
Council Meeting Date: January 8, 2024

Agenda Item: 9(a)

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Discussion of the Human Services Strategic Plan
DEPARTMENT:	Recreation, Cultural and Community Services
PRESENTED BY:	Bethany Wolbrecht-Dunn, Community Services Manager
ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

Since incorporation, the City has provided funding to support human services agencies that serve the Shoreline community. This financial support has been provided through both competitive funding processes and direct contracting.

To that end, the City Council approved additional, one-time funds in the 2023-2024 biennial budget for the development of a comprehensive Human Services Strategic Plan. BERK and Associates were selected as the City's consultant for the development of the plan and have been gathering information and feedback to develop a set of recommendations within the overall plan.

Tonight, City staff and staff from BERK and Associates will share an update on the development of the plan, engagement feedback received, and proposed plan review and adoption schedule.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact associated with this discussion item. The draft Human Services Strategic Plan may have recommendations for Council consideration that require additional financial resources.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required tonight. Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction to staff regarding the Human Services Strategic Plan.

Approved By: City Manager **BE** City Attorney **MK**

BACKGROUND

The City's vision is for people of all ages, abilities, cultures, income levels, and backgrounds to be able to live, work, play, and thrive in Shoreline. In support of this vision, the City's Human Services program has prioritized its limited human services funding for meeting basic needs such as food and housing, and for behavioral health services. Key values that guide this work include supporting culturally and linguistically appropriate services; a commitment to building an anti-racist community; and prioritizing services for those who are most harmed by institutional and systemic barriers. The program's core belief is that when all people have the support and resources they need, they will have the ability and freedom to exercise self-determination in all aspects of their lives and strengthen the community as a whole.

The City has provided funding for human services that serve Shoreline residents since 1996, shortly after the City's incorporation. As the City grew, components of the Human Services program have been modified and shifted along with our changing community. Along the way, there have been a few opportunities for need assessments and programming adjustments; but there has not been a comprehensive program and funding review. There have been other outside factors - such as the 'Great Recession' and the COVID-19 pandemic - that have also affected human services programs in the region, as well as the rising cost of housing and the opioid crisis.

Additionally, the City conducts a [resident satisfaction survey](#) every two years. While the survey has been conducted since 2004, questions about human services and homelessness were added in 2010 and 2020, respectively. The importance of human services has been shown in the most recent satisfaction surveys conducted in 2020 and 2022. Based on the survey analysis, the major services that are recommended as the top priorities for investment over the next two years to raise the City's overall satisfaction rating are:

1. Overall response to homelessness, and
2. Overall quality of human services.

In response, the City Council approved one-time funds in the 2023-2024 biennial budget to develop a comprehensive Human Services Strategic Plan. The development of the plan is being carried out by the City's consultant, BERK and Associates, in collaboration with City staff.

The primary objectives of the Human Services Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Review established data and information to prioritize service areas and identify gaps.
- Review City programs, policies, staffing and best practices to make recommendations that will guide the work of the City.
- Identify policy and program opportunities to promote equity and inclusion and build on community strengths.
- Provide a rationale for an appropriate level of funding required to have the impact in the areas that the Plan prioritizes.

Tonight, City staff and BERK and Associates staff will provide an update on the progress to date on gathering information and community feedback, as well as the next steps in the development of the Shoreline Human Services Strategic Plan.

DISCUSSION

Role of the City Regarding the Provision of Human Services

Before detailing the information and data gathered as part of this effort thus far, it is helpful to provide context regarding the City’s current Human Services program. The City currently provides funding, coordination and planning to support homelessness and other human services programs. Funding is provided through the City’s General Fund, as well as other restricted revenues.

Funding for Human Services

Every other year, as part of the biennial budget process, the City Council reviews its human services funding allocation and develops a new two-year Human Services Funding Plan. This plan includes multiple funding sources with associated spending parameters and goals. Shoreline’s funding for human services supports a system of local and regional services that together provide Shoreline residents with access to an array of services to enhance their well-being and to mitigate pressing needs. The 2023-2024 Human Services Plan (HS Plan) was approved by Council on [October 3, 2022](#).

The support for Human Services programs through Shoreline funding can usually be split into three separate categories, however the program is currently managing COVID-19 Response funding as well. These categories are competitive funding, dedicated/reserved funding, and one-time funding. The funding levels for these (and the COVID-19 response funding) is as follows:

Human Service Funding Category	2024 Funding Level
Competitive	\$510,601
Dedicated/Reserved	\$248,756
One-Time	\$176,000
COVID-19 Response	\$479,500
Total	\$1,414,857

- **Competitive Funding.** In [2016](#), the Council set a goal of allocating 1.0% of Net General Fund (GF) revenues for competitively allocated human services by the year 2022. This resulted in a gradual increase each year between 2017 and 2022. The current 2023-2024 HS Plan meets the Council’s goal of 1.0% of Net GF Revenues for 2023 and 2024, respectively. While the GF allocations for competitive Human Services funding is budgeted at \$503,438 in 2023 and \$517,764 in 2024 (1.0% of reoccurring GF revenues for each year), the HS Plan spreads the funding equally over the two years of the biennium. This allocates \$510,601 in 2023 and \$510,601 in 2024 to support services provided by agencies that submit applications through the competitive human services allocation process.

- **Dedicated/Reserved Funding.** The budget includes a small amount of dedicated funding that has specific purposes – either as line items within the budget or that include a restricted funding source. In the last decade, financial support for the Senior Center shifted from the competitive program to an annual line-item. In addition, [\\$25,000 for Utility Assistance was established by the Council starting in the 2008 budget](#), as a component of the Council's approval of a utility tax increase. In [2019](#), Council approved Resolution No. 448, which allowed Shoreline to impose a local sales tax, which is credited against the state sales tax, for affordable and supportive housing. And lastly, the State of Washington shares revenues from several sources with cities across the state. Two of those sources (Liquor Profits/Liquor Excise and Criminal Justice/Special Programs) provide funding for drug/alcohol counseling and domestic violence sheltering.
- **One Time Funding/Urgent Need.** Occasionally, the Council will request, or staff will recommend, additional funding be provided for a specific service or program. In response to economic factors of the Great Recession, the Council allocated some one-time funding to support local agencies. Currently, the City has one-time funding allocated in the 2023-2024 budget in support of the Behavioral Health Case Manager at the Shoreline-Lake Forest Park Senior Center. Additionally, the Council added \$100,000 for specific services as part of the 2023-2024 Mid-Biennium Budget Update.
- **COVID-19 Response Funding.** As shared at the [October 30, 2023](#), Council meeting, the City has used several funding sources (both General Fund and federal) in response to the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. With the programs planned for 2024, all COVID-19 Response Funds will be expended by the end of 2024.

Coordination and Planning

City staff also oversee the Human Services contracts, as well as coordination between providers, other cities, and the community at large. Staff have also been involved in developing projects and programs to assist the community, such as the Back-to-School Consortium (in coordination with the Shoreline school community) and the Shoreline Severe Weather Shelter. In 1998, the Human Services program (organized as Office of Housing and Human Services) was staffed with two (2) full-time positions, but over time, that has been reduced to a portion of the Community Services Manager position, as one of four (4) programs within the Community Services Division.

For the City's Competitive Human Services Funding, staff work collaboratively with a group of human services staff from other suburban cities in King County in the management and contracting for services. Shoreline staff review contracted performance measures quarterly and outcome and monitoring reports annually. The current Community Services Division staffing structure and capacity does not allow for in-depth review or comprehensive evaluation of programs. Shoreline staff also work with members of the collaborative for monitoring agencies through site visits.

Human Services Strategic Plan Process

The overall purpose of this effort is to develop a comprehensive Human Services Strategic Plan with recommendations on service goals and priorities, funding, and internal staffing capacity to meet Shoreline's unique community needs. To assist in meeting that goal, a process was developed for an engagement strategy that would center on system users. This process included:

- Materials and data review, including survey results and Comprehensive Plan update findings;
- Service provider organization interviews;
- Peer jurisdiction interviews;
- City staff focus group; and
- Targeted community input via engagement partners.

Summary of Information Gathered

While a complete summary will be included in the Draft Human Services Strategic Plan, below are the major themes from each component of the community engagement process.

Demographics

The Shoreline population is increasingly more racially diverse and has a lower income and a higher percentage of older adults and people with disabilities than King County as a whole. With just over 60,000 people, Shoreline has seen a slower and more stable growth rate compared than King County as whole. As in many communities, critical needs (such as housing and financial instability, mental and behavioral health) have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Engagement

To ensure the Human Services Strategic Plan is informed by a broad array of system users, BERK and the City partnered with four community non-profit partners to conduct deeper engagement with a sample of individuals and families who might have been underrepresented in other information-gathering. Additionally, other human services organizations and community partners were interviewed to gather feedback on services. There were clear themes shared by engagement participants, which are summarized as follows:

- Housing and homelessness
 - Need for housing that matches household size and that is affordable
 - Uptick in evictions
 - Rental assistance programs act more like a "band aid" than a solution
- Mental and behavioral health
 - Behavioral health system is at capacity
 - Challenging to navigate Medicaid/Medicare
 - Long waiting lists for behavioral health services
 - Many people have a need for basic needs (food, housing) and have behavioral health/substance abuse issues
 - Identified need for support groups
- Basic needs, including food assistance and medical care
 - Food assistance

- Medical Care
- Utility assistance
- Transportation
- Employment
- Affordable childcare
- Tutoring

Other major themes from community engagement:

- Challenging to navigate systems and services/lack of knowledge of services available
- “Outreach” works better if it’s tailored to specific communities
- Even as the COVID-19 pandemic has waned, there is a continued on-going and high need for services
- Questions about how to support Shoreline’s aging population
- Residents have a strong desire to live and be able to remain in Shoreline

Interviews with Peer Jurisdictions

As each jurisdiction administers and organizes their departments and programs in different manners – it can be challenging to make direct comparisons of programs and funding amounts. For example, some cities manage their communities’ Senior Centers within the city government, while others (like Shoreline), provide funding to a non-profit that manages a senior center. BERK and Associates interviewed select staff from local cities in order to gather insight into the format of their programs, including information on their funding programs and staffing structure.

Takeaways From Jurisdiction Interviews

- **Strategic decision-making is being considered by several neighboring jurisdictions:** The five jurisdictions interviewed are considering many of the same questions that Shoreline is regarding their role in human services, including how to make strategic funding decisions. All jurisdictions noted that they are aiming to fund fewer agencies but allocate a larger grant amount to increase their impact and reduce burden on individual agencies.
- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allowed jurisdictions to expand their reach:** ARPA funding allowed jurisdictions to temporarily add positions and increase agency contracts. While this funding will end in 2024, cities recognize that the needs exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have not ended, and many are looking at other strategies to continue funding at a higher level than pre-pandemic.
- **Shoreline should consider the role they want to play, before considering taking on providing direct services:** While all neighboring jurisdictions provide funding which supports local social service agencies to provide direct services, the Cities of Kirkland and Issaquah have moved into providing direct service work as well, due to the fact that they were unable to find an agency willing and available to fill a need of the cities. Other jurisdictions, such as the City of Mercer Island, have also stepped into this role. There are benefits of jurisdictions stepping into a direct service role, including community members receiving excellent access to care, quick response times, and generally longer staff retention, given higher salaries in the public sector.

- **Questions on the impact of new funding partnership with King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA):** Several jurisdictions noted the importance of KCRHA while also recognizing the challenges of the new organization.

Jurisdiction Interview Data

The table below provides information from the five jurisdictions that were interviewed regarding their human service programs, funding models, and jurisdictional size.

City	Population (OFM, 2023)	Funding Model	Budgeted Amount for Contracting	# of Staff (Admin or Direct Service)
Shoreline	61,120	1% of ongoing General Fund revenues for competitive funding	\$510,601/competitive* *other funding provided through direct contracting	Admin 0.4 FTE - Portion of the Community Services Manager Direct 1.4 FTE funded with COVID-19 Response Funding – ends December 2024
Bothell	49,450	Per capita	\$8/per capita \$386,000/year	3.25 FTE Admin Assistant City Manager (0.25) Human Services Coordinator Direct Service Community Court Advocate Domestic Violence Advocate
Issaquah	42,290	Per capita Current Baseline + Population Growth/Per Capita Rate + Consumer Price Index (CPI)	\$566,720	10 FTE Admin Human Services Manager Human Services Coordinator Direct Service Human Services/Community Court Case Manager Behavioral Health Specialist Behavioral Health Coordinators (3 FTE) Emergency Housing Program (3 FTE)
Kenmore	24,230	Per capita	\$7.53/per capita Approx \$180,000	1 FTE (split with housing) Admin Housing and Human Services Coordinator
Kirkland	96,920	Base budget and one time allocation requests to Council	\$1.7 million	5 FTE Admin Human Services Manager Human Services Coordinator – Community Wellbeing Human Services Coordinator- Equity Direct Services Youth Services Coordinator Homeless Outreach Coordinator
Renton	107,900	Per capita	\$6.76/per capita Approx \$730,000	4.5 FTE Admin Human Services Manager Human Services Coordinator Direct Service Housing Repair Program (2 FTE)

Next Steps for Development of Human Services Strategic Plan

At tonight's meeting, staff welcomes questions and discussion regarding the community engagement information and planning process as presented. Staff are scheduled to return to Council at their February 26, 2024, Council meeting to present draft recommendations for further review and discussion. The recommendations will include:

- Priorities for service goals and programs,
- Funding framework, and
- Human Services program staffing structure.

Adoption of the Final Human Services Strategic Plan is currently scheduled for the April 1, 2024, Council meeting.

COUNCIL GOALS ADDRESSED

This item supports the following City Council Goals:

- Goal #4 - Expand the City's focus on equity and social justice and work to become an Anti-Racist community, and
- Goal #5 - Promote and enhance community safety, healthy neighborhoods, and a coordinated response to homelessness and individuals in behavioral health crisis.

RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT:

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RECOMMENDATION

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