

Opportunity Eugene Task Force Draft Working Agreements

Purpose of the Task Force:

Occupy Eugene has served to catalyze public attention and concern regarding issues of homelessness in the community and is seen as an opportunity for new resources and innovative ideas to emerge in addressing this issue. Building on that momentum, Opportunity Eugene is a Task Force formed by the Eugene City Council on December 14, 2011, to develop recommendations to the Council for addressing the needs and impacts for the unhoused in the community. The task force will present their recommendations for City Council action on or about March 12, 2012.

Desired Outcomes

The work of addressing the needs of the unhoused is immense yet vital to the health of a community. The Task Force has identified the following as the desired outcome of their work together:

- To continue to build community and a spirit of cooperation and collaboration that breaks down barriers in addressing the issues and needs of the unhoused
- To raise awareness about the culture of homelessness and about the diverse composition and needs of Eugene's unhoused
- To identify actionable steps for immediate and long-term solutions to improve the lives of the unhoused
- To identify gaps and limitations to service, as well as barriers to access

Membership:

Members of the Task Force have been appointed by the Mayor and include City Councilors, community members, representatives from Occupy Eugene, non-profit human services agencies, neighborhood associations, business, the health care community and the Human Rights Commission. All Task Force meetings and committee meetings are open to the public.

Guiding Values and Principles

- All people deserve to be housed, fed, safe and cared about.
- This Task Force presents a unique opportunity to build intentional community among segments of our community not normally together at the same table; our need to continue to treat each other with respect, listen to each other's perspective, and value each member as an equal contributor within this process is vital to the outcomes and serves as a model to the larger community.

An established infrastructure of services to serve the homeless exists in Eugene. The focus of this Task Force is to build upon existing services in creative and innovative ways.

Roles

Staffing for the Task Force will be provided by City of Eugene employees, Chuck Crockett and Michael Wisth.

Facilitation of task force meetings will be provided by team members from Oregon Consensus Staff: Laurel Singer, Peter Harkema, and Wendy Willis. The facilitators will remain independent and not take positions on the issues. The facilitator will work to ensure that the process runs smoothly.

Process support for all Task Force meetings and committee meetings will be provided by Community Mediation Services of Lane County: Chip Coker, Lysbeth Borie, and Tim McCabe.

Planning Committee members assume responsibility for keeping other members of their “sectors” on the Task Force informed about the work of this committee.

All members will keep their constituent groups informed about the work of the Task Force.

Structure:

To accomplish the goals identified, the Task Force may decide to create sub committees and/or work groups. In addition to process support, subcommittees may work to develop draft recommendations on topic areas. Subcommittee recommendations will be brought to the full group for review and approval. The following committee(s) has been established:

- Planning Committee: Works in conjunction with the facilitation team to plan task force meetings. (Membership determined through voluntary participation from task force members)

Task Force Meeting Schedule

The current schedule for Remaining Task Force Meetings is as follows, with the location to be determined:

- Tuesday January 24th, 9-11 a.m. Organizational Meeting: Working agreements, education, establishing priorities, and organizing to accomplish goals
- Tuesday February 7th, 9-11 a.m. Initial ideas and recommendations – Possible Oregon Solutions Presentation
- Thursday February 23rd, 9-11 a.m. Formulated ideas and recommendations
- Tuesday March 6th, 9-11 a.m. Review Recommendations and Report to the Board

Committee meetings will be scheduled as needed. These meetings will be announced on the City website.

Communication to the Media

Michael Wisth will serve as the point of contact for the media regarding the work of the Task Force for the City Council.

All task members are free to talk to the media but will use care to represent their own views and not those of other task force members.

Language

The Task Force members recognize the importance and power of language and aim to be respectful in the terminology used to refer to those who are housed and un-housed.

Members recognize that this is a diverse group, with different established practices and that adapting language is often challenging. With this in mind, all group members agree to be open to feedback about the impact of the language they use. Conversely, when providing feedback about language, members will approach each other with the intent to educate rather than to embarrass.

Decision Making:

The Task Force strives to make group decisions using consensus. For the purpose of this group, consensus is defined as a decision that everyone can “live with”. To assist in building consensus, a number of options can be used including small group meeting with representatives of the group, an agreement to stand aside to allow a decision to move forward, submission of a “minority” report. In addition, process tools may be used to foster the development of consensus. Consensus polling is one such tool used to assist in the consensus process and that allows for a quick read of group agreement. Consensus polling will rely on the use of red, yellow, green cards to assess the needs of the group in reaching a consensus decision.

- Green indicates general satisfaction with a decision
- Yellow indicates satisfaction with reservations and/or questions about the decision
- Red indicates dissatisfaction with the decision

Consensus polling is not a vote but rather a tool to assist in fostering dialogue to enhance and improve a decision. A consensus decision has been reached when all members poll as a yellow or green.

Public Input at Task Force Meetings

Public input is valued as part of the dialogue that is critical to the Task Force achieving its goals. At each Task Force Meeting, time will be reserved for public comment. While all public input is welcome, preference will be requested that time be given to those who are homeless. Written comments from the public will also be collected at each meeting and will be summarized verbatim, distributed with the meeting minutes to Task Force Members and posted on the City web site.

Process Commitments and Guidelines

Throughout the process, Task Force members will:

- Seek to learn and understand each other's perspective.
- Encourage respectful, candid and constructive discussions.
- Seek to resolve differences and reach consensus.
- Support the eventual product if they have concurred in it.

In meetings, members will:

- Share their thoughts and ideas, speaking for themselves rather than others
- Listen thoughtfully to the ideas of others
- Allow for a balance of speaking time.
- Disagree without being disagreeable.
- Limit side conversations.
- Turn off or silence cell phones and minimize use of laptops or handheld devices for non-Task Force business.
- Make every effort to start and end meetings on time.

Written feedback will be solicited and collected at the end of each meeting to allow for continual process improvements. This feedback will be compiled and included with meeting notes.