city's comprehensive plan update.	Policy & Budget	Engage developers in building affordable and subsidized housing		6/2020	12/2020
Continue HPAC as a standing committee					

2020

Draft HPAC Action Plan

Action	Category	HPAC Recommendation	2020 Budget	Start	End
	Policy & Budget	Implement HB 1406 and explore all revenue options for housing, mental health, and chemical dependency.		7/2019	3/2021
Identify needs			\$46,000 (HB1406)	4/2020	9/2020
Develop criteria with Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)				9/2020	12/2020
Provide Rental Assistance through RFP				12/2020	12/2021
Evaluate program				6/2020	12/2020
		Continue HPAC as a standing Committee			
Define 2021 Work Plan, Priorities, and Implementation Model	Policy & Budget	Adopt and fund a Six-Year Plan to fulfill HPAC's recommendations		6/2020	12/2020

Total 2020 Investment \$312,000

Draft Homelessness Communications Plan

January 11, 2020



Purpose & Context

This plan was developed to support the City and its partners to communicate proactively, clearly, and consistently with Monroe residents about homelessness. It aims to dispel misinformation around this complex and charged issue. It also provides guidance for when and how to respond to social media posts and will include supportive web content once the main plan is approved.

This plan was informed by communications best practices, research regarding general public response to homelessness, a review of existing materials and social media content produced by and about the City of Monroe, comments provided at the HPAC Open House, and conversations with City staff and HPAC members, including:

- Bridgette Tuttle, HPAC Member
- Debbie Willis, Administrative Bureau Director
- Deborah Knight, City Administrator
- Geoffrey Thomas, Mayor
- Jeff Jolley, Chief of Police
- Rachel Adams, HPAC Member
- Ryan Irving, Deputy Chief of Police

Goals & Audiences

The activities outlined in this plan are designed to reach Monroe residents (whether housed or unhoused), and business owners. Our communications goals for 2020 include the following. Monroe residents and business owners ...

- Have a reality-based and unexaggerated understanding of homelessness in Monroe.
- Understand what the City is doing to ensure public safety and to help people experiencing homelessness.
- Understand individual constitutional rights and the City's legal limitations.
- Understand the varied and systemic factors that can lead to homelessness.
- Feel heard and know what to do if they ...
 - Feel threatened or unsafe.
 - Are experiencing homelessness and need help.
 - Want to help someone who does not have a home.

There are also broader goals that were discussed by City staff, including decreasing the number of encampments, reducing property crime, and increasing the number of people who receive services and housing. These are important goals that will be addressed as the City moves forward on the HPAC recommendations. This plan aims to build a foundation for future campaigns to seek funding and support to implement those recommendations.

Approach

Shifting the narrative to fact-based information about homelessness in Monroe is a complicated task because public perception may be rooted in emotions and beliefs rather than facts. Those who are housed have any number of reactions to someone experiencing homelessness – fear, guilt, shame, anger, empathy, helplessness, frustration – and thus, our communications must address those base responses as well as providing clear and accurate information.

Ambassadors

Ambassadors will be everyday Monroe residents and business owners who represent a cross-section of the area and collaborate with a member of the City staff. Ambassadors will carry the City's message and bolster it with their own stories and experiences, dispelling misinformation – whether over coffee or on social media.

The ambassador group should start with the existing HPAC members who are already incredibly knowledgeable about homelessness and who led a successful and well-attended open house. HPAC members could recruit others to join, focusing on under-represented groups and community leaders – ultimately building a team of 20-40 people.

The group should be formally trained and supported with:

- Consistent messaging that is adaptable so ambassadors can speak with their authentic voices
- Constructive conversation training and practice (e.g. active listening, acknowledging the other person's point of view and empathizing with their experience, sharing how your own experience is different, etc.)
- Storytelling training and practice, so ambassadors are ready with examples that resonate
- Opportunities to learn from police officers, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness
- Criteria and guidelines for when to walk away from a conversation that is unproductive

Ideally, ambassadors would meet quarterly after their initial training to support one another, share success stories and challenges, and come up with new approaches.

Consistent Outbound Communications

In addition to the ambassadors, the City of Monroe and nonprofit partners should increase its own proactive storytelling. This effort has already begun with regular social media posts, media coverage of the outreach team, the HPAC Open House, and the Monroe This Week newsletter. We recommend building on this and diversifying the types of stories that are shared, including stories and social media posts that:

- Highlight bright spots and successes from the City's Outreach Team and other service providers
- Share steps people can take if they feel threatened or unsafe, if they're worried about their business, if they are experiencing homelessness and need help, or if they want to help someone who is unsheltered
- Demonstrate what it means to be a Monroe community member (e.g. a "We are all Monroe" series from HPAC members and ambassadors that highlights why they are involved in solving homelessness)
- Combat stereotypes of people experiencing homelessness by featuring them – with their consent and input – as people, not just circumstances ([Facing Homelessness](#) does this well)
- Highlight the City's good work to ensure public safety, without stigmatizing those experiencing homelessness

The City is currently using Facebook ([City of Monroe](#), [Monroe Police Department](#), and community-led [You Had Me at Monroe](#)), [Twitter](#), [Monroe This Week](#), word of mouth, flyers, events, and their [website](#) to reach their audience. These are a good start and once they are fully populated, it may make sense to explore other channels that are informed by audience input (e.g. survey Monroe community members about how they would like to hear from the City).

Once this plan is finalized, EnviroIssues will provide graphic design support to ensure all City communications about homelessness have a consistent look and feel. We will also make recommendations for photographs and imagery.

Volunteer and Learning Opportunities

Many people shut down when confronted with the complex challenges of homelessness. Research shows that individuals are more willing to help if there's just one person in need. But when there are hundreds or thousands of people to help, they feel overwhelmed. How could they possibly make a difference? So why do anything at all?

It is important to fight this feeling of helplessness – which can quickly turn to anger and frustration – by giving people simple things to do:

- Promote volunteer events with local shelters and service providers.
- Share opportunities for people to donate food, essential items, or money to local shelters and service providers.
- Post reading lists and organize book clubs or discussion sessions where people can learn about systemic causes of homelessness and how to advocate for change. The Monroe library could be a good partner in this.
- Encourage housed Monroe residents to smile at, acknowledge, or say hello to their unsheltered neighbors.

That last bullet won't resonate with everyone, but it can have a humanizing effect. It's harder to condemn a group of people when they have faces and names. It's also important to ask people who are experiencing homelessness what would be helpful to them – what are they hoping for from their neighbors?

Annual Report

Producing and distributing an annual report could be an excellent way for the City to report back to community members, particularly if the HPAC recommendations are implemented using public funds. It doesn't need to be long or complex – in fact, shorter and simpler will be more successful. The report could include:

- One or two success stories
- Data that demonstrates how the City has made progress, e.g. the number of people successfully housed as compared to previous years thanks to new programs and investments
- Lessons learned and plans for the coming year

To keep it manageable, the report could be a compilation of existing stories and data. (It's okay to repeat stories!) The report could be produced for print, the web, or as a short video.

Foundational Web Content

While most Monroe community members will not spontaneously visit the City of Monroe's webpages on homelessness, it is important to provide foundational messaging that serves as a resource for City staff and ambassadors (e.g. easy links to share in response to public concerns). This web content should include core messages about the City's beliefs and approach, answers to frequently asked questions, stories that demonstrate the City's efforts, stories and data that combat stereotypes and misperceptions about homelessness, and resources for those seeking help.

Managing Social Media Comments

State a Clear Policy

The first step in managing social media comments is posting a clear policy around conduct and language. The City of Monroe may have this already, but it was not readily accessible. Here is an [example of a comment policy](#).

Assign Roles

Identify who will be responsible for monitoring and responding to comments. Here is one option:

- Assign a City staff member and two alternates to monitor social media comments daily.
- Identify a team of 6-12 ambassadors who are available to provide supportive comments or help dispel misinformation when needed.
- Create a schedule so not all ambassadors need to be on call all the time (e.g. weekly rotations of three).

Establish Criteria

Establish clear criteria for when and how to respond. Here are some guidelines:

Please note that this applies to City of Monroe social media sites, not to private Facebook groups. It is prudent to monitor private groups, but do not engage.

Draw on Existing Resources

When the assigned person encounters a comment that needs a response (based on the criteria above):

- Review existing web content, FAQ, and key messages to inform response.
- Respond with relevant content and a link if helpful within one to three business days (if possible)
- If the comment is charged and could benefit from community confirmation, alert the ambassadors on-call and ask them to chime in with their experience to help shift the tenor of the conversation.
- Reminder about negative posts:
 - o Treat negative comments and posts just as you would if you were talking face to face.
 - o Respond to negative posts with a positive tone. Thank people for sharing their concerns or opinions.
 - o You do not need to respond to every criticism or barb.

City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
Monroe residents and business owners	Understand what the City is doing to increase public safety and to help people experiencing homelessness.	We believe that everyone in Monroe deserves to feel safe and supported. Our officers and Outreach Team are out every day, working to reduce crime and connect our unhoused neighbors with services and resources.	City of Monroe	City webpages that describe ongoing efforts Weekly social media updates (e.g. featured outreach stat, opportunity for Monroe residents to volunteer) Police blotter that tracks responses to public safety or disturbance and Outreach Team connections
		[False belief to overcome: The City of Monroe isn't doing anything to address homeless. They're letting our city die, just like Seattle.]	Outreach Team	Weekly bright spots: short personal reports that celebrate a success from the field (share on social media and embed on the website)
			Ambassadors	Share above bright spots and other updates through personal social media and conversations.
	Have a reality-based and unexaggerated understanding of homelessness in Monroe.	There are many factors that contribute to someone losing their home: the gap between wages and rising rents, illness or injury, domestic violence, struggles with addiction and/or mental health.	Ambassadors	Weekly stories and stats (e.g. % of working people who experience homelessness, \$100 rent increase = X% increase in homelessness) that educate and combat stereotypes and misconceptions.
		The City of Monroe is working hard to help our unsheltered neighbors while holding them accountable for the steps they need to take.		Conversations with other Monroe community members to dispel misinformation. Acknowledge their feelings and what is true in their statement. Ask questions. Share personal experiences and real-life stories to challenge and replace their narrative. Don't rely on data alone – a false story must be replaced with a more powerful true story.
		Criminal activity is not tolerated, but keep in mind that it is not a crime to be homeless.	City of Monroe	Respond to comments on social media using consistent messages (in your authentic language) and share links to relevant webpages to dispel misinformation.
		[False belief to overcome: The homeless are lazy and milking the system, they're robbing our neighbors, exposing our kids to drugs, harassing shoppers, destroying our businesses – and the City is doing nothing about.]		City webpages that describe varied and systemic roots of homelessness, dispelling myths and inviting empathy. Content should also clarify that homelessness can look very different from person to person. For instance, there are people who experience chronic homelessness, who are very visible, and sometimes refuse services. However, many people experiencing homelessness are hidden, but are none-the-less affected by stereotypes and need help.

City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
Monroe residents or business owners who are frustrated that the City doesn't arrest people who panhandle or live in public spaces	Understand individual constitutional rights and the City's legal limitations.	Every person in Monroe has constitutional rights. It is not a crime to be homeless and panhandling is protected as free speech. However, aggressive behavior or blocking someone's path is not legal. If you experience this, please call 911.	City of Monroe	City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages) Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses Responses to social media and public comments
			Ambassadors	Responses to social media and conversations with fellow Monroe community members
Monroe residents or business owners who are frustrated and scared of people experiencing homelessness	Feel heard and know what to do if they feel threatened or unsafe.	Everyone in Monroe deserves to feel safe and supported. If you feel threatened, please call 911.	City of Monroe	City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages) Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses Responses to social media and public comments
			Ambassadors	Responses to social media and in conversations with fellow Monroe community members
Monroe business owners or employees who are affected by homelessness	Feel seen and know what to do to reduce crime.	Thriving businesses are a vital part of our community. Please take these steps to reduce crime: (e.g. lock dumpsters, provide bright lighting, report trespassing)	City of Monroe	City website (homelessness FAQ, police department pages) Flyers delivered to Monroe businesses
Monroe residents who are experiencing homelessness	Feel supported and know where and how to find help.	Everyone in Monroe is welcome. If you need help, please call 211 or contact Take the Next Step.	City of Monroe	City website Flyers in public places (e.g. libraries) Resource card (see an example from Redmond) Conversations with partner agencies and organizations to ensure everyone is sharing the same information

City of Monroe Homelessness Communication Plan: Summary Table

Audiences	Goals	Key Messages	Messengers	Potential Activities & Channels
Monroe residents or business owners who tend towards empathy for people experiencing homelessness	Understand the varied and systemic factors that can lead to homelessness and are willing to help.	Monroe is a place where we help each other. Together we can ensure all our neighbors are supported, housed, thriving, and accountable for their actions.	Ambassadors	“We Are All Monroe” social media series: bi-weekly post from an ambassador sharing why they do what they do to support people experiencing homelessness (could be a personal story, a recent experience, a video clip, a question, a quote, a call to action, or something they learned, etc.) Embed rotating ambassador stories on website. Ambassador led book clubs, discussion sessions, and service days (or recruitment for local volunteer opportunities with service providers).
			City of Monroe	Website with information about systemic factors and the varied ways people can lose their home. Share posts, stories, volunteer opportunities, and events from service providers.
			People experiencing homelessness	“We Are All Monroe” series: Posts by people or that feature people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness – ensure that you have consent, that the post is about a whole person (with hobbies, dreams, favorite foods, etc.), not a condition, and that it challenges stereotypes.
Monroe residents or business owners who want to help	Feel less helpless and know how they can make a difference.	We all have a part to play in ending homelessness. Here’s how you can help: [e.g. donate to or volunteer/partner with a homelessness service provider, hand out resource care]	City of Monroe	Share posts, stories, volunteer opportunities, and events from service providers.
			Ambassadors	Share volunteer opportunities, fundraising drives, and events from service providers. Resource card (see an example from Redmond)