



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Roberts and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jessica Simulcik Smith, City Clerk

DATE: April 19, 2016

RE: Documents received at 4/18/16 Council Meeting

CC: Debbie Tarry, City Manager  
John Norris, Assistant City Manager

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Attached hereto are documents received from the public at your April 18, 2016 City Council Business Meeting.

- 1) Written comments regarding homelessness submitted by Brad Lancaster.

COUNCIL TALK  
4.18.16

My name is Brad Lancaster. I live in Shoreline.

I have suggested a series of changes to Shoreline law that might make Shoreline more hospitable to homeless persons. Tonight, I want to speak about one way to preventing homelessness.

People become homeless a bit at a time. First, something bad happens. One loses a job, gets divorced, gets injured, suffers a crime, or any other of life's insults. Then one's budget capsizes. That budget had been working, just barely, paycheck to paycheck. But the insult is too much. So, one is forced to choose: kids' food, health care, the car, electricity, water, rent. All cannot be sustained. Finally, something gets shut off. The landlord evicts. And you are homeless. You couch surf until you wear your friends and family out. Then you stay in your car, if you have one. Finally, the car won't start any longer, and gets hauled away. And there you are—homeless. At that point, this instance of homelessness rises into our consciousness as a society. We start reconstructing all of those components of life for the homeless person. It is no small task.

Looked at as a system, homelessness interventions work better the farther upstream they occur. One must cut off the crisis that makes a homeless person homeless. Offering \$200 of utility assistance might, at one point, have prevented the collapse, and saved \$20,000 of emergency room care eighteen months later. Offering \$500 in rent assistance when a person breaks his arm might mean his children never are pulled from their elementary school, interrupting their math education.

The Homelessness Task Force of Redmond, Washington, did a major investigation of homelessness in their area. They made useful recommendations. One recommendation is the creation of a **flexible funding pool**. These grants and loans are made available to people teetering at the brink of homelessness to assist them in keeping their residences. Once people collapse into homelessness they are likely to do so over and over again. Preventing homelessness is much less expensive, both financially and in degree of suffering, than allowing homelessness. *All Home*, from whom the Council has heard, aims to make homelessness rare. A flexible funding pool on which Shoreline residents might draw could help keep Shoreliners in their homes, even when bad things happen.