

October 5, 2018

Dear Mayor Durkan and Councilmember Sawant,

Since 2008, the City has had specific rules – Multi-Department Rules (MDARs) – for the removal of encampments that balance providing services and alternatives to people living in encampments with the health and safety benefits of removing encampments. In 2016, a Task Force on Unsanctioned Encampment Cleanup Protocols was formed to make recommendations on improving the encampment removal rules. Following the work of the task force and public feedback, new protocols were implemented on April 3, 2017. To ensure continued improvements, an Advisory Committee on Implementation of the Rules for Removing Unsanctioned Encampments was formed to review and evaluate the implementation of the City's new MDARs. We are writing on behalf of the members of the Advisory Committee, which we co-chair.

Our charter tasks us with providing a written update and analyses to the Mayor and Council on how the rules have been implemented and our recommended changes to policies and practices at our term's end in December 2018. This letter fulfills that charge.

The Advisory Committee reflects a wide diversity of perspectives and communities. We have worked together closely to develop a common understanding of the City's efforts to engage with people living in encampments, and when and how current MDAR protocols are applied. In the process of developing these recommendations, our committee has been briefed by the Office of Civil Rights, FAS and HSD. We also had extensive discussion regarding these changes during our April and July meetings.

To prepare these recommendations, we convened a subcommittee composed of six Advisory Committee members. The subcommittee reviewed the rules in careful detail, considered FAS and other staff recommendations and reviewed a report prepared by the Office of Civil Rights. The full Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the subcommittees recommendations at the conclusion of our July meeting.

The MDAR specific recommendations are:

1) Emphasis Areas

- The City should Increase staffing capacity for Navigation Teams to support removal of encampments in Emphasis Areas. The Navigation Team can't support all the current emphasis areas. At the current time the designation is meaningless and results in neighbors and business having unrealistic expectations.

- All appropriate City Departments e.g., Parks, Utilities, Transportation, should be directed by the Mayor to allocate additional resources to help maintain areas within their respective area of responsibility.

2) Storage:

- Decrease the number of days items are stored and allow for more flexibility in keeping items for those who have a plan in place to retrieve items. The current storage data should be used to inform the number of days items are held.

3) Clean Up Standard:

- Create clear definition and policy on what "clean" means. What are the expectations and what should the physical space look like after a cleanup happens.

4) Access to Public Rights of Way:

- The City needs to respond faster to obstructions and should move quickly to clear Public Rights of Way. This includes parks, bus stops, libraries, schools, medical facilities and community centers and all Public Rights-of-Way adjacent to these properties (e.g. parking strips).

- The City should fund additional staff, (not Navigation Team model or required to adhere to MDAR protocols), whose only job should be to quickly remove tents and obstructions/access to public spaces as defined above.

5) High Density Areas/Prioritization:

- Specifically, within Encampment Rule 17-01, Section 5.1.3: -- ADD: "areas with high- density residential and commercial development."

The Committee is also making the following recommendations outside of our original charge:

1) The City should prioritize more resources to expand community based out reach.

- The city should identify funding for Localized Outreach workers based on the Ballard model:

Create 10 Neighborhood-based outreach workers, each with a defined geographic service area.

Spread appropriately among neighborhoods around the City, the outreach workers would be:

a) Nimble and community based with the ability to engage with individuals multiple times on a weekly or daily basis.

b) Work in conjunction with business and residential community members to keep the broader community informed and engaged in the process and share information about people in need.

c) Coordinate with existing Navigation Teams, particularly regarding pending MDAR assessments within the specific neighborhood.

- The City should identify additional culturally appropriate resources for more shelter, services and appropriate housing.

- The City should identify additional training for Police Officers involved in the Navigation Team.

2) The City should work in close coordination with the State and County to leverage resources.

- There needs to be better coordination of Mental Health and Chemical Dependency services.

- There needs to be more regional options for safe spaces that can be used as referrals for individuals living on the streets.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. If you would like to discuss them in more detail, we would be happy to meet with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Colleen Echohawk, Co-Chair



Patricia McInturff, Co-Chair

MDAR Committee Rule Change Recommendations

MDAR Specific Recommendations:

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5) High Density Areas/Prioritization:

- Specifically, within Encampment Rule 17-01, Section 5.1.3: -- ADD: "areas with high- density residential and commercial development."

Recommendations that are outside the MDAR Committee's original charge:

3) The City should prioritize more resources to expand community based out reach.

- The city should identify funding for Localized Outreach workers based on the Ballard model:

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