

## Off the Streets

### **Mayor Sullivan's Response to the Initial Recommendations by the Mayor's Homeless Leadership Team for Strategies Pertaining to Chronic Public Inebriates and Related Issues of Homelessness**

December 2010

*I would like to thank the members of the Mayor's Homeless Leadership Team and our valued community and faith-based partners for your hard work and commitment over the past year, as we collaboratively worked to formulate strategies to deal with homeless chronic alcoholics and related issues of homelessness. Assisting homeless persons living on the streets who suffer from substance abuse and/or mental health issues, and lessening the negative impacts of this population on neighborhoods and businesses continue to be a top priority of my Administration. I would also like to recognize and thank the Municipality's Internal Team of staff working on this issue, under the leadership of DHHS Director Diane Ingle, for their efforts. Since September 2009, members of the HLT, our community partners, and Municipal Staff have worked diligently, doing site visits, attending HLT and community stakeholder meetings, and working collaboratively to craft Anchorage's Severe Alcohol Dependency Housing Ordinance and Cold Weather Ordinance, both of which were introduced by my Administration and unanimously adopted by the Anchorage Assembly. I look forward to the next phase of the HLT's efforts, as you work with Municipal Staff on moving forward with several of your recommendations.*

*Below are your initial recommendations, and my responses:*

1. Mayoral and Municipal Support for the Development of Karluk Manor by RurAL Cap as the Initial Housing First Project in Anchorage

**Response:** *While I believe, based on evaluations of Housing First projects in the Lower 48, the concept of Housing First merits further discussion and consideration; I continue to have concerns regarding the location of Karluk Manor. However, I recognize that Rural Cap has undergone a public process and has been granted the Conditional Use Permit which will allow them to offer supportive housing at this location.*

2. Mayoral Support for Assessing, Developing and Evaluating Future "Housing First" Projects

**Response:** *I support developing criteria for evaluating future Housing First projects, and encourage the HLT to work with Municipal staff on criteria development*

3. Develop and Implement Strategies for Public Education and Outreach Around the Approved Recommendations

**Response:** *I support the development and implementation of Public Education and Outreach plans around the HLT recommendations with which the Administration would like to move forward. Department of Health & Human Services staff will work with the HLT on developing strategies and messages for Public Outreach & Education.*

4. Remove Regulatory Barriers: Clarify Residential and Facility Land Use Types in Title 21 and Title 16

**Response:** *I am comfortable with exploring possible changes to Title 21 and Title 16. The Administration sponsored AO 2010-46 (The Cold Weather Ordinance, amending Title 16), which allows churches and social service agencies, designated by the Director of Health & Human Services, exemptions from certain requirements of Title 21 while acting as temporary cold weather shelters for homeless families and individuals. My Administration will give due consideration to any recommended changes to Title 21 & Title 16 brought forward by the HLT.*

5. Implement a Municipal Cold Weather Plan (MCW) and Amend Municipal Code Title 16 to enable the MWC

**Response:** *I supported, and the Administration sponsored, AO 2010-46 (the Cold Weather Ordinance), which amended Title 16, and enabled the Municipality's Cold Weather Plan for Homeless Persons. The ordinance was unanimously approved by the Anchorage Assembly on June 8, 2010. DHHS has already received applications for designation from two local churches.*

6. Camp Closures Should Not Take Place Unless Housing Options are in Place

**Response:** *While understanding the thoughts and concerns behind this recommendation, I cannot support it. Illegal camps on public land generate serious public safety and health concerns, and the Municipality must address those concerns in a timely manner regardless of the availability of housing.*

7. Develop a Collaborative Homeless Action & Response Team (H.A.R.T.) to do Outreach to Illegal Campers when a Campsite is Posted for Closure

**Response:** *I support the development of a Homeless Action & Response Team (H.A.R.T.) for outreach to illegal campers, assisting them into services and housing. This concept was part of the Mayor's Strategic Action Plan, released on August 31, 2010. I look forward to seeing the final team model when it is brought forward by the HLT.*

8. A Commitment to Work with Stakeholders to Increase Detox Beds and Services for Chronic Homeless Alcoholics

**Response:** *My Administration will continue to work with stakeholders to increase Detox Beds and Services for Homeless Alcoholics. My staff and I have been working with Senator Ellis on continued funding for increased detox and treatment beds at Clitheroe Center. This past session one of the City's top legislative priorities was funding the design and site selection for the new Alaska Recovery Center. The Legislature approved \$5.5 million for this phase of the project.*

9. Support for Increasing the Number of Case Managers Who Work with Chronic Homeless Alcoholics. Strive for a ratio of 1:10 Case Manager to Clients

**Response:** *I support increasing the number of case managers working with chronic homeless alcoholics, and believe a 1:10 ratio of case managers to clients would allow for better results for*

*the clients and community. I look forward to recommendations from the HLT on how to fund this initiative, including an advocacy plan.*

10. Continued Mayoral Support for the Anchorage Coalition on Homelessness and Implementation of the 10 Year Plan

**Response:** *I support and applaud the past and continuing efforts of the Anchorage Coalition on Homelessness and their Executive Oversight Board, I also support the continued implementation of Anchorage's 10-Year Plan on Homelessness.*

**What's next?**

*I understand that tackling the issue of homelessness is no small task; I thank each and every one of you for the time and energy you have put into improving the lives of those who are homeless in Anchorage and the quality of life for all of our residents. I urge that the HLT, which has labored so collaboratively over the past year, continue to work towards innovative solutions to the many challenges homelessness creates. I, and my Municipal staff, look forward to working with you and supporting you in this endeavor.*

*We all know that financial limitations and the availability of affordable housing play a prominent role in our approach to solving this issue, especially in current economic climate. I believe that the dedicated group of individuals and organizations that constitute the HLT will build upon its successes and continue to lead Anchorage in our effort to turn the corner on homelessness.*