



November 8, 2016

Dear Community Partners in White Center:

Thank you for sharing your knowledge and experience of living and working in White Center, and for helping to carry out the annual One Night Count of people who are homeless in your community. We have received inquiries from several sources, and this letter is intended to answer those questions, and provide context for conversations, decisions, and ongoing work to address the unmet need for safety and survival among people in White Center.

Across King County more and more people lack basic safety and shelter. Through the January One Night Count, we work with individuals and organizations to document people who are outside overnight. Together with information about people in shelters and transitional housing programs, this gives a “point in time” snapshot of homelessness in King County. **For the last three years, we have recorded double digit increases in the number of men, women, and children we see unsheltered in King County as a whole.** This reflects significant increases in every region (Seattle, East King County, South and Southwest King County, and North King County). Despite strong work to create housing for people who are homeless, to add overnight shelter and other vital services, and to prevent people from becoming homeless, we are not meeting the need. Last year Coalition partners and volunteers documented that at least 4,505 people were homeless outside on a single night, after area shelters were full. Altogether, 10,688 people were homeless that night.

Outside of Seattle, the highest numbers of people who are homeless and without shelter are in south King County. In 2016, volunteers counted 1,013 people outside in just three hours, in parts of the following communities: Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Renton, Skyway, SeaTac, Tukwila, and White Center. White Center is a relatively small area, yet the numbers of people we have seen in that community, in the immediately adjacent jurisdictions of southwest King County, and in four south King County cities, indicate the seriousness of this crisis (see table below). **The number of people in White Center who needed housing and shelter doubled, from 46 to 89 people, between 2014 and 2015, and then doubled again to 176 people last year.** South King County saw regional increases of over 60% in those same years.

Homelessness is clearly a crisis in our neighborhoods and across our region. As in any crisis, we should respond to keep people out of harm’s way, to ensure safety and survival, and to keep things from getting worse. Our community has a strong commitment to making things better for all who live here. We understand what works in terms of housing people who have been homeless, and we have created thousands of homes for people who are now members of our community, from Renton to Shoreline, Bellevue to Boulevard Park to Ballard. The human costs of not responding to this crisis are huge, and affect all of us.

Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness *works collaboratively to ensure safety and survival for people who are homeless, and to end the crisis of homelessness in our region.* 77 So. Washington St., Seattle, WA 98104 (206) 204.8350

I hope that this detailed information is useful. Thanks to everyone who is working hard to ensure that there are robust resources and thoughtful conversations in every community in King County, as we put into place solutions that increase safety, housing, and justice for everyone.

I would be glad to answer questions, and hear about your work.

Sincerely,



Alison Eisinger
Executive Director

About our One Night Count methods:

We use simple, consistent tools for our community assessment each year: small teams of people led by one or two trained individuals gather and walk or drive (depending on the territory to be covered) a specific mapped area between 2.00 and 5.00 a.m. This short, overnight window makes it unlikely that anyone will be counted twice. Teams cover the same territory each year.

Using a simple tally sheet, teams count people they observe, as well as vehicles and improvised or temporary structures that are being used to shelter people. We work with individuals and organizations hosting or managing organized tent cities and safe parking programs, and with staff at local hospitals, to count homeless people in those places.

Each year the Count is done consistently, and the results are comparable. Teams count real people who are homeless, or their improvised structures or vehicles. We know that we do not count everyone, and we do not send our teams everywhere. By using consistent methods we can see changes from year to year. For background and more details about the One Night Count methodology, please visit our website and read our reports.

The table below shows increases over the last three years in unsheltered homelessness in King County:

People without shelter outside during King Co. One Night Count	2014	2015	2016
White Center only	46	89	176
SouthWest KC Region ²	N/A	120	139
South KC Region ³	369	451	698
<i>South King County subtotal (SouthWest and South, including White Center)</i>	415	660	1013
Other Regions (Seattle, East and North King County, Vashon I., Metro)	2708	3112	3492
King County total	3123	3772	4505

Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness www.homelessinfo.org

Notes:

*Beginning in 2016 people who were homeless in White Center during the One Night Count were included in the totals reported for SW Region. For the purposes of this explanation, the table shows 2016 White Center totals separately from the 2016 SW Region total (which was 315).

² Southwest King County jurisdictions participated in the One Night Count for the first time in 2015. This region includes parts of Burien, Des Moines, Tukwila, SeaTac, and unincorporated King County, including Skyway and White Center

³ South King County communities participating in the One Night Count: Auburn, Federal Way, Kent, and Renton