

RESOLUTION NO. M-1887

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, RECOGNIZING THE REGIONAL NEED FOR HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS, OR PERSONS IN DANGER OF BEING HOMELESS, AND TO CONSIDER RAISING REVENUE AS PROVIDED BY STATE LAW FOR HOUSING AND RELATED SERVICES

WHEREAS, housing affordability and homelessness is a growing problem in Thurston County and the City of Olympia, which requires prompt attention to reduce human suffering for vulnerable populations of our citizens; and

WHEREAS, many of the region's most vulnerable homeless end up on the streets of downtown Olympia without access to basic needs of safe housing, reliable food sources, and medical or mental health services; and

WHEREAS, downtown Olympia, which serves as the service hub for many county-wide homeless services, has increasingly been impacted by the growing number of homeless, many of whom have untreated mental illness or substance abuse issues; and

WHEREAS, the City's recently completed Downtown Strategy revealed homelessness as the leading concern for the viability of Olympia's downtown area; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction reports that for the 2015-2016 school year 444 students in local school districts were identified as homeless; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability (the "Committee") in February 2017 to study, review and take public input on issues relating to homelessness and other critical housing related services; and

WHEREAS, the Committee's investigation and research revealed a critical need for housing and housing related services for Olympia's and the region's most vulnerable citizens, including the mentally ill, veterans of America's Armed Forces, victims of domestic abuse and their children, families with children, and unaccompanied youth and young adults, including persons with substance abuse issues; and

WHEREAS, the work of the local HOME Fund advocacy group has defined important projects and services to address homelessness and the human suffering it entails; and

WHEREAS, the *Draft Thurston County Plan to Address Homelessness* provides significant guidance for the use of housing funds to address the needs of vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, the growing needs of homeless citizens led the Olympia City Council to commission a poll of Olympia voters by Elway Research, which revealed that Olympia's voters believe the number one issue for the Olympia community is homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the Elway poll indicated that seventy-eight percent (78%) of Olympia's voters would support the development of permanent supportive housing, rental assistance, sheltering, and other programs to serve the most vulnerable homeless; and

WHEREAS, the state legislature has provided a method for raising the necessary revenue to provide housing and related services for the homeless in RCW 82.14.530 by an increase of one-tenth of one percent of the sales tax or use tax;

WHEREAS, state law grants to the local county (in this instance, Thurston County) until October 9, 2017, to impose the full tax rate authorized under RCW 82.14.530(1)(a) by submission of a ballot proposition at a special or general election to county voters that is successful if approved by a majority of the voters; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 82.14.530(1)(b)(i), if the County fails to exercise its option to place a ballot proposition before the County's voters by October 9, 2017, then the City of Olympia through the Olympia City Council may submit a ballot proposition to the City's voters at a special or general election, authorizing the imposition of the sales tax or use tax which may not exceed one-tenth of one percent of the sales tax or use tax within the City's municipal boundaries; and

WHEREAS, RCW 82.14.530(2)(a) provides that a minimum of sixty percent of the moneys collected under RCW 82.14.530 must be used for either (i) constructing affordable housing, which may include new units of affordable housing within an existing structure, and facilities providing housing-related services; or (ii) constructing mental and behavioral health-related facilities; or (iii) funding the operations and maintenance costs of new units of affordable housing and facilities where housing-related programs are provided, or newly constructed evaluation and treatment centers; and

WHEREAS, the potential revenue source provided by RCW 82.14.530 offers the opportunity to assist persons whose income is at or below sixty percent (60%) of the median income of the county imposing the tax; and

WHEREAS, due to the complexity of the homeless problem, the Olympia City Council intends to gather significant additional public input about strategies and to help prioritize projects and plans;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE as follows:


- 1.** The Olympia City Council shall monitor whether Thurston County will exercise its statutory authority by October 9, 2017 to place a ballot proposition before the county's voters pursuant to RCW 82.14.530 to raise revenue for housing and related services.
- 2.** If Thurston County does not place a ballot proposition before the county's voters as provided in RCW 82.14.530, then the Olympia City Council shall consider an ordinance to place a ballot proposition before the City's voters as to whether the City's sales tax or use tax should be increased by one-tenth of one percent for housing and related services.
- 3.** If the Olympia City Council exercises its authority to place a ballot proposition before the City's voters as provided in RCW 82.14.530, the Council will consider placing such proposal before voters at the special election in February 2018.

PASSED BY THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL this 11th day of July 2017.



MAYOR

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



CITY ATTORNEY