

Planning for Self-Organized Homeless Camps: Policy, Community Relations, and Locational Process

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the policies, community relations, and locational process of self-organized homeless camps, in particular Camp Unity Eastside during their stay in Kirkland. The first chapter covers the importance of studying this topic, a brief introduction to Camp Unity Eastside, a critical stance, research questions, and a short background on self-organized and self-governed camps. The two-part literature review focuses on the history and policy surrounding homelessness in the United States, and theory and advocacy in design and planning. This includes discussions on spatial patterns, social justice, the right to the city, and radical pluralism as they relate to self-organized homeless camps. The methodology chapter describes the stakeholder interview process, site visits, meeting observations, and archival research. Precedent studies illustrate a trend of self-organized camps in the Pacific Northwest. Following is a detailed description of Camp Unity Eastside and its role for empowering campers and strengthening relationships among the camp, host organizations, and communities. Important findings include the high value of the camp being self-organized and self-governed in empowering the campers; the unique, mutually beneficial relationships among churches and the camp that enable the church members to live their mission while campers work to end the stigma of homelessness in a safe environment; and the usefulness of an established process in the city to have an open and transparent process of sanctioning and locating the camps where the campers have advocates. In conclusion are successful strategies for the camps, challenges facing them, and general thoughts for how camps and communities can work together with the help of host organizations and city departments.

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Planning for Self-Organized Homeless Camps:

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Homelessness in the U.S. has long been a societal problem that has seen an increase since the economic crash in 2008.¹ Even so, the situation at the federal level over the past 20-25 years has two major contributing factors – “a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty.”² Since the economic downturn, foreclosures have contributed to this increase.³ The demographics of the homeless population have changed since then as well; there has been an increase of many people new to homelessness, and increases in families, educated and employed people experiencing homelessness.⁴

Over the past 100 years, responses to homelessness have varied but typically include government programs for housing and food assistance, public housing, shelters run by private charities and non-profits, food banks, restrictive municipal ordinances, and the use (and abuse) of police power. Most recently we have seen the emergence of self-organized homeless camps as the numbers of “situational” homeless rise in tandem with the rise of housing costs, lack of accessible housing, and current recession. The situation remains that people are forced to live on the street, and it widely recognized that one of the main causes of homelessness for the “situational” homeless is the lack of affordable housing.⁵

1. Loftus-Farren, “Tent Cities: An Interim Solution to Homelessness and Affordable Housing Shortages in the United States,” 1042; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and The National Coalition for the Homeless, *Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*.

2. National Coalition for the Homeless, “Who Is Homeless?”

3. National Coalition for the Homeless, “How Many People Experience Homelessness?”

4. National Coalition for the Homeless, “Who Is Homeless?”

5. Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing*.

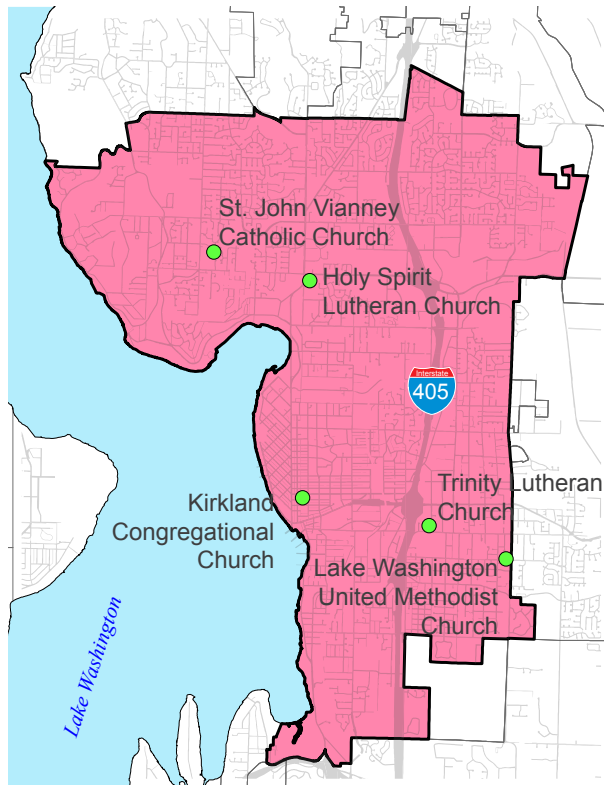


FIGURE 1. Host Churches in Kirkland.

These five host churches have either hosted Tent City 4, Camp Unity Eastside, or both. Some churches have hosted multiple times, starting back in 2005.

This change in the demographics of the homeless population has implications for the program and spatial structuring of already existing homeless encampments in the Seattle area. The City of Seattle, King County, and Washington State have enacted various measures to try to reduce homelessness through a variety of means, and have publicly stated repeatedly that it is a policy priority to provide shelter while affording dignity. However admirable these goals are, often the reality falls short due to a variety of issues, including lack of funding, NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard), and society's long-held perceptions of the homeless population as drug addicts, criminals, and mentally ill. As a result, local non-profits and religious organizations have responded to this need by helping fill the gaps in service provision and bring visibility to the problem of homelessness. Although most cities have shelters where a person can spend a night, many shelters rely on a lottery system every night due to excessive demand.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to highlight an existing trend of self-organized and self-governed homeless camps in the Seattle area – the policies that surround them, how community relations have evolved over time as the camps provide education about homelessness and interact with the host community, and the locational process of the camps – how the camps find a site and are situated on it. Most of the self-organized camps in the Seattle area are governed by Seattle Housing and Resource Effort/Women's Equality and Enhancement League (SHARE/WHEEL). Camp Unity Eastside is the only self-governed camp in the Seattle metro area, and it is this site that is the focus of this study.

Any solutions for the root causes of homelessness are outside the scope of this thesis. I chose this topic as a way to explore an innovative response – self-organized homeless camps – that attempts to mitigate the discomfort and difficulties, both physical and psychological, of being forced to live outside

the “American Dream” ideal and self-advocates for greater tolerance of differently-housed populations and better living conditions in general in our society. I think that the chances are greater for success in this area if both the top-down and bottom-up approaches are explored – policy and government level efforts must be partnered with individuals and grassroots organizations – which we see being put into practice with this case study.

CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

Although several different self-organized homeless camps are located in the Seattle metro area, this research focused on Camp Unity Eastside while it stayed in Kirkland, Washington. Camp Unity Eastside is a unique model, as it is the latest evolution of a self-organized camp that is also self-governed. Camp Unity Eastside formed in November of 2012, after splitting from Tent City 4 and its umbrella organization, SHARE/WHEEL. During my data collection for this paper, Camp Unity Eastside camped at two different sites on host church properties in Kirkland, Washington. The City of Kirkland has acquired a reputation for being the most receptive and supportive of the self-organized camps, with a responsive and flexible Planning and Community Development Department. The results of this research support Kirkland’s reputation by the overwhelmingly positive attitudes of the residents.

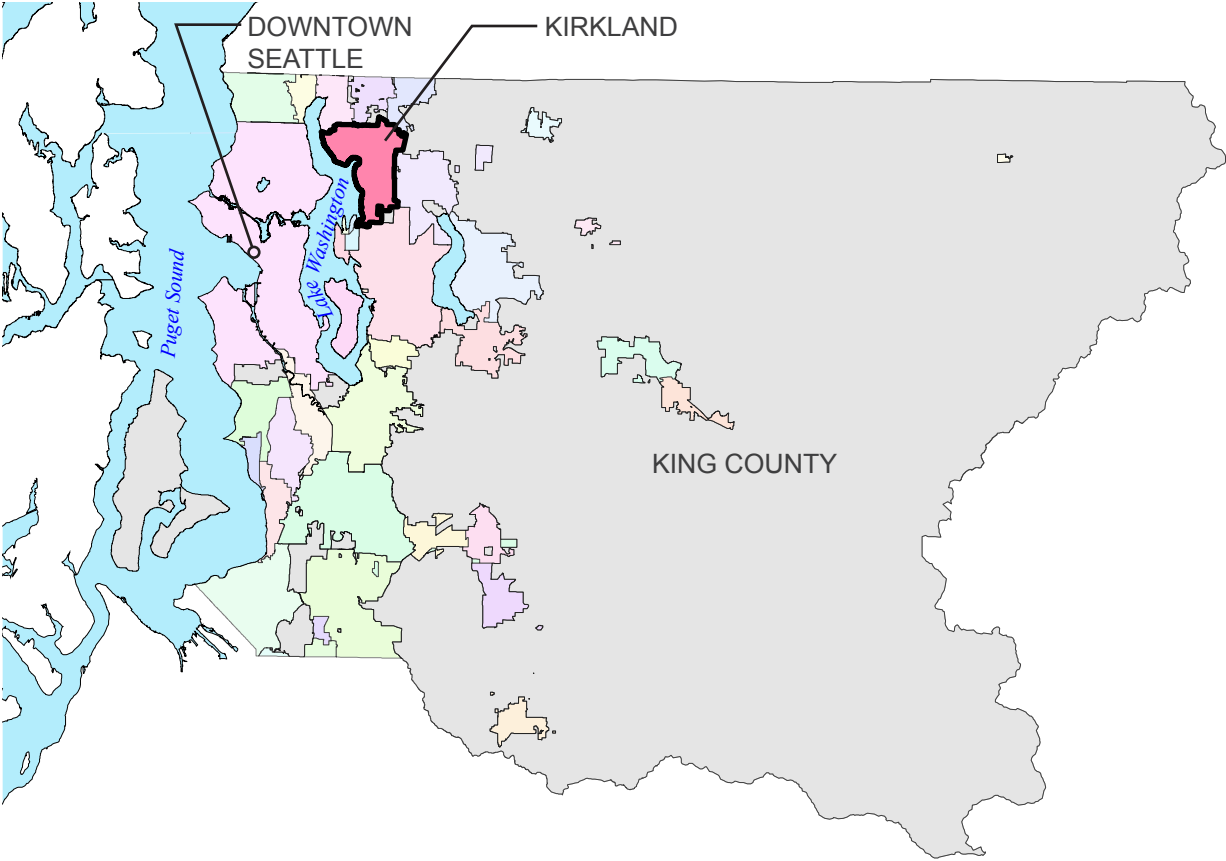


FIGURE 2. Locator Map for the City of Kirkland.

The City of Kirkland is located to the east of Downtown Seattle across Lake Washington. The group of municipalities located on the eastern edge of the lake, such as Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland, are commonly referred to as the eastside.

CRITICAL STANCE

Our country's capitalist system, privatization of once-public land and housing, and exclusionary property rights have had a great impact on the ability of disadvantaged populations to survive. I believe that all people have the right to access land, shelter, and resources whether they own property or not, or whether they live in a traditional manner or not. Through this exploration of Camp Unity Eastside, the city of Kirkland, and the various organizations involved with homeless camps, I hope to show how the people experiencing homelessness can have a place that can provide them not only with physical shelter, but with psychological shelter – a sense of belonging and security that helps them regain their dignity and empowers them to rebuild their lives. Not only is it beneficial to the camp residents, but to the neighborhood residents – raising awareness that the problem of homelessness is not just in urban areas, but that people without homes come from many different communities. The camp members may not see themselves as particularly radical or ground-breaking, but their success at integrating into a community while maintaining their identity as a camp is noteworthy.

There is no one solution to homelessness and tent cities are not seen as solving the larger root problem of homelessness. Instead, it provides a temporary stop-gap measure, primarily at the grassroots level, partially in response to lack of affordable or low-income housing. Camping in sanctioned tent cities is an action spearheaded by the homeless themselves to obtain adequate shelter and services in the short-term, and build a community of support.⁶ They leverage connections and community resources to make a home for themselves and try to improve their situation. By locating on property where others also congregate, especially organizations with a service or advocacy mission, the camps are highly visible

6. Loftus-Farren, "Tent Cities: An Interim Solution to Homelessness and Affordable Housing Shortages in the United States."

and can easily access those physical, social, and human resources.⁷ Few would argue that living in tent city conditions is an acceptable form of housing, but there are few alternatives currently present to house the homeless population. I believe planners and designers have a responsibility to promote social equity, and facilitating the camps' access to place and community falls within this realm. Discussing these issues and looking at this case study form the basis for my thesis fulfilling the requirements for dual Masters Degrees in Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research thesis examines Camp Unity Eastside and its role in empowering its campers, building mutually-beneficial relationships with hosts and volunteers, and educating the larger community about homelessness. This includes an examination of the self-governed structure of the camp, community engagement, spatial organization and appearance of the camp, and strategies for future camps. The following questions formed the foundation of this research:

1. What social purpose(s) does Camp Unity Eastside serve for its residents?
 - a. How does the self-organized and self-governed aspect of Camp Unity Eastside affect its residents?
2. What are the different ways that Camp Unity Eastside interacts formally and informally with their host organization, the city departments, and the surrounding community?
 - a. How is the surrounding neighborhood engaged in the Temporary Use Permit(TUP) process when the camp and host organization chooses a campsite, and what are their responses?
 - b. How does the physical appearance and siting of the camp influence these relationships?

7. Ibid.

- c. How does having access to church facilities affect the relationship between the camp and the host?

To address these questions, I embarked on a research project that includes examining relevant literature on homelessness and advocacy in planning and design, and conducting precedent studies of three other camps to provide context. In-depth interviews with campers of Camp Unity Eastside, host members and planners provided the main content in my main chapter on Camp Unity Eastside. Observations during site visits, and related news article and blogs about camps on the eastside also informed that chapter. The final chapter details my findings about the overwhelmingly positive current community response, how the siting of the camp can be positive or negative, and how increased physical access to the church has strengthened the relationships leading to a feeling of greater social equity and acceptance. The City of Kirkland has also provided a supportive framework and environment. Operating as a self-sustaining entity has also led Camp Unity Eastside to work more as equals with their hosts and service providers, reaching towards their mission as an empowerment camp.

BACKGROUND ON TENT CITIES IN SEATTLE

Fed up with the lack of power and choice, and wanting a say in their own fate, some individuals experiencing homelessness in Seattle banded together in the early 1990s to organize. This has led to self-organized homeless camps. Notably, the Seattle metro area has several such camps, including Nickelsville, Tent City 3, Tent City 4, and Camp Unity Eastside. A more recently emerging trend is “empowerment” camps, where in addition to the self-organized aspect of the camp there is also direct interaction with the host community that allows for different homeless and housed groups to interact in a respectful way, instead of perpetuating the division between the homeless and the housed. SHARE/WHEEL was the pioneering organization in Seattle. It was created as a non-profit organization,

establishing the self-organized camps and an assortment of indoor shelters. Founded in November of 2012, Camp Unity Eastside broke away from the SHARE/WHEEL organization and is an example of the latest development in self-organized and self-governed camps in the region.

“Self-organized” camps are those where camp residents (or campers, as they refer to themselves) take responsibility for managing their own day-to-day operations and have a voice in the decision-making process about such matters as where the camp moves next, how they want to engage with their hosts and community, and how they want to use their resources. At the same time they typically have an umbrella nonprofit organization that supports and governs the camp. “Self-governed” camps are similar, but operate independent of an umbrella organization. They often have formed their own nonprofit, and work directly with service providers and hosts as opposed to other camps with an umbrella organization, where that organization acts as an intermediary. These camps can be mobile or permanent, and frequently the residents live in tents. Some more permanent camps have small enclosed structures as well.

Although self-organized homeless camps, often called “tent cities”, have existed in the United States in various forms since the turn of the century, only in the past 15-20 years have they become sanctioned and have begun to attract attention across the country.⁸ Tent city residents live on an edge between being housed and homeless, being itinerant and settled, simultaneously visible yet hidden; they “blur the boundaries with conditions of autonomy and control, but arise out of the necessity for space.”⁹ Many camps are making an effort to be noticed, with the belief that through education, visibility, and personal

8. Loftus-Farren, “Tent Cities: An Interim Solution to Homelessness and Affordable Housing Shortages in the United States.”

9. Hailey, Camps, 399.

connections, they can raise awareness of homelessness and increase potential ways to improve conditions for people experiencing homeless, from making camps to moving into housing. Having multiple missions and engaging publicly with so many other organizations makes the camps' relations quite complex.

Intricate social relations are also played out in the spatial organization and siting of the camps. Located on the fringes of normal society, both socially and physically, the camps have a balancing act to perform. Architecture professor and author Charlie Hailey writes that “this potential hybridity of the improvised and the prescribed further complicates the dwelling space and its basic necessity with degrees of publicity, political meanings, and layers of program – activities formally programmed or informally domestic.”¹⁰

AUDIENCE

This thesis is aimed at city planners and landscape architects who deal specifically with self-organized homeless encampments; urban designers who are working on projects for private organizations that might host a tent city; and the private organizations themselves, including non-profit organizations which assist self-organized camps, and self-organized camp members. This thesis helps illuminate some of the successes and challenges faced by these groups and provides guidance for working with and for future camps. Policy implications include suggestions for how the temporary use permit is implemented, and suggestions for promoting partnerships among hosts, service providers, and camps in an effort to streamline assistance while empowering the campers.

10. Ibid.

THESIS CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

The next chapter summarizes relevant literature from the fields of landscape architecture, sociology, and planning. The chapter is presented in two parts: in part one I review the study of homelessness, and history and policy surrounding homelessness in the United States. Part two is centered on theory and advocacy in planning and design, including exploring concepts of human rights and citizen rights. I present these elements in my literature review to frame a discussion of how we, as a society, have treated people experiencing homelessness, and how those people are participating in a democratic process which is actually quite innovative.

Chapter Three covers methodology for my case study. As is typical in case studies, I relied primarily on in-depth, one-on-one interviews to gather qualitative data. Other methods include site visits as a participant-observer, attendance at an interfaith meeting on Housing the Homeless, and archival research to expand my understanding and develop the context.

Chapter Four examines three precedent studies; Dignity Village in Portland, and Tent Cities 3 and 4 in the Seattle area. With these three camps, I look at their history, stated mission and goals, physical setup and governance, camp population, anecdotal evidence of community relations within the camp and between the camp and the rest of the community, and challenges of the camp. This helps frame the case study of Camp Unity Eastside in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five contains detailed information about Camp Unity Eastside gleaned from the methods described in Chapter Three. Throughout the chapter I also refer back to Tent City 4, because that camp was a predecessor to Camp Unity Eastside and many people were members of both, even though

Tent City 4 is still extant. I look at the history of how Camp Unity Eastside came into existence and their mission. I cover demographics, the permitting process and Temporary Use Permit process, and the physical setup of the camp. This leads into a discussion of the siting and appearance of camp, and how that affects the campers, host members, and larger community. As a non-profit, Camp Unity Eastside runs itself, so I discuss its governance and organizational structure. The next section focuses on how all the previous aspects come together to influence and relationships within the camp, between the camp and the hosts, and between the camps and the larger community, including emphasizing the camp's role as an empowerment camp. Finally, I summarize some of the strengths and challenges of Camp Unity Eastside.

In Chapter Six, I conclude with a broader look at some of the unresolved issues facing the camp. This leads to some of the strategies that planners, designers, host organizations, and camps can use to facilitate balancing the needs of a self-organized/self-governed camp with the needs of other stakeholders, strengthening relationships between the camp and the stakeholders, and empowering the campers. I also discuss possible implications these strategies have for homelessness in general, future directions of research, and limitations of my thesis.

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, my goals are to highlight relevant literature that helps explain some of the causes of homelessness, and that can inform an understanding of how the case study of Camp Unity Eastside fits into a broader picture of advocacy in design and planning. The literature review also sheds light on how the camps' self-advocacy is a critical piece of residents asserting their rights and empowering themselves as a group that gains from and contributes to a larger society. I look at homelessness in the United States and the Seattle area over the past hundred years or so, focusing primarily on the second half of the last century, and introduce relevant theory within advocacy planning and design. The literature is drawn from the fields of landscape architecture, urban planning, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part One includes the study of homelessness and current data, and policy surrounding homelessness both at the federal and local level. Even though each individual has their own story of how they became homeless, it is broadly agreed upon that at the systemic level, one of the main causes of homelessness in the United States is a lack of affordable housing.¹ As access to housing is a critical part of alleviating homelessness, I will occasionally touch on housing policy as part of this thesis. More specific information related to the tent cities follows in Chapters Four and Five, with precedents studies and case study of Camp Unity Eastside, respectively.

1. Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing: Decades of Federal Housing Cutbacks, Massive Homelessness, and Policy Failures*; Rosenthal and Foscarinis, "Responses to Homelessness"; Barak, *Gimme Shelter*.

Part Two of this chapter focuses on theory on advocacy planning and design. It starts with an overview of engagement by socially progressive planners and landscape architects in housing and homelessness design issues. Next I explore the topics of spatial patterns as indicator and influencer on society, social justice/urban justice and the politics of difference, the right to the city, and radical pluralism. These subjects are relevant to self-organized homeless camps because the camps are highly visible in the public realm – not only are they physically present, they are actively engaging with the community and asserting their rights.

PART ONE: HOMELESSNESS HISTORY AND POLICY

THE STUDY OF HOMELESSNESS

Frequently in the public's eyes, homeless people are objectified as "other" and are not seen as capable of making good decisions for themselves – or have made poor personal choices, such as substance abuse, and deserve to be homeless.² Even going back to the 1930s, the homeless have often been characterized as being undeserving of help,³ and the tendency to blame the individual for their own homelessness is indicative of society ignoring larger factors at play in homelessness.⁴ Anthony Marcus, a cultural anthropologist, notes that homeless people are "social barometers"; because they are one of the most vulnerable populations in the country, changes in our social values and laws are reflected in our treatment of homeless people.⁵ They are objectified and vilified. This misrepresentation affects the types of services available to them.⁶ In Chapters Five and Six, I discuss this as a common theme I

2. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own: Women's Stories of Homelessness, Life, Death, and Resistance*.

3. Mitchell, "The Historical Context for Housing Policy."

4. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*.

5. *Ibid.*, 5.

6. *Ibid.*

heard from camp members, recognizing and protesting against the prejudices they face. They recognize how the rest of society relegates them to non-personhood simply because they do not have a home – if the homeless aren't people, why do they deserve services? As the research in this study will show, homelessness is a multifaceted problem, and factors beyond one's control often dictate circumstances.

Over the past 30 years, public perception has begun to shift around homelessness as more research began to dismantle long-held preconceptions of who the homeless are, pointing to new strategies and solutions.⁷ Contributing to and accelerating this shift, “the last decade brought key developments in research, policy, housing strategies, and service delivery that were shown through data to reduce homelessness.”⁸ Until recently, public policy was based on stereotypes that the homeless are mentally ill, suffer addiction to drugs or alcohol and were intentionally choosing to be lazy and homeless.⁹ However, key research, conducted by Dennis Culhane of the University of Pennsylvania, sheds light on the composition of the homeless population in the United States.¹⁰ His work suggests that there are three basic categories that the homeless in the United States fall into: the transitional homeless (80 percent), who use homeless shelters for a short, single time; the episodically homeless (10 percent), who usually suffer addiction and/or mental illness and frequently use other public services; and the chronically homeless (10 percent), who have more severe mental illness or substance abuse problems, spend virtually every night in a shelter, account for 50 percent of homeless resource use, and are highly visible and often mistaken as the largest group of homeless.¹¹

7. Hombs, *Modern Homelessness: A Reference Handbook*.

8. *Ibid.*, 2.

9. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

10. Culhane and Kuhn, “Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data.”

11. *Ibid.*, 6.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness' latest report, "The State of Homelessness in America 2013," provides a look at national trends over the past two years, using data collected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from local jurisdictions. HUD uses a yearly point-in-time count of sheltered homeless and a point in time count every other year of unsheltered homeless as the basis for their statistics.¹² Their findings indicate that homelessness has decreased slightly at the national level, from 636,017 individuals in 2011 to 633,782 in 2012 (a decrease of 0.4 percent), which gives a national average of 20 homeless people per 10,000 people.¹³ More than half of the homeless population is made up of individual adults, with veterans making up almost ten percent of the total homeless population, decreasing seven percent from 2011 to 2012.¹⁴ Similarly, the number of chronically homeless decreased around seven percent, but family homelessness increased by 1.4 percent.¹⁵ As of January 2012, there were 700,000 beds nationally for people in homelessness. Of the homeless receiving housing or shelter beds, 39 percent receive permanent supportive housing beds, but the users of these are not counted towards the homeless population in the one-night count. That accounts for the fact that even though there are fewer people counted as homeless than the number of beds, there are still people not receiving support. The remaining assistance is in emergency shelter beds (33 percent) and transitional housing beds (28 percent), which is 427,000 beds, leaving more than 200,000 people without any shelter assistance.¹⁶ The authors of the National Alliance report acknowledge that there are issues with point-in-time count methodology, including relying on volunteers to visually identify people on the street as homeless. They also use the definition of homeless as set out by HUD (see Appendix A for definition).

12. Homelessness Research Institute, *The State of Homelessness in America 2013*.

13. *Ibid.*, 7.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, 8.

At the state level, we see a slightly different story than the national one. Even though there was a decrease nationally in overall homelessness, Washington State saw a total increase of 0.3 percent, which consists of unsheltered, adult individuals (increase of 3.7 percent).¹⁷ The other categories; chronic, veterans, family households, persons in families, and sheltered, all decreased.¹⁸

There are some trends in housing and economic factors contributing to homelessness in Washington State that are highlighted in the same report. Housing costs are rising but there is not a corresponding increase in income, shown by an increase of 4 percent of households that experience housing costs as a severe burden. Rental vacancy rate has dropped one percent, due to increased competition for affordable housing, which, ironically, also tends to drive up rental costs. The percentage of people experiencing poverty has increased seven percent, meaning that they have less money to devote to rent or mortgage payments. As a result of rising housing costs and losing work in the 2008 economic crisis, many people are losing their homes and are living in other people's houses as couch-surfers (increase of 26 percent), and more people are accessing safety net benefits (increase of ten percent).¹⁹

Gregg Barak, professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Eastern Michigan University, describes in his book, *Gimme Shelter*, three debates that have defined the response to the homelessness problem from the 1980s to the early 90s, the first two of which are relevant to this thesis. The first debate revolves around how many people are homeless and if there is adequate assistance. On the one hand, some believe that there are a set number of homeless and simply providing emergency beds and

17. *Ibid.*, 33.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Homelessness Research Institute, *The State of Homelessness in America 2013*.

some assistance for mental illness is sufficient, and other services merely encourage the homeless to remain homeless.²⁰ On the other hand, there are those who believe that homelessness is a problem that continues to grow, and favor more government involvement. These “advocates for the homeless, in fact, maintain that the welfare state under the custom of social contract is obligated to provide the homeless with the basic resources necessary for human survival... including affordable housing.”²¹ The government’s creation of the Federal Interagency Task Force on Food and Shelter in 1983 to provide temporary, emergency relief like clothes, cots and blankets,²² reinforced the first viewpoint that only minimal assistance with basic necessities was an appropriate response to homelessness, and that further aid, such as affordable housing, was unnecessary.

The second debate is centered on the ideas of “communal responsibility, volunteerism, and existentialism”.²³ One viewpoint is that there is no obligation to help the poor or homeless of one’s community; the demand of “so-called human rights” is nothing more than begging.²⁴ “This position is grounded in the sanctity of private property, and concomitant rights of one to deny admission to anybody and to enhance one’s property value. Adherents of the exclusive property argument go so far as to call for the reinstatement of vagrancy statutes as a means of protecting public property and resisting threats to peace, order, or public safety”²⁵ which we see manifested in policies and regulations in the 90s. This is discussed further in a subsequent section on policy.

Another viewpoint in the debate calls for the respect of the American spirit, and the freedom to live as

20. Barak, *Gimme Shelter*.

21. *Ibid.*, 12

22. Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing*.

23. Barak, *Gimme Shelter*, 13.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

one desires.²⁶ This speaks to the individualism that characterizes part of the American ideal and the idea of personal rights and freedom – a person should not be judged on whether they have a home or live in a tent. However, that does not necessarily acknowledge that not everyone chooses their living situation. Yet another position recognizes that there are people who are homeless involuntarily and there are people who choose to live an alternative lifestyle – the former deserves aid as a moral obligation, and the “freely marginal should be allowed a place to exist.”²⁷ This third viewpoint is most in line with mine; however I believe that there needs to be systematic restructuring of policies and programs in order to adequately aid the homeless, and the people who choose or are forced to live out of the mainstream not only should be allowed a place to exist, but be free of harassment.

Within the case study of Camp Unity Eastside in Chapters Five and Six, I discuss how important the camps are in educating the host communities and neighborhood about homelessness. The campers put a face on homelessness, and educate the neighbors about how the camp runs and about the causes of homelessness. The educational aspect of the camps is also a social commentary about larger systemic housing and poverty issues, as well as the marginalization that people experiencing homelessness face. While this thesis does not go into detail about the causes, there has been a great deal written about it.²⁸ Homelessness in Seattle in particular has been the focus of many theses and dissertations at the University of Washington.²⁹ Multiple organizations have formed at the national, regional, and local level to advocate for housing and homelessness aid, and provide data surrounding these issues.

26. Ibid., 14.

27. Ibid.

28. Barak, *Gimme Shelter*.

29. De Rosa, “Survival in the Landscape: A Study of Homeless Encampments in Seattle, Washington”; Dooling, “The Production of Bare Life and Spaces of Possibilities for Alleviating Homelessness in Seattle, Washington”; Quaintance, “People Without Place: The Response of Capitol Hill Churches to the Homeless”; Sparks, “As Much Like Home as Possible: Geographies of Homelessness and Citizenship in Seattle’s Tent City 3”; Toft, “Social Movement Communication: Language, Technology, and Social Organization in an Urban Homeless Movement”; Demirel, “‘We’re Not Activists’: Grassroots Organizing Among Seattle’s Homeless Population.”

POLICY

Over the past 100 years or so, policy at the federal, state, and local levels regarding poor and homeless people has undergone many changes, ranging from being very supportive of disadvantaged people, to ignoring them, to penalizing them. Some policies and programs were relatively successful, but some were later viewed as misguided and even detrimental.

Homelessness in the U.S. reached unprecedented levels in the 1930s during the Great Depression – homeless settlements, commonly called Hooverilles,³⁰ emerged as many people lost their employment and homes. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the New Deal as a comprehensive relief effort to put Americans back to work and established multiple government agencies that had long-reaching effects. Landmark housing legislation included the National Housing Act of 1934, which created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Housing Act of 1937. Catherine Bauer, an activist for public housing, was instrumental in these pieces of legislation.³¹ The goals of these Acts were to make housing affordable, although they were not particularly well received, and later efforts were focused on a physical urban renewal as project housing, as opposed to making housing affordable.³²

The 50s also realized changes at the federal policy level. The Federal Housing Act of 1949 was a landmark for housing rights, allocating a large amount of the federal budget to slum clearance and public housing. President Harry S. Truman's statement upon signing the 1949 Act contained the explicit

30. The original Hooverville was in Seattle, and was named Hooverville as a political critique of President Hoover and the Republican Party's role in the economic woes of the Great Depression. Gregory, "Hooverilles and Homelessness."

31. Way, *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century*, 253.

32. Ibid.

national objective of a “decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family”³³ which was unprecedented in policy.

In the 60s, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Great Society programs, aimed at eliminating poverty and racism, which were similar in scale to the New Deal programs but were intended to maintain the economic high of coming off World War II.³⁴ This included the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, which was designed to assist low-income families with rent and housing costs.³⁵ A large part of the Great Society was the “War on Poverty” which was very controversial and included urban renewal programs that were highly criticized for displacing low income people who were predominantly African-American, and for building substandard housing units and destroying neighborhoods.³⁶ As Jane Jacobs relates, “the devices of large-scale clearance, slum shifting, slum immuring, project planning income sorting, use sorting have become so fixed as planning images and as collections of tactics that city rebuilders, and most ordinary citizens too, face a blank when they try to think of city rebuilding without these means.”³⁷ This led to a massive distrust of the planning profession and the federal government in the 1960s and 70s, sparking the strong grassroots surge in participatory and advocacy planning.

Beginning in the late 70s, there was a marked break from the Great Society programs, and we see the homeless and poor being concentrated in the cities. As federal social services, including mental health facilities, eroded and became more unreliable, especially for racial and ethnic minorities, people gravitated towards the cities where the remaining state, city, and non-profit resources were

33. The American Presidency Project, “Harry S. Truman: Statement by the President Upon Signing the Housing Act of 1949.”

34. Wikipedia, “Great Society.”

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 322.

concentrated.³⁸ Between 1978 and 1983 the HUD budget dropped from \$83 to \$18 billion in constant dollars, and the number of housing units built per year also dropped precipitously with the severe cuts.³⁹

Even though homelessness became a mainstream, widely recognized issue as a problem of systemic, structural problems in society in the 80s, victim-blaming became the modus operandi of the government response. In the Reagan administration, homelessness was reclassified as a temporary problem, thereby authorizing the use of FEMA funds for temporary shelters.⁴⁰ As the income gap widened between the middle class and the poor with Reagan's economic policies, the federal response influenced the general public's attitudes as well, marking the poor, homeless, and mentally ill as non-citizens who were undeserving of substantive, long-term aid.

The 80s marked a drastic reduction in services, and further vilified the homeless. With the Reagan Administration draining the funding for social services down to the state and local level in an effort to bolster the middle class, utilizing the "trickle-down" economic theory as part of neoliberalism, "the new poor are exposed to more grudging, bureaucratic forms of welfare that many would regard as denying them the dignity and status essential to their social citizenship."⁴¹ Many of the "new homeless" created in the Reagan years, from deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, deregulation, defunding of programs, and "urban renewal", were the working poor, elderly, and disabled homeless, which put a growing population in shelters and on sidewalks across the nation.⁴² This deregulation and cutting of social programs of the 80s is also reflected in the number of landscape architects employed by HUD to work on housing and

38. Lawson and Wilson, "Poverty, Social Rights, and the Quality of Citizenship."

39. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*, 10.

40. Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing*.

41. Lawson and Wilson, "Poverty, Social Rights, and the Quality of Citizenship," 151.

42. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*; Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing*.

urban renewal programs, which dropped from around 70 to four from 1979 to 1989.⁴³

Partnered with the drop in HUD funding and lack of affordable and public housing, homelessness ballooned in the early 80s, with many U.S. cities seeing a three- or four-fold increase in the number of homeless, and continued to grow until recently.⁴⁴ Continuing in the 1990s, with a renewed interest in downtown revitalization, mixed uses, and enhancing visual appeal, many municipalities took on a more punishing role toward the homeless, establishing as criminal sleeping in public and other behaviors, in effect sweeping the homeless to the hidden fringes.⁴⁵ There were multiple currents of activity during the 90s, some supportive of homeless rights and efforts to get people into housing, while other efforts were to privatize land and establish punitive measures for so-called “homeless behavior” such as loitering.⁴⁶ These conflicting messages from the government reflect the conflicting attitudes exhibited by society – it may be the civic, moral, and religious duty to take care of the poor, as long as it does not affect the financial interests of the middle- and upper-class nor happen in their neighborhoods or where they can see it. “For all the public sympathy ostensibly directed toward ‘the new homeless,’ city governments have responded to the current economic crisis by enacting more statutes aimed at criminalizing poor and homeless people and excluding them from public spaces”⁴⁷ without increasing the McKinney-Vento Act funding for homeless assistance – it stayed at or less than \$1.4 billion since its inception in 1987 throughout the 90s.

43. Schauman, *The State of Federal Design LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE*.

44. Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing*.

45. Rosenthal and Foscarinis, “Responses to Homelessness,” 320.

46. The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and The National Coalition for the Homeless, *Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*.

47. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*, 8.

Over the past 30 years, and especially in the past five years, the “new homeless” are increasingly working- and middle-class people and families who face foreclosure. The introduction of the “new homeless” set up a trend of distinguishing who deserves help versus those who do not, essentially discounting people as people.⁴⁸ “These narratives implicitly, if not explicitly, construct ‘the new homeless’ in opposition to the ‘other,’ older less worthy – if not criminal – class of ‘homeless people.’”⁴⁹ Don Mitchell, geography professor at Syracuse University, states that “instead of working towards a more just housing and shelter system in the United States, the official line is more geared toward demonizing homeless people – making homeless people seem somehow less than human, endowed with fewer rights than those of us who live in houses.”⁵⁰ He continues, writing that “American policy makers are continually seeking out new ways to make sure homeless people have no right to the city.”⁵¹

The view that policy makers are making an effort to create a hostile approach is supported by statistics collected in the report “Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities” on 235 cities in the United States from 2006 to 2009 that show an increase in punitive ordinances, including: 33 percent of the 235 surveyed cities prohibit “camping” in particular public places in the city and 17 percent have citywide prohibitions on “camping”; 30 percent prohibit sitting/lying in certain public places; 47 percent prohibit loitering in particular public areas and 19 percent prohibit loitering citywide.⁵² These types of ordinances have only increased in the years since the first report was written in 2006. By 2009, the updated “Homes Not Handcuffs” report noted there had been a seven percent increase in laws prohibiting “camping” in public places. At the local level, Seattle enacted ordinances in 1993 prohibiting

48. Barak, *Gimme Shelter*, 7.

49. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*, 8.

50. Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, 196.

51. *Ibid.*, 199.

52. *Homes Not Handcuffs*.

homeless behaviors, such as sitting on the sidewalk, to foster a more upscale downtown and began stricter enforcement, leading to some of the well-publicized conflicts between the homeless and police.⁵³

The Puget Sound Region has been fairly active in making efforts to reduce homelessness and provide services. In 2001, Seattle City's Initiative Measure 71 was passed stating that, "in the interest of preventing human suffering and reducing the costs of providing medical care and public safety, and in recognition of the right of all persons to overnight shelter" to provide beds and services to the homeless, and goes on to define adequate shelter as "that which to a reasonable degree maintains, protects, and supports human health, is accessible, safe, and sanitary, and has an atmosphere of reasonable dignity." In 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed the Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act (ESSHB 2163) as part of the McKinney-Vento Act, which instructed municipal governments to develop a ten-year plan "which shall be aimed at eliminating homelessness, with a minimum goal of fifty percent by July 1, 2015" and tasked the State with developing a complementary ten-year plan. Even though this plan has been criticized for its lack of depth of awareness and unrealistic goals, at least it shows that the State and local governments are making serious efforts to address the problem.

The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County was initiated in 2005, using the goal of "housing first" as the primary strategy for ending homelessness, which emphasizes "permanent housing alternatives and supportive services."⁵⁴ This plan emphasizes reducing the visibly homeless, who are only a small fraction of the homeless population, and typically need a host of services other than just housing assistance. The plan also mentions providing services as a preventative measure, as well as

53. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*.

54. Committee to End Homelessness King County, *A Roof Over Every Bed in King County: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness*, i.

providing assistance with income, medical needs, mental health and substance abuse programs, work training, and housing subsidies.⁵⁵ This would require identifying at-risk households, which is no small undertaking. The majority of homeless who would benefit from permanent housing are “hidden;” they are already in shelters, camps, or bunking with friends. So, there seems to be somewhat of a dissonance between the visible homeless population whom the plan intends to help and the proposed actions. Yet, in my opinion, their goal to prevent homelessness by keeping people in housing in the first place could be a very effective strategy.

However, the overt focus on the visibly homeless was in reaction to the need for funding. The Ten Year Plan was enacted as a way to get federal money – the McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 provides funding for those who fall under their definition of “chronically homeless,” which has resulted in holding people on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers.⁵⁶ So, ironically enough households must to be in a certain amount of need in order for the state to get the funding to help them. Mitchell explores this idea, saying “one of the greatest impediments to freedom, to a just social life...is the state itself... On the other hand, the (liberal) state has proved itself – precisely through the institutionalization of rights – to be a key protector of the weak.”⁵⁷ The Seattle area exemplifies this concept: from the vast range of both governmental and organizational responses to homelessness, from the police beatings of homeless people downtown, to the many non-profits that provide assistance, to the religious groups that open their doors to homeless encampments.

55. *Ibid.*, 5.

56. Hellegers, *No Room of Her Own*, 10.

57. Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, 25.

PART TWO: THEORY AND ADVOCACY IN DESIGN AND PLANNING

Advocacy in planning and design is part of social justice. Planners and designers can influence our society by treating all people and groups equitably, and pushing for equitable outcomes. One of the revolutionary aspects of advocacy is pluralism; recognizing and giving equal priority to a multiplicity of groups of people, not just the group in power. Paul Davidhoff wrote a famous essay in 1965 introducing pluralism and advocacy planning in which he “called on planners to work for the benefit of disadvantaged groups...”⁵⁸ Fainstein says, “justice can be seen as the consensual outcome of deliberation under hypothetical ideal conditions,” but since nothing is ideal, “the concept of truthful communication is an insufficient guide to producing justice in actual policy making, but it does support a higher order argument for employing justice, however defined, as an evaluative criterion.”⁵⁹ She emphasizes that one must differentiate between the process being just, and the outcome being just.

ADVOCACY IN PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Professionally, some landscape architects over the years have espoused a social agenda along with their design principles; notably in the 60s and 70s were Richard Haag with Victor Steinbrueck Park, M. Paul Friedberg’s projects in urban ghettos, and Karl Linn’s work in inner-city neighborhoods, to name a few. Catherine Bauer, who advocated for housing for the poor, had a large impact on housing policy at the federal level as a “houser” – someone committed to raising the quality of urban life through improving availability of and access to shelter for low-income families.⁶⁰

58. Fainstein, *The Just City*, 27.

59. *Ibid.*, 14.

60. Peter Oberlander and Newbrun, *Houser*.

Planning was not a clearly defined profession at the beginning of its 20th century roots.⁶¹ Some of the conflicting goals and motivations have historically been along two lines relevant to this thesis – one root is sympathetic and inclusive to the plight of low-income people; its proponents were concerned with public health, safety and welfare and social reform when the living conditions of workers in industrialized cities became so abysmal.⁶² Others were antipathetic and exclusive to low-income people and attempted to recreate new societies away from the dirt of the older city – ostensibly for health reasons as well as aesthetics, but the undertones were classist and racist. Both endeavors were spatial and physical, and policy-oriented.⁶³ As planning established as a profession, in the middle of the century it moved away from a political role to more of a managerial one, concerned more with regulation of land use and administrative work.⁶⁴

While planning has always had multifold motivations and manifestations, various trends have emerged over the past century that have significantly impacted a progressive social agenda. Planners such as Robert Moses have been both lauded and reviled – he accomplished a great deal of work towards revitalization in New York City, but used controversial techniques such as slum-clearing, which destroyed much low-cost housing and destroyed vulnerable communities that historically have not had the social capital to halt the destruction, further disempowering them. As Davidhoff writes in 1965:

The profession's experience with renewal over the past decade has shown the high costs of exclusive concern with physical conditions. It has been found that the allocation of funds for removal of physical blight may not necessarily improve the overall physical condition of a community and may engender such harsh social repercussions as to severely damage both social and economic institutions.⁶⁵

61. Perry, "Making Space: Planning as a Mode of Thought."

62. Fainstein, *The Just City*, 77.

63. Perry, "Making Space: Planning as a Mode of Thought."

64. Ibid.

65. Davidhoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," 219.

On the other hand, people like Jane Jacobs, a journalist and activist, advocated for retaining a mix of old and new buildings, of low-cost housing mixed with higher-cost housing in order to retain and strengthen the social fabric of neighborhoods. Some of her main theses were that the production of heterogeneous space leads to strong social fabric and diversity leads to overall strength.⁶⁶

Through the first half of the century, rational planning emerged as the dominant mode of planning, focusing on spatial ordering and creating measurable, “scientifically determined” objectives and plans that were supported by data, intended to insulate the planner and elected officials from criticism of personal bias.⁶⁷ In the 60s, critical thought and advocacy planning reemerged in the fields of both landscape architecture and planning, critiquing not just the current state of affairs but their professional direction and application.⁶⁸ All planners could and should express their views and attempt to educate their client, but planners, including advocacy planners, were inherently limited by the obligation to the client or city.⁶⁹ Conflicting views and desires from different stakeholders could push public agencies to incorporate different solutions, but un- or underrepresented groups often are left out of the planning process – this is where the advocacy planner could have a greater role in the planning process.⁷⁰ As of the mid-60s, “much work along the lines of advocacy planning has already taken place, but little of it by professional planners. Mostly the work has been conducted by trained community organizers or by student groups.”⁷¹ Now, many city planning departments are much more responsive to citizen concerns. In the case study of Camp Unity Eastside, I discuss the camp’s interactions with city planners, and how planners have acted as advocates for the camp while balancing the needs and desires of their cities.

66. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

67. Healey, “The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory.”

68. Perry, “Making Space: Planning as a Mode of Thought.”

69. Davidhoff, “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning.”

70. *Ibid.*, 215.

71. *Ibid.*

The 50s and 60s saw a resurgence of interest in the public good and social equity across the board, in addition to the developing interest in ecological processes as major elements of landscape architecture. Grady Clay was an influential journalist in architecture and landscape architecture who was interested in forming alliances with the associated professions of planning and architecture, and gave print space to activists and thinkers.⁷² His contribution to the field with regards to seeking progressive designers and planners and publishing articles about advocacy design and planning was significant.

One of the significant articles in *Landscape Architecture*, published in 1950, was written by Hideo Sasaki about education in landscape architecture. He emphasized the importance of “questioning and exploration of new ideas – and the process of thinking...Students needed new conceptual tools ‘to forge new knowledge to meet existing and new situations and to contribute toward social progress in their professional life.’”⁷³ Later, in 1955, Sasaki wrote another important essay in which he stated that the social and economic aspects are inextricably linked to the aesthetic and cultural values,⁷⁴ indicating the growing awareness of design as a force that can shape culture, and vice versa.

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) lagged behind the times, continuing to recognize mostly “plazas and playgrounds, shopping centers and sub-divisions, corporate villas and college campuses” in spite of the forward-thinking landscape architects who “proposed new criteria for design and grew wary of ‘elitism’” and “a growing awareness that women and people from racial and ethnic minorities should be brought into the processes of planning and design.”⁷⁵ Theodore Osmundson, ASLA president from 1967 to 1969, recognized the lack of dialogue in the landscape architecture professional

72. Simo, *One Hundred Years of Landscape Architecture*, 138.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.*, 141.

75. *Ibid.*, 161.

realm dealing with the larger forces at work in the country, and that the profession was stagnating. In his

final report he said:

In a country racked by protest and riot, racial inequality, inflation, burdensome taxes for military rather than needed domestic programs, a debilitating and futile foreign war, urban congestion, and an economic system characterized by almost unlimited privilege to use privately owned land and resources for profit regardless of its degradation and ultimate waste, this profession has been silent, irrelevant, and unnoticed.⁷⁶

Yet there were landscape architects who were taking notice and embraced the progressive agendas;

some of whom are Karl Linn and M. Paul Friedberg.

In 1968, at an ASLA annual meeting in Niagara Falls on changes in the environment, Karl Linn introduced his own work, which was in line with much of the revolutionary advocacy work in contemporary planning. He “laid out his framework for much of the progressive, socially-focused work of landscape architects that followed. He was among the first to use (if not to introduce) the notions of ‘advocacy planning’ and ‘advocacy design’” to the landscape architects.⁷⁷ His projects in major cities, including Baltimore, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and New York, engaged people who were not normally included in the design process, including teenagers and African-Americans.⁷⁸ He called out the profession for not engaging social and environmental forces and called for a return to an older model – “barn-raising – to set up the framework of community.”⁷⁹ But Linn was one of the few who pursued this line of work, and “this sort of grassroots effort would not be submitted for an ASLA award for many years to come.”⁸⁰

76. Ibid., 164.

77. Ibid., 167.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

M. Paul Friedberg was another seminal landscape architect during the 60s. His watershed project was the Jacob Riis Housing and Riis Plaza in New York City, built in 1965.⁸¹ This public housing project was widely publicized and brought the element of play into an age continuum instead of being segregated into different ages, contributing to the holistic vision he had for urban life and public housing.⁸² Predominantly in the academic world as opposed to the professional world, social responsibility was recognized as one of the three major charges for landscape architects to engage by 1970. The ASLA awards began to catch up and recognize the planning and social space designs towards the end of the 70s.⁸³

Through the decades, the role of planners and landscape architects has had multiple manifestations, ranging from advocacy to exclusion. Even though there will always be a struggle for power, I think that the imbalance can be somewhat redressed through advocacy efforts. It starts with institutions adopting certain values that can become cultural values.⁸⁴ This is speaking beyond just the needs of the homeless; this is about creating a better city for everyone. While the enormous complexity and local nuances of homelessness is not solvable by urban planners and landscape architects – it would take a concerted effort of our entire society – I do think that they can and should play a crucial role as advocates of human rights in our built environment.

81. The Cultural Landscape Foundation, “Biography of M. Paul Friedberg.”

82. Ibid.

83. Simo, *One Hundred Years of Landscape Architecture*, 169.

84. Sandercock, *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*.

SPATIAL PATTERNS AS INDICATOR AND INFLUENCER ON SOCIETY

American society places a great deal of importance on the idea of private property and the exclusion of others from that property. The larger your piece of land, the more power you hold, and vice versa. Those with no land have limited power – those with no power have no land. The case study of Camp Unity Eastside is important because it shows how the camp has gained social status even though it is sharing land owned by religious organizations. The visible presence of the camp in relatively affluent communities is a bold statement by the camps and the host organizations; sharing their space is publicly recognizing the campers as valuable members of society.

Since the late 1960s, Lefebvre and other theorists who gained prominence in the 80s, such as David Harvey and Edward Soja, have explored at length the dialectics between space and society, and the role that time and process play in producing spaces and places. Soja calls this the socio-spatial dialectic; “the spatiality of whatever subject you are looking at is viewed as shaping social relations and societal development just as much as social processes configure and give meaning to the human geographies spatialities in which we live.”⁸⁵ Space and society are constantly influencing and building off each other, and the people in power are the ones who control space.⁸⁶ Therefore, there are always inequities in spatial distribution of power and money, and those inequities have been exacerbated by the capitalist policies mentioned in part I of this chapter, further intensifying the differences.⁸⁷ Space is both “a social and political product,”⁸⁸ which can lead to further exclusion and disempowerment of the poor and powerless. Mitchell emphasizes “how important an appreciation for power must be when considering how public spaces are to be ordered and policed: we must always be aware of who benefits from social

85. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 4.

86. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*.

87. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*; Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*.

88. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, 183.

order and consensus and who doesn't, whose interests are served and whose are not."⁸⁹ Advocacy planners and designers must make a conscious effort in policy, planning and design to mitigate those inequities.

Harvey calls this a theory of uneven geographical developments, which has two components; the production of spatial scales (nested hierarchy of spaces), and both historical and current political-economic and socio-ecological processes.⁹⁰ Social inequities produced by uneven spatial development can be relatively harmless, but when rooted in long-held prejudices based on race, class, and gender, the spatial inequity becomes oppressive and detrimental to the members of the victimized group.⁹¹ Low-income populations are particularly victimized by spatial inequities, because they are tied to the little they have and have very little mobility; and "it is only through active appropriation that control over space is assured."⁹² Lefebvre identifies space as "the ultimate locus and medium of struggle" – the essence of political issue.⁹³ The movement and attachment to place that the case study in this work, Camp Unity Eastside, displays as both rebelling against this victimhood and the strong desire to be an active part of the community, and doing so in an overtly political way, even if they do not see themselves that way.

Soja also elucidates the theme of geographical inequalities, noting the confluence of the legal, historical, and spatial to further the separation – "Hidden behind the florid materiality of gated communities and privatopias is a more intricate web of spatial injustice deeply rooted in the naturalized sanctification of property rights and privileges."⁹⁴ Indeed, one of the fundamental aspects of private property rights is the

89. Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, 219.

90. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*.

91. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 73.

92. Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 265–266.

93. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 183.

94. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 44.

right to exclude others and “unwanted elements”, which Harvey says is indicative of not only successful control of one’s property, but of other people.⁹⁵ The fact that our country ties voting rights into a physical address also stifles the voice of those without homes. Camp Unity Eastside, its host organizations, and nonprofits are all working to empower the people experiencing homelessness. Camp Unity Eastside takes on responsibilities with their hosts to help maintain and protect their shared space as a safe space, and some of those connections last after the camp has moved on.

SOCIAL JUSTICE/URBAN JUSTICE AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Social justice is a critical element of empowering people in homelessness. Social justice within the context of homelessness is about providing opportunities to access housing, mental health services, child care, job training, medical care, and the like; and having professionals, including planners, work as advocates for them. Susan Fainstein says the principal elements of urban justice are “equity, diversity, and democracy” that form “the moral basis of planning and policy.”⁹⁶ Iris Marion Young agrees, stating “social justice entails democracy.”⁹⁷ Young clarifies that equality refers to “the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society’s major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices,”⁹⁸ which I believe is the basis for a democratic society. She “argued forcefully for the need to contextualize justice in more concrete geographical, historical, and institutional terms” and focus on the “structural forces that generate inequalities and injustice” saying, “social justice... requires not the melting away of differences, but institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression.”⁹⁹

95. Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 266.

96. Fainstein, *The Just City*, 63.

97. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 191.

98. *Ibid.*, 173.

99. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 78.

Diversity refers to the physical environment and the social composition in space of groups of people, regarding race, class, sexual orientation and so on.¹⁰⁰ Fainstein alludes to the concept of diversity, expanding beyond what she terms “local color appealing to Jane Jacobs and creative-class cosmopolitans” to a more proactive stance, where diversity is “the inclusion of all city users within the space of the city, regardless of their cultural differences.”¹⁰¹ The economic, political, and social survival of cities into the future depends on including the under-represented citizens and the diversity within populations. Sandercock argues for social inclusion, not merely the tolerance of “other” but respect for and recognition of difference.¹⁰² Harvey goes on to say, in later writings, that “the problem is then to find ways to broaden and amplify the scope of human rights in ways that are as sympathetic as possible to the right to be different or the ‘right to the production of space.’”¹⁰³

Even within different social contexts, there should be universal truths about social justice espoused by our society and embodied in our policy, local government, and spatial practices. In furtherance of equity in social justice, Fainstein is a strong proponent for low-income accessible housing and an adequate supply of housing. She makes the point that “planners should take an active role in deliberative settings in pressing for egalitarian solutions and blocking ones that disproportionately benefit the already well-off,”¹⁰⁴ and can do so by influencing decision makers with what type of information they present, and how it is presented.¹⁰⁵ Planners and landscape architects, as professionals and as citizens, have the opportunity and responsibility to contest policies and designs that seek to stifle others, exclude certain groups, or homogenize our city and our public spaces, as well as promote inclusive designs and plans.

100. Fainstein, *The Just City*, 67.

101. *Ibid.*, 70.

102. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*; Sandercock, *Cosmopolis II*.

103. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 86.

104. *Ibid.*, 173.

105. *Ibid.*, 180.

THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

The concept of the “right to the city” is an accurate description of what Camp Unity Eastside is fighting for. Lefebvre envisioned the right to the city as a right to a future city, one that we build as an equitable place; economically, socially, and spatially, because these things are intertwined and interrelated.¹⁰⁶

Lefebvre’s right to the city was not just a plea for basic existential human needs, but the right to demand more – a demand for the ability and opportunity to take advantage of everything the city has to offer to all citizens.¹⁰⁷ The right to the city is primarily concerned with enabling the people who do not have power, those who are underprivileged, poor, excluded, and oppressed to have influence over their own lives and participation in society.¹⁰⁸ Purcell sums up the concept of the future city; “the right to the city cannot be a fully formed agenda, it can only be an initiator, a catalyst, for a process of political construction.”¹⁰⁹ David Harvey also cautions that to think of the right to the city only as a physical endeavor is an illusion, because it is necessarily political, social, and revolutionary, including “homeless people organizing for their right to housing and basic services.”¹¹⁰ The potential to create a better life is there, but it requires action. Camp Unity Eastside, as discussed further in Chapters Five and Six, is making an effort to empower its campers as its main mission, and by doing so, claim their right to the city.

Lefebvre saw the radical restructuring of the government paired with ongoing criticism as the only way to incorporate progressive political goals,¹¹¹ with two main components, “a program of *autogestion* and a reformulated understanding of citizenship, which would include a rethinking of rights.”¹¹² The concept of

106. Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer, *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and The Right To The City*.

107. Marcuse, “Whose Right(s) to What City?”

108. *Ibid.*

109. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy: Neoliberalization and the Struggle for Alternative Urban Futures*, 108.

110. Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, xvi.

111. Brenner, “Lefebvre’s Critique of State Productivism.”

112. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 226.

autogestion refers to the ongoing struggle of a group of people to self-organize and have a say in their fate,¹¹³ “a process of intense political engagement and ‘revolutionary spontaneity’ that must ‘continually be enacted’.”¹¹⁴ As Lefebvre explains,

Autogestion is defined as knowledge of and control (at the limit) by a group – a company, a locality, an area or a region – over the conditions governing its existing and its survival through change. Through *autogestion*, these social groups are able to influence their own reality. The right to *autogestion*, like the right to representation, can be proclaimed as a citizens’ right.¹¹⁵

Young agrees, saying that “if oppressed and disadvantaged groups can self-organize in the public and have a specific voice to present their interpretation of the meaning of and reasons for group-differentiated policies”¹¹⁶ then those groups will have greater success, which is in line with the goals of social justice and democracy. Camp Unity Eastside exemplifies the concept of *autogestion*. They are self-organized, speak as a group, and consistently fight for recognition and acceptance. The camp guides their own destiny as much as they can – which is contrary to the stereotype of homeless people, further working to destroy the prejudices they face. While the establishment of the predecessor camps has not led to a radical restructuring of the government, it has influenced local governments to respond by writing inclusive code and ordinances, thereby legitimizing the camps.

Citizens’ rights are different from human rights, in that human rights are universally acknowledged rights for all humans, regardless of location and setting, and citizen rights are grounded in a specific society.¹¹⁷

Lefebvre envisioned the future citizenship as acknowledging “the multiplicity of spatial and temporal relationships among that culture’s individuals and various social groups.”¹¹⁸ Citizen rights

113. *Ibid.*, 229.

114. Brenner, “Lefebvre’s Critique of State Productivism,” 240.

115. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 227.

116. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 185.

117. Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory*; Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 230.

118. Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space*, 235.

should, in effect, bring the citizen and government closer together, working more in tandem to enable citizens to access all opportunities available, and so the definition of citizenship should be expanded to “include such things as the right to information; the right to free expression; the right to culture (to enjoy art and explore the world); the right to identity and equality within an understanding of difference; the right to the city; the right to public services and the right to autogestion.”¹¹⁹ The citizen also has the right to participation, where they can take advantage of opportunities in the city and have a say in decision making, as discussed in the section on social justice,¹²⁰ and have the right...to participate fully in the production of urban space.¹²¹ A citizen has the right to “inhabit well, and realize a full and dignified life” based on being able to access the opportunities mentioned above.¹²²

Marcuse emphasizes that the right to the city “is a right to social justice, which includes but far exceeds the right to individual justice.”¹²³ As such, inevitably some people who are part of the dominant class will lose some privilege, leading to conflict.¹²⁴ In the section on radical pluralism below, I explore the idea that conflict is not only inevitable, but sometimes irresolvable, and that can be an acceptable process and outcome. It relates to the power dynamics at work that shape our city, and also to the democratization of space. Harvey describes the diversity of responses to place and different situations in relation to social justice, saying,

There can be no universal conception of justice to which we can appeal as a normative concept to evaluate some event... There are only particular, competing, fragmented, and heterogeneous conceptions of and discourse about justice which arise out of the particular situations of those involved.¹²⁵

119. Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, 231.

120. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*, 95.

121. *Ibid.*

122. *Ibid.*, 94.

123. Marcuse, “Whose Right(s) to What City?,” 34.

124. Marcuse, “Whose Right(s) to What City?”

125. Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*, 342.

How citizen rights are actualized depends on the society in which they are situated. In this case study of Camp Unity Eastside residing in the City of Kirkland, I think that the public engagement process has been an example of politics of inclusion, which I will describe more fully in subsequent chapters.

RADICAL PLURALISM AND THE COMMUNICATIVE MODEL

As a group, Camp Unity Eastside, the other camps like it, and the host communities in Kirkland reflect what is called radical pluralism, where they are all working towards equity in outcome, not just in process. They have gently pushed past the boundaries of “normal” society and have been working to establish the camp as an entity to be recognized on the eastside.

One of the most recent forms of democratic thought, radical pluralism is critical of other forms of thought, such as classical pluralism and communicative democracy.¹²⁶ Patsy Healey writes in the mid-90s about the emergence of communicative theory as a result of the detrimental effects of urban renewal programs, describing the relatively revolutionary focus on making the process of decision-making open to everyone and equalizing their voice and influence, which she identifies as pluralism; even so, she acknowledges that, “many will see this approach as too radical and too idealistic for our present times.”¹²⁷ In his book, *Recapturing Democracy*, Purcell identifies himself, along with the others mentioned above as radical pluralists – they believe that democracy requires a serious engagement with difference, conflict and power.¹²⁸ He goes on to say a radical pluralist sees power differences and conflict as one in the same, in terms of social relationships and sees the inherent inequalities in power that will always exist.¹²⁹

126. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*.

127. Healey, “The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory,” 253.

128. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*, 62.

129. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*.

Scholars, among them Iris Marion Young, Mark Purcell, Susan Fainstein, Chantal Mouffe, and Leonie Sandercock, are strong proponents of pluralism, although they hold that the content of what the different groups ask for is not always in line with equity goals.¹³⁰ Further critique of the communicative model is that not all affected stakeholders can be included in a decision-making process. The problem that Purcell identifies with this is the big stakeholders, property owners and large corporate interests will always be represented, conferring an automatic advantage, while minorities and poor communities and stakeholders are only sometimes given a voice in the process¹³¹ for many reasons; distrust of the dominant power structure, purposeful exclusion, non-English speaking, etcetera. Purcell says that radical pluralism focuses advocacy efforts only on rights for the underrepresented while still acknowledging the general system of rights for everyone.¹³²

Like Camp Unity Eastside and the host communities, radical pluralists question the established value systems of mainstream society. The camp and the hosts make efforts to enable the camp residents to achieve more equitable footing and not be treated as second-class citizens. Nancy Fraser illustrates this point – “In stratified societies, unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles. The result is the development of powerful informal pressures that marginalize the contributions of members of subordinated groups both in everyday life contexts and in official public spheres.”¹³³ Pluralists object to liberal democracy’s acceptance of social stratification as part of normal society and allows marginalization as status quo. As part of the definition of radical pluralism, Chantal Mouffe critiques existing models of deliberative democracy and participatory democracy in two parts; the desire to squash power and conflict, and the idea that consensus can be reached and people will act

130. Fainstein, *The Just City*, 31.

131. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*, 71.

132. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 187.

133. Purcell, *Recapturing Democracy*, 64.

in the common good. Following the logic that power and conflict are integral to social relationships, it is impossible to neutralize them during interactions and that the very act of trying to neutralize power and conflict is an imposition of a normative set of rules.¹³⁴

The planner's role should be to "transform those relations; to mobilize power to engage in counter-hegemonic struggles and to establish new hegemonies."¹³⁵ Aiming for consensus in planning projects is unrealistic – yet communicative advocates see it as desirable and possible, with successful consensus suggesting that "differences have been overcome, that conflicts have been resolved, at least on issues relevant to the present agreement."¹³⁶ Recognizing these inequalities and explicitly bringing attention to them can help planners open up the process towards greater democracy, with the understanding that the goal is not to eliminate hegemony, but to engage in the constant process of struggling to establish new ones. Young says that there should be "institutional mechanisms and public resources supporting self-organizations of group members so that they achieve collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of society."¹³⁷ The Seattle metro area is one of the more open-minded areas of the country and ripe for progressive ideas and action. The work that the city of Kirkland has accomplished with Camp Unity Eastside is a testament to the progress that has been made – the local city planners actively support, respond to, and advocate for the camp, which in turn self-advocates throughout the community. As such, they provide a desirable model for other areas of the country.

134. *Ibid.*, 67.

135. *Ibid.*, 68.

136. *Ibid.*, 70.

137. *Ibid.*, 184.

CONCLUSION

In subsequent chapters I detail more specific information from interviews, observations and archival research about Camp Unity Eastside – and the camps that led up to its creation – that shows the depth of drive of this group to fight for a better life for themselves and other people facing homelessness. Even though the homeless are a group that often receives the worst treatment, Camp Unity Eastside is an example of how they make their situation change. Frequently there is no one to organize or stand up for the homeless; no one to act as their advocate, but Camp Unity Eastside and the host organizations, as well as the forerunner camps, have done an admirable job so far, though not without their challenges along the way. This case study on Camp Unity Eastside shows that this particular community of people experiencing homelessness has worked in a way consistent with radical pluralism and is a pioneering group in the way they embed themselves in a community.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

For this thesis, I focused on Camp Unity Eastside and how it interfaced with the City of Kirkland as a case study because it is the latest iteration of self-organized camps in the Seattle area. Case studies provide a unique way of looking at complex situations, and are “a common research strategy in psychology, sociology, political science, and planning... the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events”¹ and is the most appropriate method for studying this particular phenomenon. There are already multiple theses and dissertations written about the Tent Cities run by SHARE/WHEEL, but none have focused thus far on Camp Unity Eastside, which formed its own non-profit in November of 2012, independent of the umbrella organization of SHARE/WHEEL. I chose to focus on a homeless encampment in the City of Kirkland because that city has been involved with Tent City 4 almost since Tent City 4’s inception in 2004 and because it also has been the only host city for Camp Unity Eastside at the time of my research. Kirkland also has had a reputation for being among the most welcoming to the camps of all the municipalities on the eastside.

1. Yin, Case Study Research, 14.

In the tradition of in-depth case studies, I used qualitative methods to collect information on Camp Unity. The primary methods of data collection I used to describe and analyze the policy, community relations, and locational process of Camp Unity Eastside as a self-organized, self-governed homeless camp include:

1. archival research
2. semi-structured interviews with campers, host organization members, and a city planner
3. Multiple site visits as a participant-observer
4. observation of a Kirkland interfaith committee meeting on Housing the Homeless

Incorporating these different methods allowed me to use different sources of evidence, which is one of the keys to data triangulation.² One of the strengths of using multiple sources is “the development of converging lines of inquiry... Thus any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it based on several different sources of information.”³

During interviews and site visits, I make an effort to clearly identify myself as a graduate student working on my thesis and to maintain a consistent image by wearing jeans and a purple University of Washington sweatshirt. I felt that trying to be visually consistent and recognizable was important since there are frequently many people around the camp.

2. Ibid., 90.

3. Ibid., 92.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Based on my initial investigations, I decided that there were three main groups of stakeholders to target for interviews: Campers host organization members and city planners although there is some overlap between groups. I focused the majority of my interviews on campers and host organization members, but I was also able to interview a planner in the City of Kirkland.

- 1. Campers.** I interviewed both leaders and members of the camp –from Camp Unity Eastside about their experiences, history, community relations, and camp siting. Many of those I interviewed were previously Tent City 4 members, and so I was able to get a perspective on the history of camps on the eastside. I was able to conduct semi-structured interviews with nine campers total; two women, and seven men. All camper interviewees except one woman said they have at least some degree of responsibility in the camp, if not a great deal of responsibility.
- 2. Host organization members.** Focusing mainly on the churches that have recently hosted or are currently hosting Camp Unity Eastside and/or Tent City 4, I interviewed both leaders and members of the host organization, for their experiences, history of relating to the camps, and camp siting. I interviewed seven people in this category; five women and four men. Three were from Kirkland Congregational Church, two were from Lake Washington United Methodist Church, one was from Trinity Lutheran Church, and one was from Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. These churches are all part of a larger organization, the Greater Kirkland Ecumenical Parish (GKEP).
- 3. Kirkland City planners.** I interviewed one member of the Kirkland City planning staff. There are very few people in the department who deal with the camps and the Temporary Use Permit. I interviewed the staff member about the history and establishment of ordinances

and Temporary Use Permit, evolution of community relations within Kirkland, and her impressions of the camps. She has been employed by the city since before Tent City 4 moved to the eastside.

Recruitment

My first contact person on this project was a member of one of the host churches and the American Planning Association (APA), who connected me with key individuals in most of the stakeholder categories. After contacting the camp operations officer for Camp Unity Eastside, I used a snowball sampling method to identify other potential interviewees from the camper and host interviewee groups. I also asked host organization members to direct me to potential interviewees who had some experience or were familiar with the camps. I attempted to interview people with a range of differences: male and female, length of time in camp, if they had previously lived in Tent City 4 or not, and if they were involved in camp governance or operations. This strategy is known as purposive sampling, which “means that the participants are hand picked from the accessible population so that they presumably will be representative or typical of the population.”⁴ Like the campers, the host organization members as a whole were happy to talk to me and willing to help me with my thesis.

Interview Instrument

To conduct my interviews I developed a standard semi-structured, interview instrument. When developing interview questions, I considered the potential risks and benefits to the interviewees and modified my questions accordingly, since the topic could lead to disclosure of sensitive information.

The questions covered topics relevant to my research questions, including how the campers interact

4. Gliner, Morgan, and Leech, *Research Methods in Applied Settings: An Integrated Approach to Design and Analysis*, 124.

with each other and other people, and how being self-governed has influenced those relationships. These interviews also covered how the physical setup of camps and access to facilities affect those relationships. See Appendix B for the interview instrument.

I created the interview to be open-ended and in a conversational style, in order to keep it casual and comfortable, but was careful not to wander too far off topic. While generally following the interview protocols, I would ask elaborative or clarifying questions during an interview as well, to delve deeper into the experiences and viewpoints that were relevant to my thesis.

Interview Process

I conducted all interviews with campers at the camp when it was located at Trinity Lutheran Church; I was in the office tent if it was raining, sitting outside the office tent in an open area if the weather was nice, or inside the church in the room designated for the computers and donations. In all cases, we were visible and possibly audible to other campers, although no one appeared to be paying attention to the interview. For the host organization members, we either met at their church or in a café. I interviewed the city planner at the Kirkland City Hall.

I started each interview by asking for oral consent to be interviewed and audio-recorded, following the contents of my consent form which can be found in Appendix B. This informed interviewees of my intentions, the process of keeping their interview and transcript confidential, and that they could choose not to respond to any questions they did not want to answer. In general, most of the interviewees either actively wanted their names associated with their opinions in my thesis, or simply did not care if their names were included. Even so, I decided to maintain anonymity as much as I could in writing.

TABLE 1. Codes used in Analyzing Interview Data

Category	Code	Category	Code
Description of Camp Unity, Tent City 4, hosts, or Kirkland	Organizational Structure of the camp	Camp Unity's role for its campers	Camp Unity as an empowerment camp
	Physical description		Camper loyalty to camp
	Access to church facilities		Positive social aspects of camp
	Siting of camp		Negative social aspects of camp
	History of TC4 move to eastside		"We are people too"
	Camp Unity demographics		Permanent camp desire
	Kirkland organizations and networks		Camp safety
	Camp mobility		Advocacy
Relationships	Between campers	Host outreach to homeless in general	
	Between campers and hosts	Host outreach to camps	
	Between campers and neighborhood	Homeless self-advocacy	
	Between campers and city departments	"Homeless mentality"*	
	Evolution of neighborhood responses	Camp visibility	
	Perception of homelessness	Tent cities not a solution	
	Perception of camps/campers	Temporary Use Permit	Process
*Codes in quotes are "in vivo" codes – they are phrases heard in interviews. I used this particular in vivo code as a placeholder for a set of concepts that I later parse out in chapter Five.		Neighbor concerns, property rights	
		TUP meeting	
		Site outreach and coordination	
	General	Camp strengths	
		Camp challenges	
	Great Quotes	Great Quotes	

Data Analysis

To record the interviews for later data analysis, I used an application called “tape-a-talk” on my tablet computer to audio record each interview. After conducting my interviews, I then transferred the recording to my laptop where I transcribed them using a program called “Transcribe”, which can be accessed through the Google web browser Chrome. This program plays back the audio and allows the user to slow down, speed up, pause, rewind and fast-forward with certain keys while transcribing in order to facilitate a speedy transcription. After transcribing the interviews, I cut and pasted each interview into its own word document and saved the files as .docs, then uploaded those documents into an online qualitative data analysis program called “Dedoose.” This was a useful tool to organize and code my transcriptions. I developed 36 different codes that fall into six main categories, with a seventh additional category of “great quotes” to make notable quotes easy to extract later (See Table 1). These codes enable me to see themes and patterns in the data that otherwise might be overlooked. Once all the interview transcripts were coded, I used Dedoose to produce reports for each code. These code reports essentially extract out, across all interview transcripts, any excerpts that I have labeled with a given code. Once code reports were generated for a code, I was able to examine the excerpts for patterns and themes within that given code. I did this systematically for each of the 36 codes that I developed thus enabling me to see the larger themes and patterns that emerged across all codes.

SITE VISITS AND OBSERVATIONS

I conducted site visits to Camp Unity Eastside while it was located at Lake Washington United Methodist Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, both in Kirkland. I spent the night at the camp before the move day, and on the move day went between sites as needed. I chose to take an active role in my observations, using a participant-observation technique, rather than being a passive observer because it would help

the campers get to know me and become comfortable with me, and because it was important for me to help the camp as they were helping me with my thesis. This method does have its drawbacks; as a participant, one tends to become biased in favor of the group, and the fact that the very act of observing behavior changes that which is being observed.⁵ However, participating in move day allowed me to see firsthand how the camp coordinated between the two sites, and with the host organizations that were providing moving assistance and food.

Periodically during the time I was working on this thesis, I would stop in at the camp on an afternoon, usually preceded by a phone call to the camp operations officer. I would sit at the office tent and chat with the campers who were on duty or just hanging out, or go into the church facility. I did this about four or five times. This was also a way in which I found people who were willing to be interviewed. During these visits, I observed how the campers related to each other and how they ran the camp. The campers willingly offered to give me a tour of the camp, describe the various physical components, and give me a history, so I was able to see how the camps were laid out and how people moved between the tents and the church building. From informal conversations during site visits I was also able to obtain general descriptive information and background knowledge about the camp that was not available from other sources. I also drew diagrams of camp layout and organizational structure, and occasionally took photographs.

Observations at Community Meetings

In addition to observation at camp site visits, I also attended two meetings of hosts and potential hosts and service providers. To prepare for this, I developed an observation guide for any meetings I might

5. Zeisel, *Inquiry by Design*.

attend. During the course of my research, I was invited to and attended a meeting of the Greater Kirkland Ecumenical Parish (GKEP) on Housing the Homeless, in which they discussed their strategy for partnering with two camps in the city. I identified myself and gave a brief description of the thesis at the beginning of the meeting, so they were aware of my presence. After the meeting, I also spoke individually with members who were interested in learning more about the thesis, and recruited one member to be an interviewee. I did not audio record any meetings, but did take notes about the general atmosphere of the meeting, what information was being presented and by whom, statements in support of the camps or concern about the camps, what questions are asked and what the response was to those questions. See Appendix B for my observation guide. I used this information to supplement my findings from the interviews.

I also attended a presentation in Kirkland called “Homelessness in the Media”, presented by Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC) and the Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County (HDC). In this presentation, two sets of panelists contributed to the discussion: members of the media, and housing and service providers. They discussed the need to build relationships within the community between service providers and the homeless, raise awareness of homelessness and available support programs on the eastside, and the history and controversy surrounding Tent City 4 and Camp Unity. This presentation was open to the public and there was no occasion to announce my presence to the whole group, but I did identify myself and discuss my purpose with other attendees or presenters when the opportunity arose. Both meetings were useful in providing more people who shared their opinions and knowledge of the camps. The members of the media also provided an observer’s view, and have acquired a lot of information since they had been following the activities of the camps and the neighborhood reactions since Tent City 4 came to the eastside.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

In addition to collecting original data, I also conducted archival research that included reading websites about the camps, host organizations, non-profits, and other organizations that relate to the thesis topic to understand how the various stakeholders present themselves so I could begin to get an understanding of how they interact. Literature on the history and policy surrounding homelessness and the study of homelessness, and on theory and advocacy in planning and design also guided my work. I used the City of Kirkland's website to find information about the camps, and various news websites and community blogs to track public opinion about Tent City 4 and Camp Unity Eastside over time. From my contacts with planners and host organizations, I was also able to obtain documents about policy and procedure in Kirkland. Online news and other blogs also helped me look into other self-organized camps around the country as part of my precedent studies.

In addition to following websites and blogs, I used Google Earth aerial images of sites in Kirkland that hosted the camps to understand the site itself better and the way it changed over time. Google Earth allows one to navigate back through time to older satellite photography, which enabled me to see some of the camp locations in the past and see how the camp was sited in relation to the church building, roads, and parking lots, as well as the larger context. Previous theses and dissertations about homelessness in Seattle also proved useful in finding background information and guiding my research endeavors.

CONCLUSION

Together these mixed methods provided a rich picture of life in the camp and its relationship to the host organization and the larger community in which it is situated. The combination of hearing personal experiences with the camp and seeing it from an outsider's perspective through the media coverage helped me understand the evolution and adaptation of the camp to become as successful as they are, and where they face challenges. Some limitations of conducting interviews include: recognizing my own bias – my critical stance is basically supportive of self-organized camps and that could have influenced interviewees' responses, although I took concerted efforts to limit this with a carefully constructed interview instrument, and my interpretations of their answers; I could only interview a portion of the people involved; and not everyone necessarily wanted to be interviewed – those individuals might have had insights beyond the information I gathered.

In the next chapter on precedent studies, I cover three other self-organized camps: Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon, which has gathered quite a bit of coverage from the news in Portland since its beginnings in 2000, and Tent City 3 and Tent City 4 in Seattle and on the eastside of Lake Washington, respectively. I discuss their history and mission, the physical setup and governance, community relations, and challenges.

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CHAPTER FOUR: PRECEDENT STUDIES

To inform this research, I have selected three self-organized camps in the Pacific Northwest to explore; Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon, and two predecessor camps to Camp Unity Eastside – Tent City 3 in Seattle, and Tent City 4 on the Eastside of the Seattle metro area. I look at their history, stated mission and goals, physical setup and governance, camp population, evidence of community relations within the camp and between the camp and the rest of the community, and challenges facing the camp. Through this, I can pull out some common benefits and limitations to self-organization in the camps.

Dignity Village is what is called a “village concept camp” and has a permanent site within the city of Portland. I chose to review Dignity Village because Portland has a similar demographic and political profile to the Seattle area, their establishment has been fairly well documented, and the city has been receptive and appears to have been working collaboratively with the camp. Tent City 3 and Tent City 4 are mobile every three months, and while they are self-organized, they are overseen by the umbrella organization SHARE/WHEEL. Since Camp Unity Eastside grew out of Tent City 4, I find these case studies to provide useful context and background for comparison. Each case study presents the unique challenges faced by each camp, which can help inform the case study on Camp Unity Eastside. All the case studies present the commonalities among the camps that lead to successful community relationships within the camp, and among the camp, city, and neighborhood.

DIGNITY VILLAGE (PORTLAND, OR)

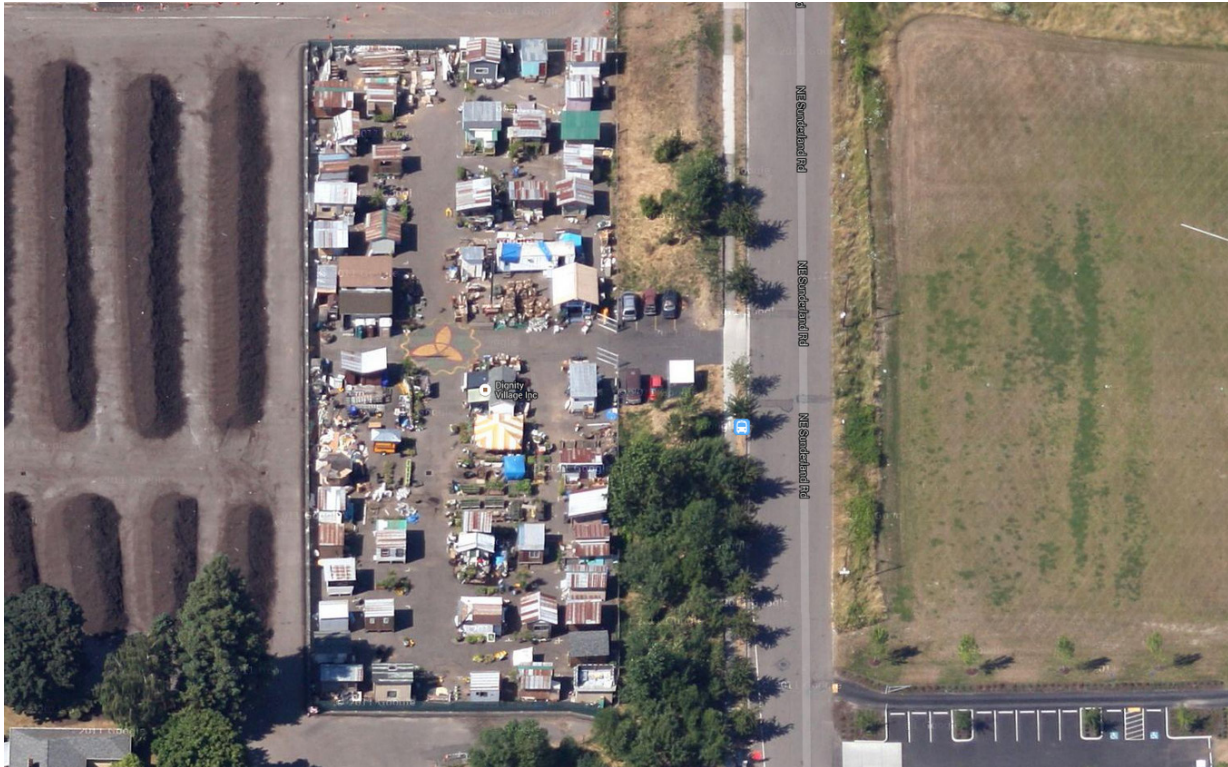


FIGURE 3. Aerial View of Dignity Village.

(Image courtesy of Google Earth)

HISTORY AND MISSION

Dignity Village is a self-organized, city-sanctioned group with a permanent site in Sunderland Yard, next to the leaf composting center, in north Portland near the Columbia River. The camp's mission is to provide "safe, dry and accessible shelter to Portlanders experiencing homelessness."¹ Established in 2000 with an unsanctioned site in downtown Portland, they moved in 2001 with an agreement reached by the camp and the city to house no more than 60 people at a time, cover their own expenses, and abide by a set of safety and sanitation rules. The

founders expressed in their 2001 visioning document a desire to be located downtown so the camp was "visible to the homeless population being served and large enough for future growth."² A former commissioner who oversaw the Housing Bureau at the time, voiced an understanding of the camp residents' situation; while explaining that the city did not originally plan for the village, camp residents fought for it and it eventually gained official recognition in 2004 with a long-term contract with the city.³

1. Theen, "Dignity Village: Residents Fight 'Complacency' as Right 2 Dream Too Captures Portland's Attention."

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

PHYSICAL SETUP AND GOVERNANCE

Dignity Village is a non-profit organization, and with an average daily cost per person of \$4.28, it subsists entirely on donations and profits from small businesses within their community.⁴ Some of those businesses include selling produce from their community garden, small crafts and firewood. The city does not charge the camp for use of the land, but the camp pays about \$2,000 a month for water, electricity, garbage pickup and portable toilets with the proceeds from their small businesses. The city has allowed them to connect to the sewer system for shower water disposal. They also purchase food and bus passes as a group. As part of their effort to incorporate green building techniques, the camp is adding greywater collection and going organic with their gardening, as well as building with green construction methods, including strawbale, cob, and recycled materials.

Working with the architect Mark Lakeman, Dignity Village was designed for the two-acre site adjacent to a leaf-composting facility and correctional center, with a bus stop out in front. It falls under the “transitional housing campground” zoning in the State of Oregon building code, legitimizing the camp and allowing for contracts of two or three years to be drawn up between the city and the camp. In designing the campground, they “emphasized existing goals of the city and region. This included addressing livability and global warming. Dignity Village now has the lightest ecological footprint and highest level of political participation per capita in the city.”⁵ The camp consists of multiple small, elevated cabins, often painted bright colors. Residents have garden boxes, and there is a communal shower area, computer area, and basketball area. The camp consists of 43 structures ranging from cob houses to plywood cabins. The camp promotes its eco-friendly building methods.

4. Heben, “Inside Tent Cities.”

5. Ibid.



FIGURE 4. Dignity Village Entrance Sign.

The blue pole is the bus stop right outside the entrance to Dignity Village. (Image courtesy of Andrew Theen, Oregonian.com)



FIGURE 5. Dignity Village Check-in Sign.

(Image courtesy of Andrew Theen, Oregonian.com)



As a non-profit, Dignity Village has a set of bylaws, and a board of directors, including an elected chairperson. In order to join the camp, potential members submit an application, but are not rejected for reasons “based on religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, lifestyle choice, previous (criminal) record or economic status.”⁶ Children are not allowed to live in the camp. Residents all play a role in running the camp, including being on the board of directors for one-year terms and performing security duty, totaling ten hours a week in service to the camp. Like many other camps, Dignity Village members follow rules prohibiting drugs, alcohol, violence, and stealing, and discrimination of any type – sexual, racial, or otherwise, is not permitted. If the residents do not follow these rules, they can be evicted from the camp.

FIGURE 6. Dignity Village.

(Image courtesy of Andrew Theen, Oregonian.com)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While the camp enjoys its official status now, it did not start out easily. Their site was chosen because “it was the only place that the city controlled that the city could move it to without madness ensuing.”⁷ Now, it seems to be “out of sight, out of mind”.⁸ Police calls are extremely infrequent, and the camp has a good relationship with the fire and rescue department, according to the departments’ spokesperson.⁹ A city commissioner who had voted for the original long-term lease spoke favorably about the camp, happy that they are “providing a transition to stable housing and jobs” and saying “everything we hoped they would do, they’re doing.”¹⁰ Another commissioner recognized the role the camp plays in establishing a support system for the residents, saying “I think these encampments are more about people feeling part

6. “Dignity Village.”

7. Theen, “Dignity Village.”

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Hall, “Portland’s Dignity Village Expects to Win Contract Extension.”

of something.”¹¹ The self-organized aspect of the camp has helped provide that sense of belonging and commanded the respect of the city officials.

Residents as well feel the camp has provided stability and community. Having their permanent site, a democratic leadership structure, and participating in maintaining the camp means a lot for the residents, “having a working shower, garden, cabins and community to call their own goes a long way toward increasing their confidence, they agreed.”¹² Having a safe place to call home has helped many residents get back on their feet, getting a steady job and eventually moving into permanent housing.¹³

CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges in self-organization for Dignity Village is the turnover in the board members. As people move out or their term ends, the quarterly and annual reports are frequently late or inaccurate, creating a concern for the Housing Bureau, which would rather see more longevity on the board and have more consistency in the Bureau’s level of involvement.¹⁴ The contract negotiation process is also slowed down due to the transitional nature of the camp leading to the turnover in their board of directors, and the fact that the camp is the first of its kind in the area. The city is still figuring out what works well and what needs to be changed.¹⁵

The site of the camp, rather remote from downtown Portland, has been both beneficial in providing a fixed location, and detrimental to the residents’ motivation to move out, according to residents of Dignity

11. Theen, “Dignity Village.”

12. Hall, “Contract Extension.”

13. Ibid.

14. Theen, “Dignity Village.”

15. Hall, “Contract Extension.”

Village and its CEO.¹⁶ The newest contract places a two-year time limit for residents (exceptions can be made) and formalizes the Fire Bureau's safety checklist.¹⁷ Dignity Village also must fix issues identified in a 2010 report evaluating the camp, including overuse of the portable toilets, and residents staying beyond their two-year limit.¹⁸ The consultant found that 80 percent of residents stay less than two years, with 60 percent in residence less than six months.¹⁹ In addition to stricter safety codes, the city is also expecting "to provide more onsite access to social services, such as financial planning and mental health care, to help people move into homes and jobs more quickly."²⁰ Even though the 2010 report showed the majority of residents abided by the two-year limit, by 2012, the Oregonian reports that Portland Housing Bureau statistics show "more than half of Dignity Village's 60 current residents have been there two years or longer, and one-third have lived there for five years or more."²¹ While in line with the camp's goal of being a place of transition, some residents are frustrated or scared by the time limit.²² This speaks to the need for affordable housing

The founder of Dignity Village recognizes the challenges facing the camp. He would have liked to set time limits for residents as well, and require more than ten hours a week of time working for the camp. The biggest issue he sees is the distance from downtown, which is allowing the residents to become complacent because they are out of the public eye and makes it more difficult to access services and jobs, saying "I think we enable them to be dependent and lazy...We're trying to create independency here."²³ So while the camp has successfully created a stable community, it is not operating quite as

16. Theen, "Dignity Village."

17. Slovic, "Portland Grants Three-Year Contract to Dignity Village Camp."

18. Hall, "Contract Extension."

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Theen, "Dignity Village."

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

intended, helping all the residents moving out into other housing. Even so, I think that the village concept camp is a viable option for future camps in other cities. Having a time limit is not unreasonable, but allowing someone to stay in the camp as long as they need to without fear of being asked to leave while providing resources is more in line with the idea of helping someone become more empowered and self-sustaining.

TENT CITY 3 (SEATTLE, WA)AND TENT CITY 4 (EASTSIDE OF SEATTLE METRO AREA, WA)

HISTORY AND MISSION

The Seattle area is novel in the existence and treatment of sanctioned, temporary camps hosted on private land – most frequently owned by churches or synagogues – and the camps have established partnerships with non-profits, local government, and interfaith networks beyond their host religious organizations. Most other temporary camps in other parts of the country are not sanctioned by the city or county, and are frequently bulldozed away. Tent City 3 and 4 also differ in that they have an umbrella organization –even though they did not start out as organized and sanctioned, they were able to become this way.



FIGURE 7. Tent City 4 Sign and Camper Doing Maintenance.

(Image courtesy of APA Brownbag Presentation, “A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community” Feb. 15, 2012)

The umbrella organization, Seattle Housing and Resource Effort and Women’s Housing Equality and Enhancement League (SHARE/WHEEL) has its roots starting back in 1990, advocating for homeless rights, and over the past 23 years has developed multiple shelters and tent cities.²⁴ Tent City 3 was founded in 2000 in south Seattle, staying on church property, but without a city permit – the city did not currently have any permit addressing such an encampment. After two years of legal fights, Seattle eventually signed a Consent Decree for Tent City 3 and spelled out the basics of how the camp should operate.²⁵ Two years after that, in 2004, SHARE/WHEEL made the conscious decision to branch out to the Eastside of the Seattle metro area in municipalities, like Bellevue and Kirkland, to raise awareness of homelessness through their Tent City 4 camp.²⁶

24. SHARE / WHEEL, “History.”

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., personal interviews.

The mission of the tent cities is to help their campers move out of homelessness while simultaneously raising awareness of and advocating for people experiencing homelessness: The current mission statement of TC 3 & TC 4 is to provide a safe place for homeless people to spend the night and keep their belongings; to give a homeless person the privacy and dignity of their own residence (a tent); to develop a sense of community for homeless people who are isolated and alone, and to empower homeless people by being responsible for their own community.²⁷

This is one of the reasons that the camps move every three months; it raises visibility for the homeless and allows them to create new community connections with different groups, building their donations base and hopefully improving perceptions of homeless people and correcting misconceptions.

Unlike the relative ease of Tent City 3 finding site on the westside, Tent City 4 faced prejudice, animosity, and sometimes vicious verbal attacks in locating a site on the eastside.²⁸ Both camps

²⁷. National Coalition for the Homeless, *Tent Cities in America: A Pacific Coast Report*, 18.

²⁸. Wikipedia, "Tent City 4.", personal interviews.



FIGURE 8. Tent City 4 During Setup.

Wood pallets are laid out according to the site plan. They are later covered with plywood to form the floor for the tents.
(Image courtesy of Tent City 4)

FIGURE 9. Tent City 4 During Setup.
(Image courtesy of Tent City 4)

are operating still; Tent City 3 on the westside in Seattle and adjacent municipalities, and Tent City 4 living in cities on the eastside. Tent City 4 started out camping on church land in Bothell without any city ordinances or code governing it. Bothell's government tried to evict the camp, but the church fought it legally under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA).²⁹ The subsequent lawsuits gained a lot of attention, and the cities on the eastside began developing their permitting processes to handle tent cities, with most municipalities adopting a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) as the solution, which often includes neighbor notification and a public meeting in advance of the move, as well as placing health and safety regulations on the camp.³⁰

One church, the Kirkland Congregational Church, had a novel approach the first time they hosted Tent City 4 on their parking lot, which the church leases to Kirkland City Hall six days a week, which is across the street. At the time, the church had a stipulation in their agreement with the city that if the church had a memorial service, they could preempt the City Hall parking. So as the former pastor told me, he said to his church board, "maybe we need to have a memorial service every day during the time tent city is there...For 89 days at noon time we had a brief service where we read names of people who had died on the streets of metro Seattle. And we did that every day for 89 days." Both camps are now to the point that they are returning second and third times to previous host sites, having established connections and leaving positive impressions with the community.

See Appendix C for a chart of the various municipalities' permitting processes and requirements. In general, most cities regulate camps through a TUP, with specifics spelled out in the zoning, land use,

29. National Coalition for the Homeless, *Tent Cities in America: A Pacific Coast Report*.

30. Cox et al., "A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community"; National Coalition for the Homeless, *Tent Cities in America*.

or municipal code, covering: length of stay, location, setbacks, lighting, access to public transportation, visual screening, maximum number of residents, parking requirements, children permitted, code of conduct, background checks, public notice and public meetings, and a variety of other issues. Application fees and other fees range considerably – for example, Mercer Island does not have an application fee, but charges \$69 for a temporary power permit, but a TUP in Redmond costs slightly more than \$1,600.

Tent City 3 and Tent City 4 camps are both limited in size to 100 members each, have similar codes of conduct, and are mobile, moving approximately every three months to a new host location, typically church-owned property, in response to the TUP conditions set out in many of the municipalities' codes. Seattle-King County Public Health provides services.

PHYSICAL SETUP AND GOVERNANCE

Both camps have similar setups, physically as well as organizationally. Campers live in tents and use blue tarps to cover the tents for additional weather protection. All tents, pallets, tarps, and other shared items are owned by SHARE/WHEEL, including a communal kitchen, living room, office, and donation tents, a shower, portable toilets. They also both have trash service. The camps have one entrance that is always monitored by those on security duty. A fence and visual screening material surround each camp, as typically required by code or the permit, although these also provide a sense of privacy and security for the inhabitants. The camp hooks into the church's electricity, and sometimes even the water and sewer lines. Sometimes the host church will pay for the utilities and permitting. Frequently the host church also provides meals inside for the campers, and various community groups come and make meals according to a meal calendar that is managed through the SHARE/WHEEL website, and drop off donations of food and clothing.

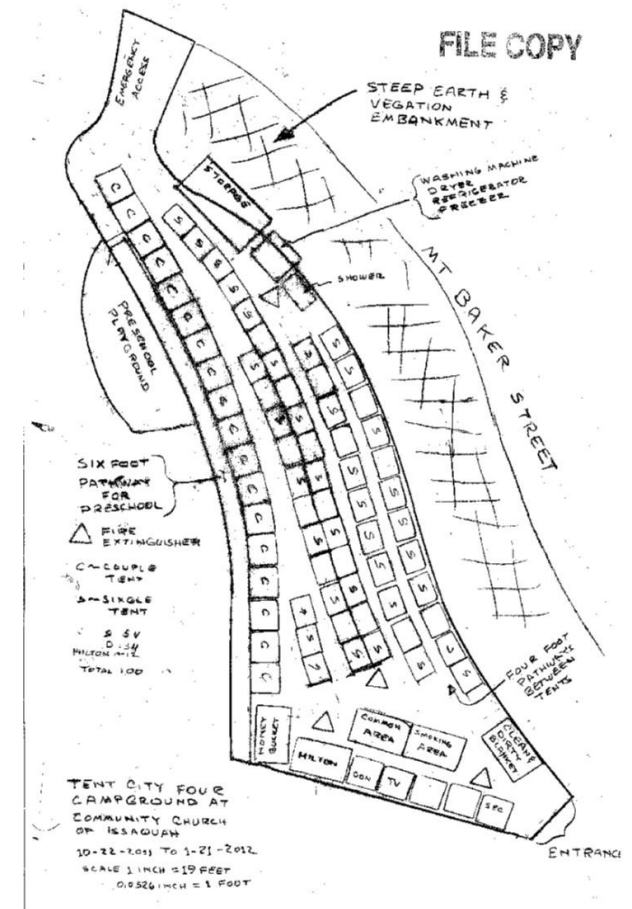


FIGURE 10. Tent City 4 Layout Submitted to the City of Issaquah.

(Image courtesy of APA Brownbag Presentation, "A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community" Feb. 15, 2012)

ethnic makeup was at 44 percent white, 15.4 percent black, and 14.8 percent Latino, with the rest of the camp consisting of people of Native American, African, Pacific Islander, and Asian descent. The ages ranged between 18 and 72, with the majority in their 40s at 37 percent, also representative of national averages.³² Persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to live in the camps. In the interviews, former members of Tent City 4 reported that the same ratios held true for their time in Tent City 4, occasionally fluctuating.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Initially, Tent City 4 was quite unwelcome, with such animosity held by residents that a group of citizens on Mercer Island formed an organization called “Mercer Island Citizens for Fair Process”. According to the report from the National Coalition for the Homeless, “Tent Cities in America”, the Mercer Island Citizens for Fair Process claimed “firstly that homeless deserve better- (although most of the reasons on their website referred to declining property values, safety concerns, fears of vandalism, and negative effects of having homeless people in their community).”³³

Many of the people I interviewed in Tent City 4 also described the initial fears and concerns of the neighborhoods, as well as the support from the host organization members and pastors. They also described the changing attitudes as everyone got to know each other, some providing poignant anecdotes about the drastic turnaround of former detractors turning into strong advocates for the homeless camps. In Chapter Five I present more detailed findings from the interviews on this subject. Now, after having stayed at many sites and returning a second or third time, most of the neighborhood



FIGURE 12. Tent City 4 Screening.

(Image courtesy of APA Brownbag Presentation, “A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community” Feb. 15, 2012)



FIGURE 13. Tent City 4 Kitchen Tent.

(Image courtesy of APA Brownbag Presentation, “A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community” Feb. 15, 2012)

32. Sparks, “As Much Like Home as Possible: Geographies of Homelessness and Citizenship in Seattle’s Tent City 3.”

33. National Coalition for the Homeless, Tent Cities in America, 24.

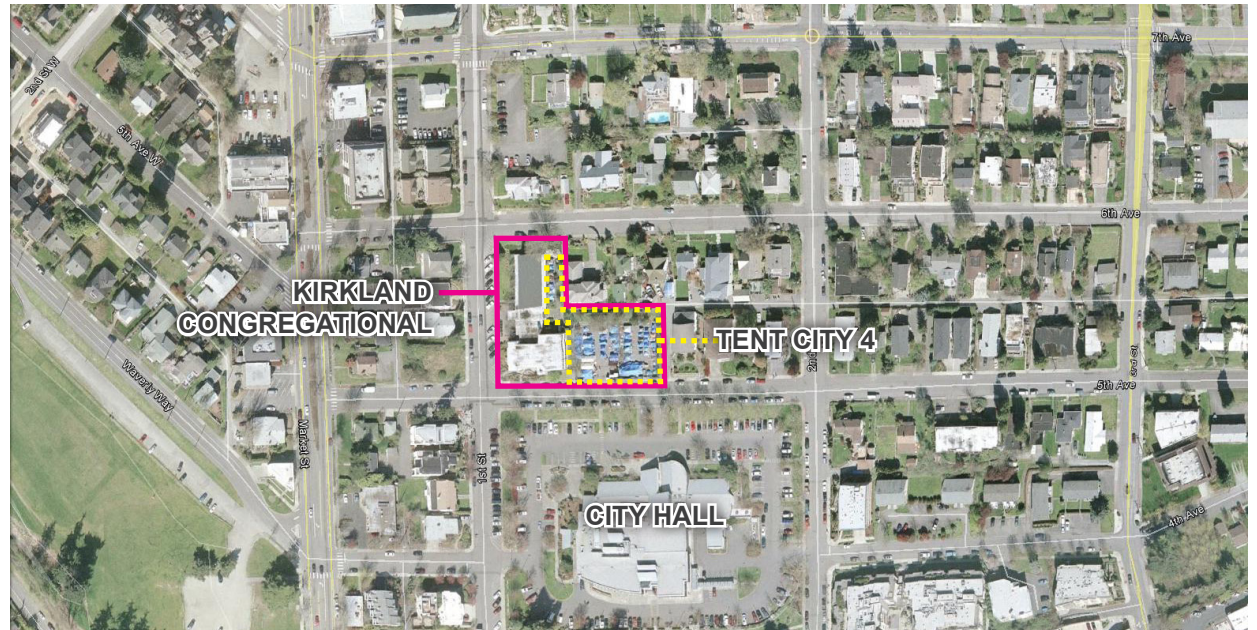


FIGURE 14. Tent City 4 at Kirkland Congregational, Across from Kirkland City Hall.

These aerial photographs, both taken in March 2005 and shown at the same scale as each other, show two of Tent City 4's campsites in Kirkland. At Kirkland Congregational, the parking lot site is very small – the smallest site that Tent City 4 has occupied in Kirkland. In contrast, St. John Vianney has a great deal of room, yet the camp is still snug against the church building.

(Aerial photographs courtesy of Google Earth)



FIGURE 15. Traces of Tent City 4 at St. John Vianney.

concerns have been allayed because the neighbors have gotten to know the campers and see the camp running itself. Numerous news articles chronicle the initial strife and the subsequent change of heart. Tent City 4 has just completed a stay at the Redmond Family Church, where the pastor said, “we felt like we built some great relationships with a lot of them” and “Tent City 4 was probably 99 percent well-received by the community.”³⁴ Every person I interviewed mentioned the welcoming attitudes they now have and experience from others in the community. The self-organization helps community residents see the campers as taking responsibility and making an effort to change their situation, helping dispel the preconceptions of people experiencing homelessness.

CHALLENGES

In November of 2012, a section of Tent City 4 campers split off from the camp and became Camp Unity Eastside. The split was precipitated by disagreements over camper duties between SHARE/WHEEL and the camp and SHARE/WHEEL’s claim of inconsistent attendance of “power lunches” with the non-profit staff and the camp leaders.³⁵ The problems came to an abrupt head in mid-November 2012, when a new resident of Tent City 4 was arrested on November 7th and criminally charged with child rape.³⁶ This person was admitted to the camp two weeks before charges were filed so there were no records yet on this person. With this incident, the host church became concerned, and met with camp leaders to ask them to do weekly background checks and the camp leaders agreed, without first seeking approval from SHARE/WHEEL.³⁷ This was against the SHARE/WHEEL’s position on the right to privacy and

34. Nystrom, “Tent City 4 Has Its Highs and Lows in Redmond.”

35. Rodriguez, “SHARE Halts Tent City Shutdown Following Dispute With Residents in Kirkland.”, personal interviews.

36. Rodriguez, “Kirkland Tent City Resident Charged with Child Rape.”, personal interviews.

37. Rodriguez, “Tent City Resident of Former Kirkland Encampment Charged With Child Rape.”, personal interviews.

considered discrimination; it ultimately did not uphold weekly checks as part of Tent City 4 operations.³⁸ Tent City 4 continued operating as before, but a group of campers from Tent City 4 agreeing to the request for weekly background checks split off and formed Camp Unity Eastside in mid-November of 2012.

Because of their mobile nature, Tent City 3 and 4 both struggle sometimes with finding new locations every three months, although it has gotten easier as they have built up relationships with hosts and can return to previous sites. However, this is now complicated on the eastside for Tent City 4, where Camp Unity Eastside also stays, because some cities wrote their Temporary Use Permit requirements in such a way that only one camp can obtain a TUP per year, perhaps unintentionally but effectively banning the other camp from that municipality, since only one camp existed when the code was written. This recently occurred in Bellevue; when Tent City 4 tried to obtain a permit, they were denied. Another challenging aspect of their mobility is the cost and coordination associated with moving an entire camp in one day, not to mention the stress on the campers of having their lives uprooted, setting up again, and finding new routes to work. While it has gotten easier over the years to meet new communities, there is also the added stress of getting to know new hosts.

Apart from the well-publicized incident in 2012 with the sex offender, there is usually no change in the crime levels in the surround neighborhood. Within the camp, the residents will call the police for violations of their code of conduct. A Redmond PD resource officer, Julie Beard, describes what was called in for Tent City 4's most recent three-month stay in Kirkland:

38. Rodriguez, "SHARE Halts Tent City Shutdown."

Tent City 4 leaders often call the police when they have problems with their own residents. She said there were eight arrests for disorderly conduct, domestic violence, possession of drug paraphernalia, stolen property and outstanding warrants at the encampment. In addition, there were 11 911 calls for warrant service or fugitive arrest; nine calls for disturbances, assaults and intoxicated or disruptive residents; two medical or welfare checks; two trespass calls; one firearm found; and other miscellaneous calls for service...RPD didn't receive any calls for registered sex offenders.³⁹

Other challenges include the constant turnover of camp members, and continuing their mission of educating people about the issues of homelessness and advocating for the homeless persons' rights. They consider political demonstrations and sit-ins as part of that, as well as one-on-one interactions with host members and visitors, which can be challenging to maintain with new camp members entering frequently.

CONCLUSION

These case studies provide a general background of the history, structure, benefits, and issues faced by both mobile and sedentary homeless camps. Looking at Tent City 3 and 4 provides the more specific precedent to Camp Unity Eastside, and helped me to understand the launching point for it.⁴⁰ The self-organizational aspect of the camps has benefits and drawbacks. Benefits include promoting a sense of belonging, ownership, and control over some aspects of their lives that a homeless person in other circumstances might not otherwise have. Having a self-organized group demonstrates motivation and responsibility, and explicitly shows outsiders a different view of homelessness. This education and visibility is part of the mission of changing opinion of homelessness. The camps are a group of people working together, and as such they have more of a voice with the city and can leverage more

39. Nystrom, "Highs and Lows in Redmond."

40. For an in-depth report of Tent City 3, I recommend reading Tony Sparks' dissertation, titled "As Much Like Home as Possible: Geographies of Homelessness and Citizenship in Seattle's Tent City 3." For a more extensive look at tent cities around the nation, a great resource is Andrew Heben's website, Tent City Urbanism, tentcityurbanism.com. Heben is an urban planner who has written articles and a book about tent cities, and has been an active advocate for a number of years, currently based in Eugene, Oregon.



FIGURE 16. Tent City 4.

A resident carries supplies through Tent City 4. Visible are potted plants, lending a cheerful burst of color. Also visible are the creative solutions to staking tents – weighted milk crates and five-gallon buckets.

(Image courtesy of APA Brownbag Presentation, “A Different Kind of Fully Contained Community” Feb. 15, 2012)

resources as a non-profit. Members generally have very similar goals to each other, and can provide support to each other. Some common drawbacks are quick turnover in the leadership and general camp population. Rapid turnover can prevent progress, because new people need to be trained and caught up, and they do not necessarily have the same style of leadership or opinions on how the camp should be run. Turnover leads to fluidity in the camp composition of personalities, and can make it somewhat unpredictable.

Democratic leadership means that there is debate and dissent at times, which can lessen the strength of the camp if it appears that the residents are not unified. In the case studies, the camps also struggle with acceptance in the communities, but as the camps gain recognition and acquire a generally good reputation, it has gotten easier.

The next chapter provides the details of Camp Unity Eastside – how they came to exist, how they are similar and different from Tent City 4, what the camp means to the residents, how they have specifically interacted with host organizations and cities, how the siting of the camp affects the community relations, and the effective strategies and tools have been for all involved to make Camp Unity Eastside a success.

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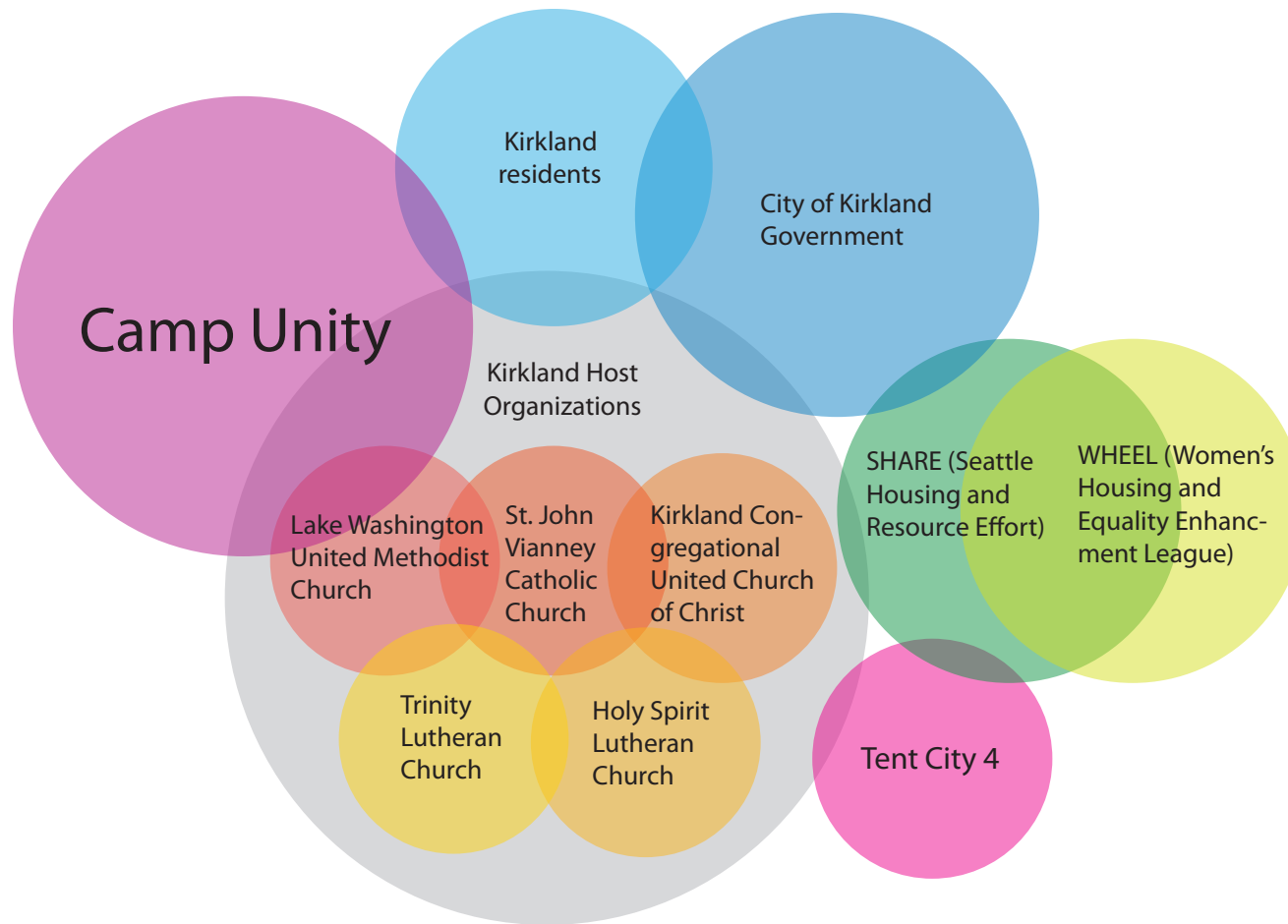


FIGURE 17. Relationship Diagram for Camp Unity Eastside, Kirkland, Tent City 4, and SHARE/WHEEL.

This diagram shows my understanding of the state of relationships while I conducted my interviews. The degree of overlap of circles indicates closeness of relationship. Camp Unity Eastside overlaps considerably more with the host organizations, particularly Lake Washington United Methodist Church, than Tent City 4. The Kirkland host organizations interact with everyone in some capacity, including each other.

CHAPTER FIVE: CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

This chapter focuses on Camp Unity Eastside, while occasionally referencing Tent City 4 in order to provide some background that either compares or contrasts shifts in attitudes or strategy that resulted from the formation of Camp Unity. The findings from this research are organized here mainly according to the key themes that emerged from the interview data analysis.

In Part One, Description of Camp Unity Eastside, I begin by covering Camp Unity's history and origin following up from the case study of Tent City 4 in Chapter Four, and demographics. Next, the section on how the camp is established covers permitting, the camps layout, siting and appearance of the camp, and governance and organizational structure. In Part Two, Camp Unity's role for its campers, community relations, and challenges facing the camp, I explore the relationships among campers, between the camp and the host organizations, and between the camp and the neighborhoods. Within the part about relationships within the camp, I also discuss how Camp Unity functions as an empowerment camp, the camper loyalty to it, the desire for a permanent camp, and camp safety. In the second part on how the camp interacts with the host organizations, I cover a general background of the host organizations' advocacy role in the camps, then go on to discuss the moving day process, access to church facilities, and site outreach and coordination. The third part on the relationships between the camp and the neighborhoods covers the Temporary Use Permit process and neighbors' reactions to the camp. Finally, I introduce some of the challenges facing Camp Unity as it moves forward.

PART ONE: DESCRIPTION OF CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

HISTORY AND MISSION

My primary source of information for this chapter and the next chapter is the in-depth one-on-one, interviews with campers, host organization members and leaders, and a city planner. Other sources of information included here that corroborate their interviews are observations from my site visits, news articles, conversations with other interested people, and websites for the camps and churches.

As described in Chapter Four, in November of 2012, a group of 12 people were barred from Tent City 4 in response to the conflict between camp leaders and SHARE/WHEEL about the issue of privacy and background checks. While only those 12 were barred and required to leave the camp, about three-quarters of the camp went with them. The campers who left Tent City 4 to join the barred campers were interested in joining the new camp right away. The chief operations officer (COO) was the main leader in this effort, and he recounted to me that he thought at the time, “that’s too many, we can’t do this, we’re too big too soon...” but he pulled together with the other leaders and accepted the offer from Lake Washington United Methodist Church (LWUMC) in Kirkland for a site to use immediately. About 65 campers moved to that site, and, because of the precipitous formation of Camp Unity Eastside, they started out as an unsanctioned camp, like many other camps start out. Luckily, the city of Kirkland was responsive and worked with the camp and church to get a temporary use permit issued quickly. The camp COO said he was concerned about the legitimacy of the camp staying on LWUMC’s property without a permit: “I knew [the church leader] had offered LWUMC as a stop-gap, but we didn’t know we would do [if the permit was not granted], and it turned out that the permit was granted, and we stayed at LWUMC.” The camp formed their own non-profit organization as a self-described empowerment camp.



FIGURE 18. Camp Unity Setting Up at Lake Washington United Methodist Church.

(Image courtesy of Camp Unity Eastside)

This is the first sanctioned camp in the Seattle metro area that is independent of SHARE/WHEEL, which operates all other camps in the area.

The name of the camp was the result of a discussion and vote by the members of the new camp. The word “Unity” was chosen for multiple reasons; it spoke to the heightened sense of community resulting from weathering an immediate crisis together, and the desire and need to join forces to better their situation as an empowerment camp. The camp leader described how the camp chose to add “Eastside” to their name; because “we’re very specific where we are,” and feel a loyalty to the relationships already established, and are in a sense staking a claim. Frequently it is referred to simply as “Camp Unity” and I also refer to it as such in this document. Based on the interviews I conducted, this crisis cemented the bond of campers in Camp Unity and enhanced the loyalty to the camp. Almost all the campers I interviewed said “I love this place” or some variant thereof discussed further in community relations.

Much like other existing tent cities, Camp Unity Eastside welcomes homeless people who can abide by the camp’s rules, live in tents, participate in camp life, and do not have issues with the law. Camp Unity Eastside also relies on partnering with host organizations, usually religious organizations, for locating their camp every three months. Also like other tent cities, Camp Unity also understands the importance of raising awareness of homelessness issues as part of their mobility and visibility on the Eastside. However, there are key differences between Camp Unity Eastside and the tent cities run by SHARE/WHEEL. One easily recognizable difference is that Camp Unity first and foremost identifies their primary function as an empowerment camp, whereas the camps run by SHARE/WHEEL are more about raising awareness of homelessness, and not as focused as moving those specific campers into permanent housing.

Camp Unity Eastside Mission Statement

1. Provide a SAFE and STABLE shelter environment for the residents and the community.
2. Be active in the community and work toward redefining homelessness and the attitudes toward individuals without a permanent residence.
3. Help facilitate an active residential transition from homelessness to permanent housing.
4. Ensure transparency of all central business operations and communications with hosts and supporters.
5. Empower our residents through self-management.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of the campers are, as most camps, in flux, because of the fluid nature of the camp. The camps are all limited to 100 campers, according to the camp rules and Temporary Use Permits. The camp started with some 60-odd campers for the first month or so, then grew into the 70s in the next couple of months, and it has hovered in the mid to low 80s since then. Since many of the campers were previously members of Tent City 4, I asked about the change in demographics that they have experienced over their time there, and I also talked to host organization members who have been involved with both camps since the camps' origins. Tent City 4 started out with a similar demographic profile to Tent City 3, (described in Chapter Four), but was predominantly male. The campers and host organization members reported seeing a shift in demographics in 2008 when the housing bubble burst and the economy declined precipitously. Previously, the majority of campers in Tent City 4 were white males between the ages of 20 and 50, who were previously homeless, and came from the Seattle system. After 2008, the camp saw a large increase in people over 45 as they were laid off for younger workers. Many more campers came from being housed, having money, and living on the eastside, as opposed to being homeless before and coming from the Seattle system. The general education level of campers increased post-2008, as people were laid off. They report seeing their first stockbroker and first CEO as campers. They had an entire construction crew enter the camp as a group, and a print shop.

Camp Unity has very similar demographics as whole. They usually hover around 25 percent female, but that fluctuates, occasionally dropping to about 18 percent. One leader reports that that proportion is close, but higher than the national average of 19-20 percent women on the streets. The King County HUD AHAR 2011 report says that women comprise 15 percent of individuals in emergency shelters, and women in families in emergency and transitional housing increases to about 75 percent of the

total. Women counted as individuals make up 58 and 37 percent is transitional housing and permanent supportive housing, respectively. There are a lot more shelters and resources targeted specifically to women and families, and women are more likely to stay with a friend or family (as “hidden” homeless). So, it appears that Camp Unity is more attractive to single women. The female campers I interviewed corroborated that, with one saying that “I would feel more safe in a place like this than I would be in an indoor shelter.” Issues of safety are discussed further later in this chapter.

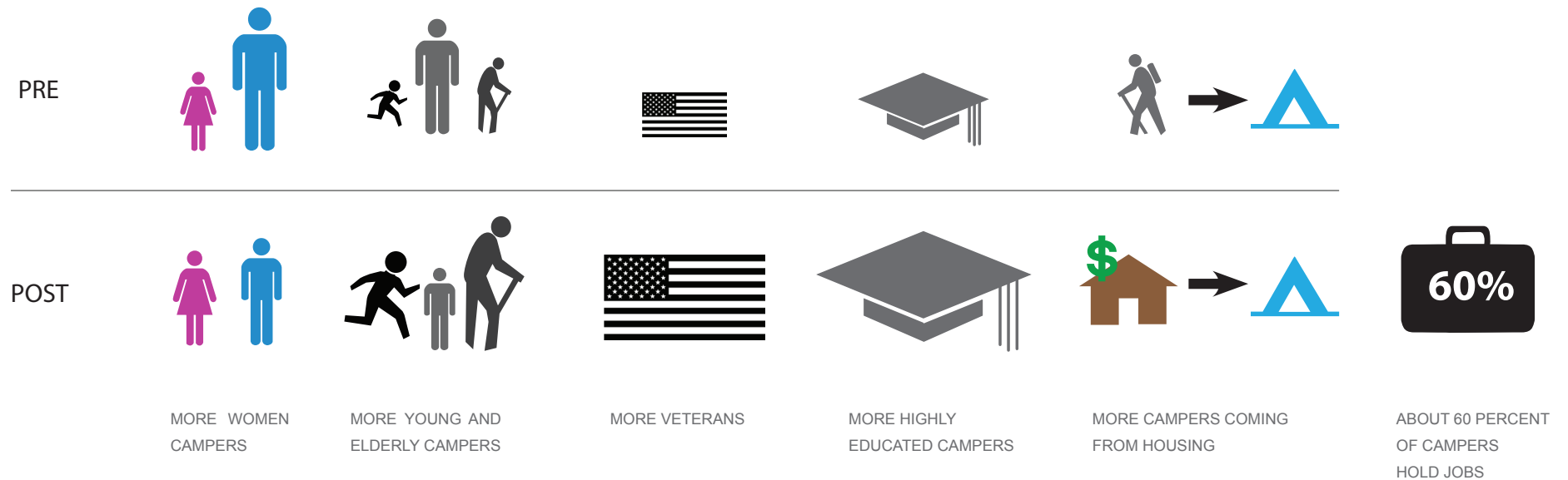


FIGURE 19. Changing Demographics of Camp Unity Diagram.



FIGURE 20. Camp Unity's Kitchen Tent.
(Image courtesy of Camp Unity Eastside)



FIGURE 21. Camp Unity's Honey Buckets.
(Image courtesy of Camp Unity Eastside)



FIGURE 22. Camp Unity's Shower and Sinks.
(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)

LAYOUT

The physical layout of tents, communal spaces and amenities on the site is usually fairly similar from site to site, and is guided by fire codes in addition to the TUP. There is always a twenty-foot setback from any residential property line for these camps, which is for fire access and for a little bit of a separation from the neighbors. The codes also dictate a set distance for pathways between tents, for fire access as well. The camp is usually set up with the more public functions towards the entrance, the communal tents next to that, with the personal tents in more private areas, as shown in Figure 25. The couples' tents are usually in the most private location of the camp. The security/office tent and donations tent are located right next to the entrance, so they can monitor visitors and accept in-kind donations easily. The kitchen tent, living room tent, computer tent, Honey Buckets, and shower room are centrally located off the entrance area.

When laying out the individual and couple's tents, some factors determine who goes where, such as those with physical disabilities or special needs take precedence and are located close to the Honey Buckets and other common facilities. Longer-term campers also generally have more of a say in where their tent is, and younger, healthier campers are frequently in less accessible locations. Campers tend to select tents with a group of friends.

Part of the siting of the camp depends on the size and shape of the property. The camp taps into the electricity of the host organization, and sometimes the sewer and water lines if feasible, so that also influences siting the camp. The camps pay about \$1,200 a month for dumpsters, emptied twice a week. The Honey Buckets are \$1,598 for five units, emptied twice a week. The camp also owns a 15-person van, which is often used to take people for medical appointments.

Unlike the other camps run by SHARE/WHEEL, Camp Unity does not have any restrictions on the campers using church facilities that have been offered. At their first site, LWUMC, the pastor opened the doors to the church around the clock to the camp, so they could access the sanctuary for sleeping, bathrooms, kitchen, and main dining area. In return, the camp maintained security on the premises and kept the church clean. The campers were also available to help out with anything around the church. At the second site, Trinity Lutheran, the campers had access to the unfinished basement rooms for television and computer rooms, but did not sleep there. In return, some campers were doing construction to help finish the basement rooms. The camp carries insurance, so if anything is missing or damaged from the churches, it can be taken care of, but there was no mention of any problems. The access to the church facilities is discussed further in part two of this chapter.

Like other camps, Camp Unity has one main access point and a fence surrounding it. The TUP requires screening material around the perimeter of the camp, which, in the case of Camp Unity, is scrim-like, so it provides partial privacy but also allows people to see general movement from the inside out or the outside in. Tent City 4 uses an opaque visual barrier. I think that while this decrease in opacity at Camp Unity was not necessarily intentional, it is complementary to Camp Unity's emphasis on organizational transparency.

SITING AND APPEARANCE OF CAMP

The siting and appearance of the camp from the outside does have an effect on how the neighborhood perceives it. Sometimes siting is constrained by the size of site, and where accesses to utilities are located. Looking at LWUMC provides a good example, because they have hosted both Tent City 4

multiple times and Camp Unity, and their site is large enough that they have tried different arrangements. When it was placed in back, it was sometimes perceived as hidden, like the host was ashamed or the camp was trying to hide something. But that configuration does provide more privacy for the campers. Up front, it is highly visible, which has positive and negative implications. A negative is that it can offend some people and can force interaction with passersby, and good because it makes the camp visible and shows what they are doing. However, as one of the members of LWUMC said to some women who were complaining that the camp sited up front was blocking the view of the church and making it look bad, "This is not the church, that's the church outside. Read your bible honey!". Other host organization members were also in favor of siting it up front, with one saying "If the community sees the face of homelessness every day when they walk by, it's kind of a reminder that hey, this is an issue, there are actually people living that way. You might think about that, but [it's] probably tougher for the folks at the camp." Other members were in favor of a private setting. One recounted that the city planner had received reports "that some of the neighborhood children walking to and from school would yell at and heckle the campers." Another host member thought it would be better balance for both the community and the campers for a more private camp setting:

For everybody, for the community as well as the camper, they have a more private setting. That works good for both, for the community cause then well, "I don't have to look at it, it's not in my face." And for campers, they're not like they're sitting with a big glass window like they're in a goldfish bowl and everybody who walks by... "look at those poor people." So probably a more private setting is the best for everybody.

Some interviewees thought that the siting of the camp had no impact on how well the camp was received, and that it was more about educating people. One camper says that:

It isn't really a matter of how close we are to the road or away from the road, or if we have a lot of trees or open space. People know who we are and why we're there, and folks, neighbors, tend to pre-judge, and pre-determine what you're going to do before you ever do it.

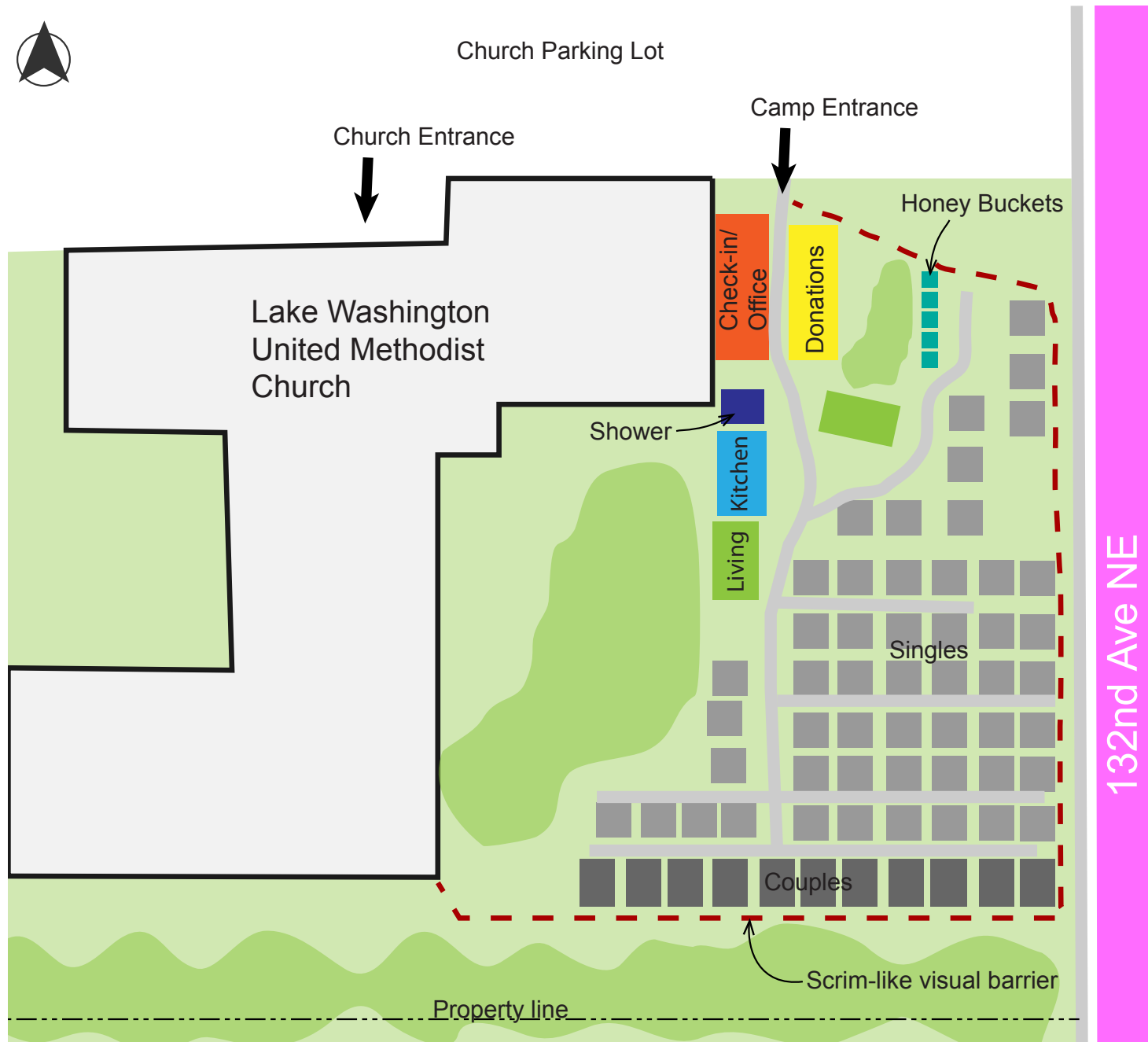


FIGURE 23. Diagram of Camp Unity Layout at Lake Washington United Methodist Church.



FIGURE 24. Inside Camp Unity.

View down walkway of singles tents.

(Image courtesy of Camp Unity Eastside)



FIGURE 25. View of Camp Unity from 132nd Ave.

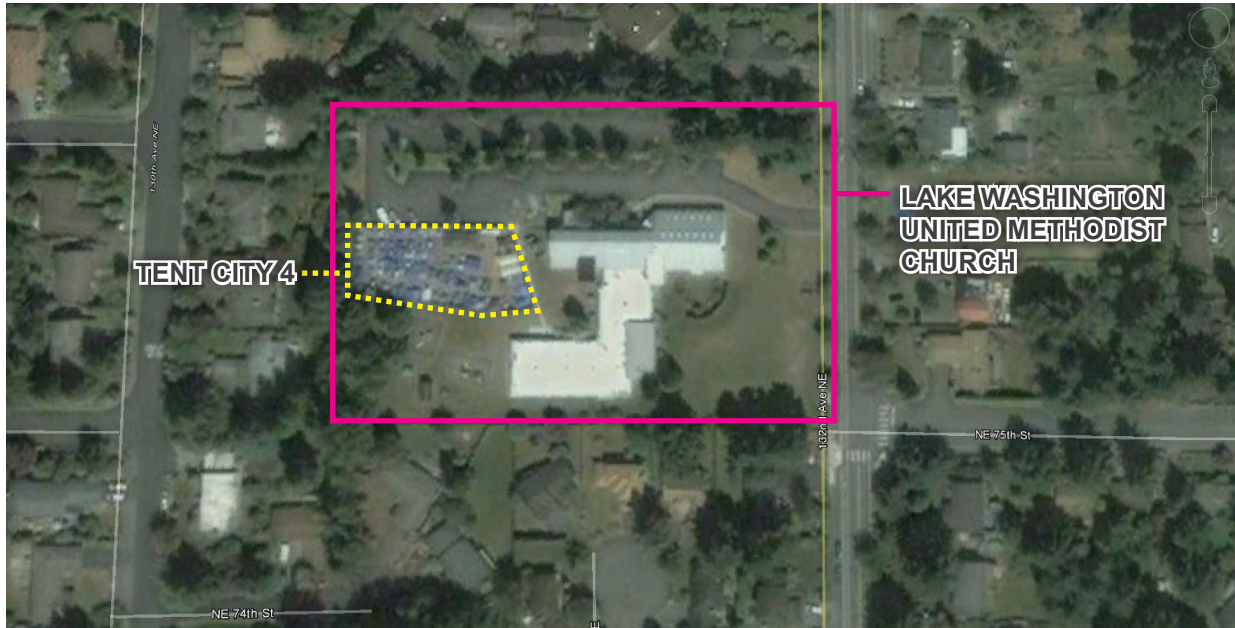
The colors and outlines of the tents can be seen through the scrim-like visual barrier.

There was no strong consensus among the campers I interviewed whether it was better to be up front or behind the church building. Personally, many of them preferred the camp to be set back from the road, because it is more private and quieter, and the campers perceive it as less offensive or intrusive to the neighborhood. Multiple campers expressed similar sentiments as this camper's opinion: "the further off the road is better... We don't want to be right in front of everybody all the time. It creates privacy. We want to have as little impact on the neighborhood. It's good so they don't have to look at us all the time." Another camper wants to convey a sense of etiquette with the placement of the camp being set back, saying "We ain't trying to hide anybody, but I ain't trying to scream in your face either. Just trying to be polite." The campers are well aware that they are trying to create a positive impression with the community.

Those campers in favor of being up front like the visibility it brings to the camp, allowing the campers to interact with and educate passersby. They want to emphasize that they are open and honest people, with nothing to hide. One camper describes his desire to show that the campers are not the stereotype of homelessness, they are actively trying to make their lives better and he wants the community to know that. He says,

I like it up front. I want to be up front with everybody. "I'm a homeless guy, come over here. I'm not going to bite you, I'm not going to swing at you, I'm just going to say yeah, I need help, I'm trying to get back on my feet. I'm here as a transition from what I'm trying to climb out of. I'm not here just to sleep, to eat and sleep."

Another camper says that "I think every single one of these campers should be staying along the road and waving, 'hey!' You don't have to say anything, you don't have to whatever... Be nice about it, be nice 'cause we're all just humans here on this earth together."



These aerial photographs, shown at the same scale as each other, show two different campsite arrangements at Lake Washington United Methodist Church. (Aerial photographs courtesy of Google Earth)

FIGURE 26. Aerial View of Tent City 4 at Lake Washington United Methodist Church in July 2005.

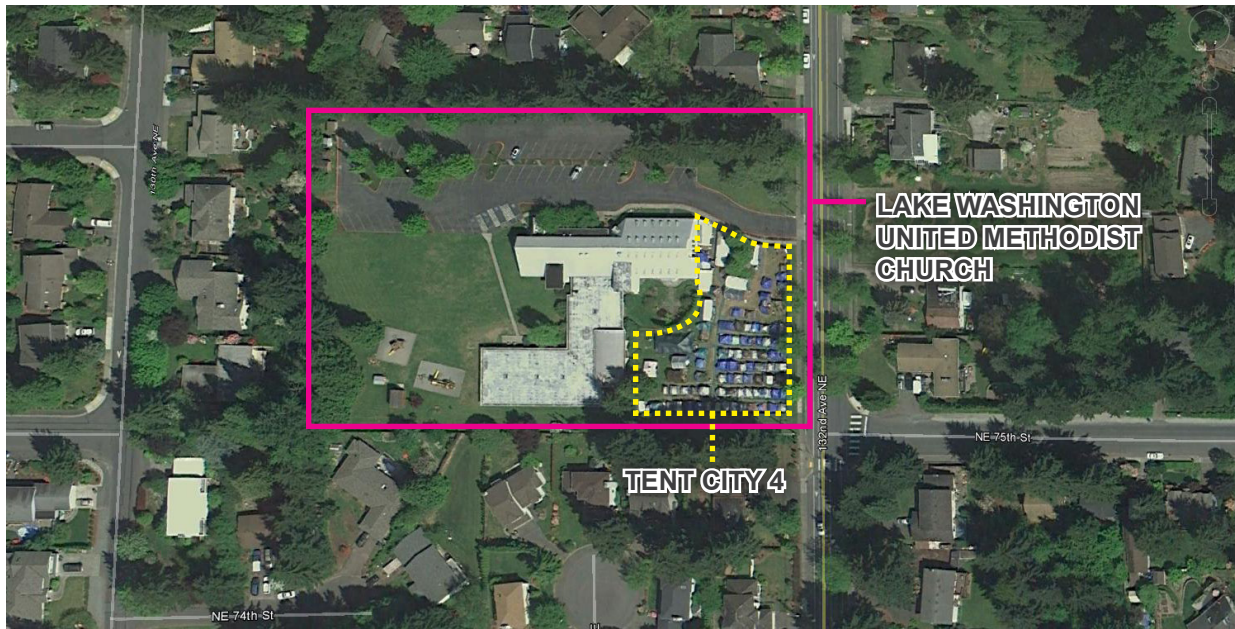


FIGURE 27. Aerial View of Tent City 4 at Lake Washington United Methodist Church in May 2010.

Other than the siting of the camp, the appearance of the tents and blue tarps is not really seen as something that can be changed, and most of my interviewees said that the appearance of the camp honestly represented what the camp is – a camp. Many thought it could be perceived as an eyesore, but were not personally put off by it. As mentioned earlier, the screening material is also put up around the camp to provide a little more privacy and block the view from the neighbors. The screening and fence also provide clear boundaries. Having access to the church building begins to blur those boundaries. Camp Unity Eastside does not receive funding from the state, whereas the camps run through SHARE/WHEEL receive money for bed-nights,¹ nor does Camp Unity receive bus tickets. Their emphasis on organizational transparency is carried through in their open books, showing the donated money and where the money is spent. Many of the former members of Tent City 4 and community members were unhappy with how SHARE/WHEEL's books were closed, and how requirements for camp residency included participating in protests, and various other activities, which interfered with keeping a regular work schedule or job searches. Camp Unity's approach is more flexible in how, and how much, campers contribute their time and efforts to the camp. Many choose to participate by taking security shifts or running the front desk, which manages many things including camper intake, schedules for the shower and laundry, answering the phone, monitoring visitors, and coordinating with deliveries and meal schedules.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Camp Unity is entirely self-run, with the only official external advising body being a board of directors, which is made up of camp members and host organization members for the most part. See Figure 29 for the general organizational structure of the camp.

1. A bed-night is a unit of reference for calculating how much money the organization will receive in funding. It refers to one person per bed, per night.

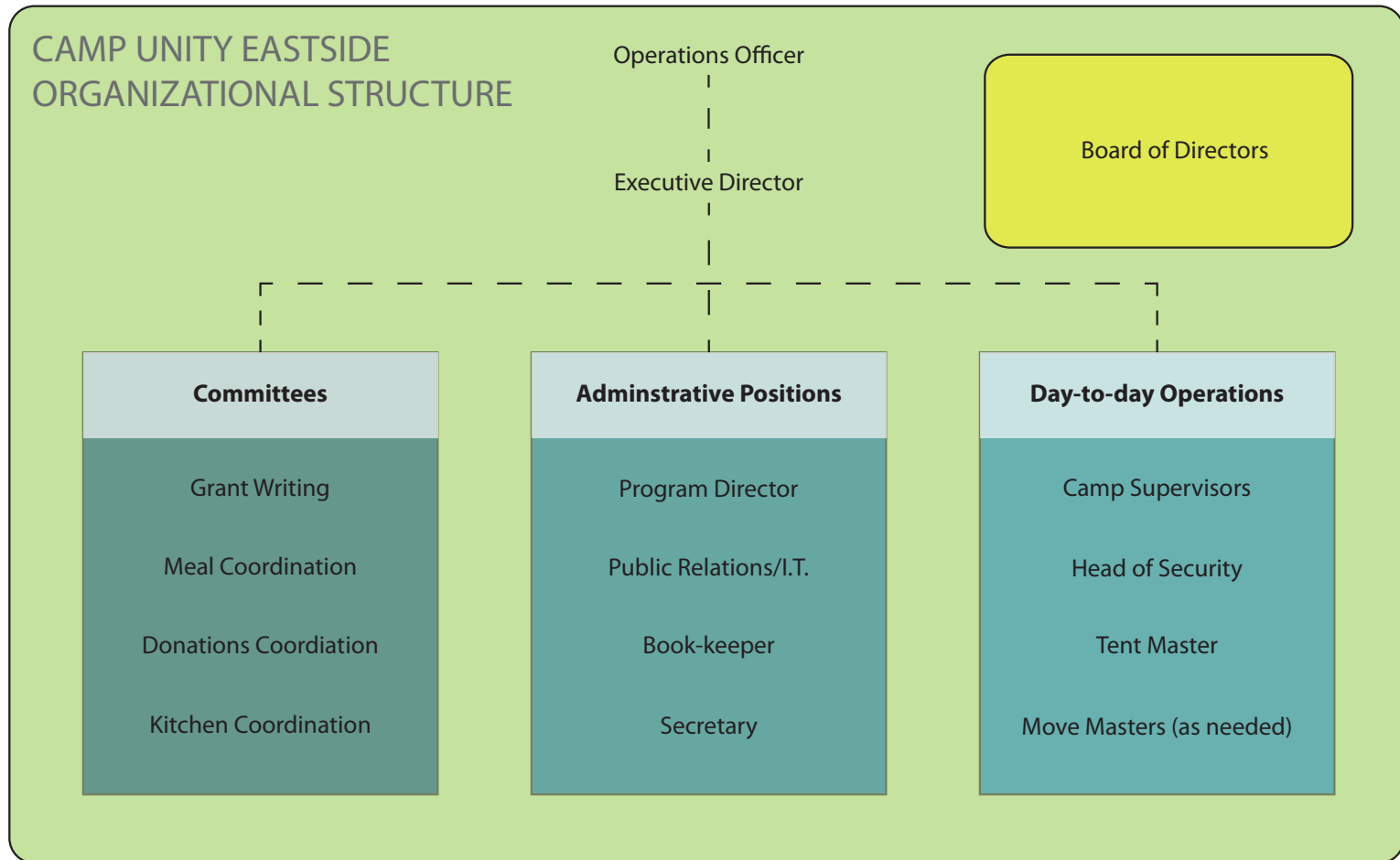


FIGURE 28. Camp Unity Eastside Organizational Structure.

Committees and positions can be formed as needed. Campers vote on all key positions. The operations officer and executive officer meet every morning to plan out the day and then check in with people around the camp to see what they need. They are available to the campers around the clock. While all the campers I spoke with voice great appreciation for the dedication of their leaders, they are also concerned that their leaders are overworked. This sentiment was also conveyed when I interviewed host organization members. Their concern is that the leaders are shouldering such a great burden, that if they had to step down or needed a vacation, the camp would not function as it should. The camp as a whole has a weekly meeting every Thursday evening where camp-wide decisions are discussed and made, and grievances aired. The meeting is completely open to anyone who wants to attend. The day-to-day camp needs and operations are taken care of by the campers in administrative, operations, or committee roles, but big decisions are discussed at the meeting and put to a vote. About three-quarters of the decisions are made by voting at the weekly meeting.

To become a member of the camp, a person has to submit an application, and the camp runs a sex offender check and a warrant check. In response to the controversy I discussed in Chapter Four, Camp Unity runs weekly sex offender checks on everyone in camp. If a person is in the camp longer than a year, they run another warrant check. If someone breaks the rules, by bringing weapons or drugs into camp, or threatening or harming another person, or damaging property, they can lose their place in the camp, either temporarily or permanently, and will be escorted out and taken to the nearest transit center. The camp is sensitive to their situation though; they evaluate each on a case-by-case basis, and try their best to assist their members. One of the leaders describes their attitude:

You're human. We got it. So we're like, "ok, we'll give you a three-day out, come back, think about what you did, because next time it may be permanent." We'll bend over backwards to help. We really don't want to make anybody else become homeless, because there's safety in numbers, you know, this is safe.

PART TWO: CAMP UNITY'S ROLE FOR ITS CAMPERS, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, AND CHALLENGES FACING THE CAMP

This section focuses primarily on the relationships within the camp, between the camp and host organization, between the camp and the neighborhood, and the challenges facing Camp Unity as they continue to develop. These relationships are complex and nuanced beyond what I discuss in my thesis; I focus on aspects of the camp that contribute to its campers and aspects of their interactions with the host and neighborhood communities that strengthen the camp, as well as difficulties that confront the camp.

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

Within the camp, relationships are as complex as any family – which is frequently how campers refer to the camp. Camp Unity Eastside is a closely-knit group of people. Even so, there are inevitably conflicts that arise, but they attempt to resolve them through their democratic process. Many of the campers I spoke with were proud of Camp Unity Eastside, and their mission as an empowerment camp. However, some campers expressed concern that other campers were not taking full advantage of the idea of self-empowerment. Here I will try to articulate what I was hearing from the campers. To begin, many campers expressed that some of their fellow campers experience a sense of hopelessness or passivity resulting from their previous experiences with homelessness, where they internalized the stigma of being homeless. At the same time, campers also expressed a frustration and anger with the homeless stigma, resulting in complex behavior where the campers have an expectation that they will receive things or money and have no personal responsibilities. This could be because part of the homeless stigma is that homeless people are entirely reliant on others, and they feel like there is nothing they can do to change the way society views them. Perhaps people experiencing homelessness feel like they might as well play

the part of the stereotypical homeless person because that is what others expect of them. But Camp Unity is trying to break that stigma and stereotype, helping people help themselves, and educating the larger community in the process. Camp Unity wants to empower the campers to take care of themselves, and by taking care of themselves, they are also empowered to help others. All the campers I interviewed were very loyal to the camp and were happy that they are part of a strong group of people who actively seek to improve their lives, fight for the rights of people experiencing homelessness, and educate the larger community about the camp and social issues.

Breaking the Stereotype

Upon their first arrival to camp, most of the campers who were newly homeless said they were kind of timid, and it took them some time to get to know people in the camp. One of the things that came up for these campers is that they initially felt like they were different from the other campers because they were not *really* homeless. One of the long-term volunteers with the camp says “when people come in and they’re new, you always hear the same words ‘I don’t belong here, this shouldn’t have happened to me, I never thought this would happen.’” Even if the new campers came from the same circumstances, there were still some misconceptions and mischaracterizations of who is homeless, and the newer campers had to adjust. One camper says, “I’d never been homeless in my life, so it felt weird, and I just had to get used to it. It took a little time, but I got used to it, just once I got to know the people around here, and they’re really, you know, good people - some are, some aren’t.”

Some of the sentiments I heard from campers are that other campers are unwilling to help simply because they do not care anymore. One camper describes how when he asks other campers to help out, “they just turn their heads and they could care less. That’s the whole mentality of it. It’s like, ‘I

don't care." When new campers arrive, they seem to express some internalization of the stigma of homelessness in the way they perceive those in the camp who have experienced homelessness for a long time, stating that "[many long-term campers are so used to] being homeless. They're like, 'yeah, I can leave my mess here, 'cause there's somebody that's going to come along and clean it up after me.'" The newer campers expressed that they are dedicated to the camp, and are willing to help in any way, but they are also frustrated by the perceived lack of effort by some other campers. It seems there are different expectations about the amount of work put into the camp itself. A few campers expressed unhappiness that other campers were not participating in camp duties as fully as they were, saying, "You get some people that may just want to come here to take a siesta, they don't want to have to help pitch in, help do anything, and it doesn't work that way. They complain about doing security." But one element of Camp Unity's mission is to help break people out of that mindset. They provide many opportunities for the campers to help themselves. One camper recognizes that it is hard for many other campers to take advantage of what Camp Unity has to offer: "There's probably only going to be a few people who seize on these opportunities and I'd like to see that happen. That's the biggest challenge, because a lot of people are not motivated because they've been in this situation a long time."

Empowerment for Campers

Beyond providing the campers opportunities to find work, a stable place to live, and access to a support system, the camp's democratic setup was meant to provide a setting where everyone has a voice. Anyone can bring up concerns at the weekly meeting, and interviewees said that most people were vocal at the meetings. But some campers related to me that some among them seemed to feel that their opinion would be disregarded, perhaps as a result of their previous experiences in other situations where they were discounted because they were a person experiencing homelessness. One camper says

in response to my question about why some campers do not speak up: “Because they’ve never really been part of...the voice part of it. I think some people are still indoctrinated into the old ways of doing things, and that really didn’t encourage you to want to speak up. They have their own personal reasons sometimes too.” Another camper says,

I’m one of the people that feels like everyone should have a voice but a lot of people don’t want to... they hold back. I’d like to encourage more talking from everybody. A few people feel like they don’t have anything to say or what they have to say isn’t important or just no one will listen, but that’s their personal choice, they can talk and no one will beat them down for it. I just want to encourage more.

All of the campers who voiced these opinions took at least one role in the camp, either as security, camp supervisors, or were on one or more committees. No one who contributed in my interviews told me that they do not participate in the camp meetings. It was unclear how active in other aspects of maintaining the camp the less vocal campers are.

One of the powerful things about Camp Unity Eastside is the ability to help people become less passive and help them stand up for their rights. One of the leaders enthusiastically expressed it this way: “Now you can think for yourself. You ain’t got anybody telling you what to do, when to do it, how to do it. It’s wide open, so c’mon, start thinking! And you’ll see the whole mind flip, when it finally happens, it’s like, ‘oh my god!’ it’s like, ‘yeah, how about that! Welcome to Camp Unity!’” The campers who were previously in one of the Tent Cities were of the opinion that SHARE/WHEEL was not doing enough to help its members get out of homelessness and were merely enabling the homeless. As one host member says,

What’s unique about Camp Unity is that they do interact with other organizations and other groups, and they are definitely more of an empowering camp. They invite various different organizations to come into camp to help the campers find places to live, to find work, to get reestablished, which is a huge difference from Tent City 4.

So, one of their goals as Camp Unity Eastside was to really push that aspect of moving people out of homelessness. According to the campers themselves, the host organization members, and the city

planner I interviewed, it seems to be the case that the campers are much happier with Camp Unity's efforts to find and use resources to help people find housing, jobs, and other services than they were with Tent City 4 and SHARE/WHEEL. One of the leaders describes it as: "We're actively trying to make everybody here have an exit strategy. To fill out an exit strategy, is like, what do you need the most? Let's help facilitate your journey to get back in to mainstream." As an empowerment camp, they "offer a range of ways for people to attain their goals" and through their networks and through state or county resources, help the campers with "legal, financial, spiritual, medical assistance, and...have counselors in all different fields available." Another host organization member also recognizes this unprecedented quality, saying:

I think their greatest strength is that they are doing something proactive on their own behalf and that is really just amazing. They said [about Tent City 4] 'this program isn't good enough, it's not getting us where we need to be so we're going to take those ideas and make our own and go in the way we want to do it.' That is just huge.

Camp as a Home

Through the empowerment aspects of the camp and the communal living, many campers feel like Camp Unity is a home and the community of people is a family. Many campers say, "I love this place." Through their combined actions and work, they develop close bonds. One camper describes his feelings: "I care about this place so much, I could sit here and talk for hours about it. I got a lot of respect for the people here and they respect me for what I've done since when I got here." The campers also have great respect for the efforts of their leaders, saying "They're willing to give the shirt off their backs to you." The camp knows that together they are strong, and they are going to help each other out as much as possible to move forward in their lives. If a camper is not able to work, frequently they become more involved in helping the camp as a whole. One camper describes her situation: "For those of us who are unable to currently work, are working on benefits, like I am – and I'm going to be looking into social

security because I'm unemployable, I'm disabled – it gives me time to focus on the camp and benefit the camp." The camp is providing a stable base for the campers, and through the provision of this existential sense of security, they may be better able to improve their circumstances.

Loyalty to Camp Unity

Many campers view their contributions and duties as "paying rent" to the camp, and express great loyalty to the camp – not just the people in it, but the idea of the camp itself. They are willing to do whatever it takes and are highly driven to help each other and the camp succeed. This loyalty to the camp and desire to work towards common goals is another aspect of the empowerment mission. Many campers expressed sentiments similar to this camper: "I would like to better things for the camp, and help it move along, keep it a positive entity where people can come and better themselves. So, if I can function in that capacity that would be great." Many of the campers take on leadership roles, Camp Supervisors in particular, as part of their loyalty and contribution to camp. This camper also views his role as setting an example for other campers that they can help too: "If they need help with anything else I'm there to help them. That's my biggest step-up. When I step up to be a Camp Supervisor it's showing not only the campers, but [the leaders] as well, that hey, this guy cares about the camp, he's willing to do what it takes to step up and help the camp out." Part of the loyalty to the camp is conserving and sharing resources and recognizing the needs of others. A camper tells how he contributes:

If I have something that I can eat myself in my tent, that I got on my food stamps or what have you, I'll provide for myself whenever possible, cause there's other people here, I realize, that need it more than I do. People can't get on food stamps or have nothing at all. If I have extra, I'm more than willing to give it.

Permanent Camp Desire

Even though some campers expressed a desire for a permanent site, there does not seem to be consensus for that direction for the camp's future. The temporary status of the camp helps assuage fear of property values decreasing among neighboring residents, and does not overtax one community's resources. When Tent City 4 moved to the eastside, they very intentionally decided to only stay in a location for three months, one of the reasons being in order to gain visibility and improve the educational value. Staying at a site for a three-month stretch also helped make it more palatable for the neighbors. However, making the camp uproot every 90 days is quite disruptive to the campers' lives and schedules. Many of the campers and host organization members mentioned how uprooting every 90 days makes getting to jobs or services more difficult for campers and how emotionally difficult it is to work on establishing new relationships or re-establishing old relationships with communities. In the interfaith "Hosting the Homeless" meeting I attended, where the impact of having two camps operating on the eastside was discussed, one of the concerns was straining the host congregation's resources, time, and money if there are potentially twice as many campers, if both Tent City 4 and Camp Unity Eastside reach maximum occupancy of 100 campers each.

Safety

Another beneficial aspect of the tight-knit community and code of conduct of Camp Unity Eastside is the safety aspect. The campers know that their belongings are safe during the day – they will not be stolen or thrown away, and that they are safe staying there at night. Security patrols run around the clock, for both the outdoor areas and near the camp, in addition to running indoor security if they have access to church facilities. They are relieved of the monumental stress of not knowing where they will be spending the night every day. They have some home comforts, like a television and couches, and have access to

basics like food, shelter, and the ability to maintain their hygiene. One camper describes this as a camp strength: “this was the only real thing, this private place that you could stay and leave your stuff, without anybody getting into it or stealing from you, and being able to go to work, actually. Or try to, without lugging your bag around. So that’s a great strength here.”

Everyone I interviewed who is not a camp member mentioned the safety and hygiene amenities of the camp as a major asset for the campers. One host member says, “It’s a safe place where you can leave your belongings, and have a shower, and be able to sleep at night so that you can actually go out and present yourself at a job interview.” The police departments in many of the municipalities have a good relationship with the camps they have encountered, and Camp Unity is no exception. The officers stop by the camp usually about twice a day to check in, and talk with the campers. Having this relationship also helps allay neighborhood fears as well. Almost all the people I interviewed mentioned that the crime rates either remain the same in an area or actually decrease slightly with the presence of the camp, because the camp is running security constantly and are quick to report suspicious activity.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE AND THE HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Camp Unity’s relationship with their host organizations has been so far a good one. The camp founders were already familiar with their first host, Lake Washington United Methodist Church (LWUMC) in Kirkland, which made their first months in existence much easier. When the group split from Tent City 4, SHARE/WHEEL retained all the tents, tarps, and pallets, so the campers were without. The LWUMC community pulled together and came up with enough donations to purchase new items, and collected in-kind donations as well to help the camp get on their feet. This is a testament to the bonds that have

been established between the camp and the host church. The host organizations also frequently gather members to prepare and serve meals to the camp, and coordinate with other groups, like high school sports teams, to serve meals as well. The camp had no way to do laundry at their naissance, so many members of LWUMC took loads of laundry home with them and washed it for weeks until a new washer and dryer were delivered to the camp.

Hosts as Advocates

Not all the host organization members were always so accepting of the camps, back when Tent City 4 started, but everyone I interviewed emphasized the overwhelming support for the camps now. Everyone who talked about it in my interviews – campers and host members alike – said that people who were afraid or suspicious of the camp were that way out of ignorance, and ignorance leads to fear. Hence, one of the goals of the camps is to educate and enlighten the church and neighborhood on who they are and the situations that they face. The host organization members I interviewed all reported that they have stood up in support for the camp at one time or another, either to other host organization members, or at a community meeting. A long-time advocate for the camp recounted her experience with Tent City 4's first community meetings:

I think they need us to be there. And that's when... I stood up. There were some awful things said, some horrible things yelled at the priest, and I finally stood up and said, 'look, these are not Vikings invading our neighborhood. These are people just like you and me' so they we ended up signing up to help on committees because we felt [the host churches] needed the support from other than just their own congregation. And we've been there ever since.

The host organizations typically have social justice and homeless outreach as one of their major concerns and ministries, so hosting Camp Unity or one of the tent cities is helping them fulfill their mission. A member of Holy Spirit Lutheran described their church's outreach of five different teams,



FIGURE 29. Morning on Move Day.

Camp Unity is packed up and ready to be loaded into moving trucks the morning of Move Day.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)



FIGURE 30. Trucks on Move Day.

Moving trucks and volunteer vehicles help on the morning of Move Day.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)

including a housing team that “focused around supporting the encampments and then looking at doing advocacy work around housing issues and then just basically educating the rest of the congregation about those kinds of issues and try to keep a spotlight on the need for affordable housing.” The hosts usually have a variety of other outreach efforts that are ongoing as well. For example, LWUMC also hosts car campers in their parking lot. When Camp Unity stayed there, campers volunteered to do security rounds for the car campers as well. This continued even when the camp moved on to another site, maintaining the ongoing relationship with LWUMC in yet another way. For the host organization members I interviewed, hosting a camp is very rewarding for them. One member told me that the reason she and her husband chose to attend LWUMC after moving to Kirkland was the fact that the church hosted a tent city. They drove by the church while Tent City 4 was camping there, and she thought, “let’s try that place out, because if they do that, if they let those people stay there, then we want to be [there].”

Move Day

Another aspect of hosting a tent city is assisting with move day, something I took part in during this research. The camp must move every 90 days (or every 60, depending on the municipality), so they have the moving process fairly refined, considering they are constantly dealing with new campers and volunteers. Major preparations begin up to two days in advance, packing up supplies and things that are not used on a daily basis. Move day involves coordination between the current and future host, and the camp. The camp has two “move masters,” one at each site, who coordinate the order in which things are moved, how they are packed up and where they go when they are there. Someone takes charge of the kitchen supplies and tent as the kitchen manager, another camper takes charge of coordinating meals during the move day, and the tent-master is at the new site laying out the locations of all the tents and managing the setup. The camp rents a large moving truck to move the 475 pallets, 400 sheets of

plywood, tents, and other assorted items. Campers pack personal belongings and clothes in black plastic trash bags if they do not have luggage, and everything is labeled with the camper's name. Volunteers also help transport people and items to the new site in their personal vehicles. Although the move is fairly well organized, there is a lot of room for improvisation and adaptation for changing conditions as they go.

The volunteer turnout has been so high that sometimes volunteers and campers end up standing around or not helping at all, because there are so many people. So, there is an upper limit, though yet undefined, of how many and what type of volunteers are needed, and perhaps in the future the camp will set a limit on them. It is not always beneficial to the campers to have so many volunteers – the campers are responsible for moving their camp, and not everything needs to be done by someone else. One host member mused during our interview about the need for the hosts to be aware of boundaries within their role. He related that in his experience, some campers can feel like they are being cared for *too* much, which in turn can impede the self-empowerment aspect of the camp, and the relationship-building between campers.

The host churches, they're very willing to help, but there's a balance between helping someone in a constructive way versus just being a mother hen... and the people who have been in the camp, they're used to living pretty resourcefully and independently, so they're getting smothered by it, all these people that want to take care of them.

The campers do not want to perpetuate an attitude of passivity in the camp where it is "just expected for people to come in and help us." Having the move day process also builds trust between campers – trusting that their belongings are going to be moved and set up, building reliance on each other, and engendering cooperation – that empowers them.



FIGURE 31. Laying String Lines for the New Campsite.

Move Masters prepare in the morning at the new site, using a tape measure and string lines to locate the camp elements.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)



FIGURE 32. Laying Out Pallets.

Move Masters double-check pallet layout.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)

Access to Church Facilities

Having access to the church facilities is something unique to Camp Unity since they are not under the umbrella of SHARE/WHEEL. As mentioned in the section on the physical setup of the camp, Camp Unity has enjoyed the hospitality of their hosts beyond what was previously experienced. The gesture of literally throwing open the church doors to the camp has proven to be very powerful in strengthening the relationships between the hosts and the camp. As mentioned, the relationship with LWUMC continued beyond the camp's stay. The pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, which had never hosted the camp before this time, describes the impact on the host/camp relationship in relation to accessing the church building:



FIGURE 33. Afternoon at the New Site on Move Day.

Campers' personal items and tents are unloaded onto large tarps at the new site while the Move Masters finish laying out the pallets.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)



FIGURE 34. New Site on Move Day.

The new campsite is more secluded and some tents are under trees.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)

They essentially take ownership of this place too. We have a number of different organizations that meet here and I'm not here to go through at night to make sure everything is locked up and lights are off. They do that as part of their security checks. They'll make sure all the building is closed up, all the lights are down, etc. They have taken ownership of this place. They've taken ownership of this neighborhood, really.

The campers are impressed and touched that the churches trust them in this way. One camper talked about how their relationship with the hosts improved:

It changed a lot. At Lake Washington, they really opened up their church, and they gave us the whole friggin' church, you know, like woowoo. You never see a church nowadays, in this day and age, ever open up their church like that. And then to keep it open after we leave, for 24 hours a day, never to lock the doors again, that's... that's phenomenal.

This constant physical access is significant in showing the campers and host organization members that the church recognizes the humanity of the campers in a way that is quite different from just point-in-time events, like serving a meal. One of the camp leaders recognizes this, saying "I think it helps the campers to... give them back the little moments, you know, to actually be able to sit down on a couch and watch TV, instead of inside your tent on little bitty eight-inch little DVD player and 'oh god I'm freezing!'" That being said, some of the campers feel like others abuse that generosity and leave trash or food waste lying around. One camper says of it, "have a little bit of respect for the host church and don't leave [it] for the people who do pick up after themselves." Overall, it appears that continued access to the church has strengthened the relationship between the camp and the host organization members.

Site Outreach and Coordination

In order to find new sites, it is a matter of the camp reaching out to potential hosts, and in turn, potential hosts approaching the camp. There are multiple coalitions among the faith communities, and the hosts are sometimes recruited from these meetings. Most of these started in the late 80s or early 90s. The Greater Kirkland Ecumenical Parish, and Interfaith Alliance of Washington State started as politically and theologically liberal organizations to counter the religious right's attempts to politicize religion. Almost



FIGURE 35. Food and Kitchen Supplies in LWUMC's Multi-purpose Room Adjacent to the Kitchen.

Everything is packed up and ready to be moved on Move Day. In the background, the table to the right is the check-in and coordination desk for volunteers and campers during Move day. Camp Unity Move Masters coordinate and administer the whole process.

(Image courtesy of Lisa Sturdivant)

all of the churches involved in those ended up hosting camps at some point. The Kirkland Interfaith Transitions in Housing and Kirkland Interfaith Network (with the aptly named acronyms KITH and KIN respectively) are both organizations that assist the camps. I attended a meeting in May of 2013 in which these organizations were specifically discussing Tent City 4 and Camp Unity Eastside – the status of the camps, ideas how to move forward with supporting both camps and providing ways to stable housing, identify new hosts, and plan follow-up actions and identify a support team for the camps and other homeless. So, the hosts in Kirkland were actively discussing a future with both camps, but there was concern about the availability of sites and the limits of resources available. There was a discussion of developing a hosting calendar with the camps, and also make themselves available as facilitators to end the “feuding” and competition for resources between the camps. There were about 30 people (from various churches) in attendance in that meeting, and there was some tension over which camp you supported, but the general consensus was that no matter the politics and accusations, the fact remained that there were people without homes; the camps are a band-aid and further efforts must be made to get the campers out of homelessness.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Temporary Use Permit Process

Like Tent City 4, Camp Unity Eastside is limited to 100 people by a Temporary Use Permit (TUP), which is the way many municipalities on the eastside regulate homeless camps. In Kirkland, each host site can only host a camp once a year, according to the way the TUP is written. The TUP for Kirkland also requires that the camp be within half a mile from transit services, have a transportation plan in place, have a code of conduct, and must have a sponsoring organization (usually the church), among other things. See Appendix D for the full list of Kirkland's regulations that were adopted in 2006. The process of establishing a camp once it has been approved is described in that document in a fairly straightforward manner:

Following receipt of a TUP application, the City mails a Notice of Application to property owners within 500 feet of the subject property and residents or tenants adjacent to the property. The Notice will be mailed within 14 days before the Director's decision is made and will be published in the Seattle Times at least seven days prior to the Director's decision. The same mailing list will receive a Notice of Decision four days following the decision. There is a 21 day appeal period following the decision. Appeals may be filed with King County Superior Court.

Chapter 127 of the Kirkland city code, which provides more detail, can also be found in Appendix D. This includes the mandatory public meeting at least 14 days in advance of the camp moving to a new site.

Neighborhood Reactions to the Camp

The community meetings required by the Temporary Use Permit TUP process originally were highly contentious on the eastside, like I described in Chapter Four. Now, the meetings for both camps are sparsely attended. However, just because no one is showing up at the meetings to protest does not mean that everyone likes it. Two of the main concerns that the neighborhood residents have voiced in

the past meetings are for the safety of their children, and for their property values. The police department shows up at the meetings and discusses the lack of crime associated with the camp, the camp members stand up and talk about who they are and how they do background checks on everyone, and that usually has been effective in calming the fears. Usually the people who do attend are showing up in support of the camp or are interested in helping out in some way. However, in some cases those who attend are against the camp's arrival, but many respondents' stories indicate that their attitudes changed as they got to know the campers, and the campers proved themselves to be good neighbors. One of the people involved in helping the camps since their inception describes how one man's attitude changed with Tent

City 4:

At Bellevue United Methodist Church we had a man who fought, screamed and yelled and raised a whole uproar [at the meeting]. After the camp opened it was two doors down from his house and he decided he was going to be in that camp every day. He was going to go by and check up every day. By the end of the first week he was making sandwich boards to stand out in front of the church, "hire these people for local landscaping." And he's one of our strongest supporters to this day.

Apart from such individual cases, Camp Unity's has been generally well-received by the community. During my interview period in the spring of 2013, the planning department in Kirkland was considering changing the TUP requirements so that sites that have hosted a camp before would not require the public meeting component, but new hosts would still be required to have the community meeting. This change was proposed because of the lack of attendance at the public meetings and the relationships the camps have established with their hosts. Maintaining transparency with the community meeting for at least for a little while longer will be beneficial for establishing the camps' legitimacy. In September of 2013, the Kirkland Zoning Code was updated to reflect this change. Notification for residents living in a 500 foot radius are still issued. See Appendix D for the Kirkland Zoning Code chapter 127. These are important steps towards making the camps accepted in the neighborhood.

CHALLENGES

For Camp Unity Eastside, there are a variety of challenges facing them: simply having enough resources to continue, maintaining the democratic structure and social interactions within the camp, establishing themselves as a separate entity from SHARE/WHEEL, empowering the campers, and educating people to try and end the stigma of homelessness. Operating costs and permitting were mentioned as a challenge, as well as keeping up donations. Not having bus tickets, like they had at Tent City 4, was also mentioned as one of the daily challenges for the campers. Day-to-day operations and interactions in a camp with 80-plus people also present logistical issues – as one host organization member puts it, “How do you all live together? You see all the chaos that goes on a family of five or six... Multiply that a few times.” However, one of the biggest challenges mentioned repeatedly for the camp's internal structure was the fact that the camp has some very strong leaders who work hard, but, if for some reason one or more of the leaders were to leave, the camp would struggle considerably to keep going. Another sticking point within the camp is the dissatisfaction of some with the amount of participation of other campers, as I alluded to earlier in the chapter.

Outside of the camp, one of the biggest challenges mentioned by the campers was disassociating themselves from Tent City 4 and SHARE/WHEEL and establishing themselves as a separate entity. The fact that there are now two camps on the eastside competing for sites and resources is yet another unprecedented challenge facing Camp Unity. There is still a lingering distrust from some communities around the sex-offender crisis that was the catalyst for Camp Unity's formation, and the camp is constantly fighting the perception that people experiencing homelessness are drug addicts, alcoholics, abusers, or mentally ill. Their continued visibility and efforts to educate people about who is homeless are an ongoing task.

Camp Unity faces some larger issues – finding affordable housing, getting jobs in a still-struggling economy, and most of all, the stigma of homelessness; they are not just “lazy bums,” as many of the campers put it, they are people too. I heard the phrase “we are people too” over and over again, in interviews and conversations with campers, and similarly with the other groups I interviewed, they emphasized how the campers were just like anyone else, just experiencing homelessness. One camper spoke passionately about the prejudice they have experienced:

I used to be like anybody else. And they see us, for some reason, as almost subhuman at times, in some people's opinions, I get that feeling that we're just... we're not as good as they are because they drive a car, they have a home... it's not fair. They don't realize there are a lot of professionals that reside here, there's a lot of people... ALL of us used to be like they are. And that's the hardest thing, I think, of all, is breaking that homeless perception.

The challenges that Camp Unity faces are not unique to this camp, or this region. Many camps and people experiencing homelessness face the same prejudices and problems every day.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, I reflect on the findings of this study and the implications for Camp Unity as they move forward. First, I review the successful strategies and strengths of Camp Unity. Next, I discuss some of the challenges and unresolved issues that Camp Unity faces. Following that, I discuss how this thesis could be useful for self-organized homeless camps, host organizations, and planners in general. After that, I consider the limitations of my work and directions for future research, and conclude with some final thoughts.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES AND STRENGTHS OF CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

Despite its short life so far, Camp Unity Eastside has been remarkably successful with enhancing their relationships with their hosts and empowering their campers, especially compared to the struggles of previous camps. Part of this is due to the fact that previous camps helped pave the way through their outreach. One of the biggest strengths is partnering with host organizations, primarily churches, for a place to stay and for assistance with financial and in-kind donations. Most of the host organization members have been involved with either Camp Unity or Tent City 4, or both, since the beginning of the camps. Many of the churches view social justice as a strong aspect of their mission, and so working with the camps was seen as a manifestation of that mission. Many of the host organization members are advocates for the camp and people experiencing homelessness in general. As mentioned in previous chapters, not all advocates started out in favor of the camps. The camps were responsible for this

change of heart by standing up for themselves and working in conjunction with the cities and hosts to participate in the civic process, claiming their right to the city. Camp Unity in particular accomplishes this through their transparency of operations, willingness to educate visitors, and general openness. By placing the camp on church property, often touching church buildings, the camp and the church are visibly partnering with each other.

Other strengths of this empowerment camp include having a code of conduct, a democratic structure, an application process to become a camper, and running their own security. The benefits to campers are multifold. The campers can take charge of their own living situation, helping them gain control over their own life again and fighting against the internalized stigma of homelessness. This goes back to the concept of *autogestion* mentioned in the literature review. The camp has organized as a group to influence society and assert their rights, impacting the municipalities to create “group-differentiated policies”, as Young puts it. After Tent City 4 started on the eastside, some planners on the eastside worked proactively in the second half of the 2000s to develop policies and codes regarding the camps. The policies help ensure that the campers follow basic health and safety codes, and help legitimize the camps’ presence.

Another successful strategy of Camp Unity Eastside was to break away from the umbrella organization of SHARE/WHEEL to form their own nonprofit. This allowed them more freedom and transparency. When Tent City 4 camped with some churches, the hosts had wondered why the campers did not attend services when camping on the church property, or why they were kept separate and did not enter the church except for meals, even when the campers were invited in. Camp Unity has more permissive rules regarding interactions, and it has been beneficial for enhancing relationships between the camp and the

hosts. As mentioned previously in Chapter Five, having access to church facilities for worship, cooking, hanging out, and sleeping, solidifies trust between them. Another form of trust is exemplified through Move Day. Move Day builds trust among campers, hosts, and volunteers through teamwork. Developing this level of trust is yet another way the campers have been empowered.

CHALLENGES AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES FOR CAMP UNITY EASTSIDE

There are some issues that remain difficult for Camp Unity. These include balancing privacy and visibility, having strong leadership that runs the risk of burning out, struggling with stability over the long term, some conflicting desires of the direction of the camp over the long term – including the debate over a permanent camp versus a mobile camp, and continuing to self-advocate and empower campers while battling the stigma of homelessness.

Balancing privacy and visibility is one concern that must constantly be addressed at each new site. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the campers as a whole have mixed feelings about being in the public eye. On one hand, it is educational for the neighborhood and shows the strength of relationship between the camp and the host, especially when the camp is located to the front of the property and is visible from the street. On the other hand, it is an added stress for the campers to not have a lot of privacy and the campers worry about being too intrusive on the neighborhood. Seeing the campers living differently in the public realm tends to make some community members uncomfortable. Finding the right balance with siting the camp is an ongoing challenge. This is where planners can contribute as advocates for the campers and facilitate an equitable solution, as described in the literature review in the section on radical pluralism. The campers need to have some areas and times of privacy.

Strong leadership has made Camp Unity quite successful so far, but the leaders have so many demands on their time, many campers and host organization members voiced concern that their leaders will become too fatigued without enough help. At the time of my interviews, many of the campers were acting in leadership roles, but the camp had not quite found the right balance in their administrative roles. The fact that there are now two camps on the eastside competing for sites and resources is yet aspect of this challenge facing Camp Unity. Maintaining consistent leadership, especially in a camp with a shifting population, is an exhausting task. Developing a unified group and structure with a population in flux requires some very dedicated people in charge, and those people need to be grooming successors who are willing to be flexible with the new personalities that come into the camp.

As I mentioned in Chapter Five, some campers voiced the desire for a permanent site, while others were content with the mobile nature of it. This could be a challenge to presenting a unified front, and is also indicative of different philosophies and approaches to solutions to homelessness in general. Perhaps a group might splinter off in the future, because having quite different overarching visions for the camp could lead to conflict later down the line. A permanent camp would likely not be serving the same role in terms of educating the public and giving homelessness a face because they would not be entering new communities or necessarily forging new bonds, but the added stability of a permanent location would be beneficial to the campers.

Breaking the perception of homelessness – among community members and the campers themselves – is one of the biggest challenges mentioned by the campers. Part of this struggle involved campers disassociating themselves from Tent City 4 and SHARE/WHEEL and establishing themselves as a separate entity. Although campers view differentiating themselves from Tent City 4 as an ongoing

challenge, I mention it also as a success because it appears that they are making headway in this effort to become a unique camp. There is still a lingering distrust from some communities around the sex-offender crisis that was the catalyst for Camp Unity's formation, and the camp is constantly fighting the perception that people experiencing homelessness are drug addicts, alcoholics, abusers, or mentally ill. Many of the interviewees from the camp or host organizations mentioned that community members are afraid of what they do not understand. The campers' continued visibility and efforts to educate people about who is homeless are an ongoing task.

GENERAL THOUGHTS FOR SELF-ORGANIZED CAMPS

As I conclude this research, I have reflected on issues related to policy, community relations, and locational process for self-organized camps; keeping in mind, as most interviewees stated, that camps are not a solution to homelessness. However, self-organized camps serve a valuable role at this point in time not only for the campers, but for the communities they are becoming part of. There is a very real, unfortunate need for such camps in our society, and we as a society can take action to help self-organized camps while working towards other solutions as well. These ideas are for everyone – campers, hosts, community members, policy-makers, and planners.

Policy

In terms of general policy for camps, city planners should be proactive, not reactive, and act as advocates for the camps. Land use and zoning policy should be responsive to the changing needs of the camps, hosts, and community. As mentioned previously, the City of Kirkland is a good example of the city planners working constructively with the camp, hosts, and surrounding community. See Appendix D for

more details on the City of Kirkland's policies and code. The Temporary Use Permit (TUP) process has been working well so far on the eastside of the Seattle metro area, but may not be the best choice for all communities. It is important to develop an established process of community involvement, meetings, notifications, and so on as part of the TUP process. Requiring a public meeting as part of the policy for the neighbors to meet the camp representatives and city departments involved – usually the police and planning departments – can be tense and stressful for all involved. However, it is also a public forum where groups of people can come together and voice their concerns and support of the camp, where the camp and city departments can educate the people who are unfamiliar with the camp before the camp moves to a site. It is one more way that the camp takes part in the civic realm as an entity to be taken seriously. In Kirkland, the zoning code was recently changed so that if a camp is returning to a prior host site, a public meeting is not required, because over the past few years the meetings have had almost no attendees who were unfamiliar with the camps.

One aspect of the Kirkland requirements is that the camp must partner with a host organization, or multiple organizations, to ensure that the camp has advocates and a support system. Tent City 4 had camped on city land in some municipalities, but the camp and city experienced considerable animosity during those stays. Partnering with religious organizations are ideal because they enjoy more freedoms with their land under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), passed in 2000, and frequently view social justice and outreach as part of their religious freedom and mission. As such, they are more resistant to lawsuits.

The TUP usually requires some sort of visual screening and setback from neighboring property, which helps the camp feel more organized and self-contained, but the code does not address signage.

Currently, the camp welcomes visitors at all times. If the camp could have clearly posted visiting hours for the public, it would serve two purposes: one, it would be a written invitation to people unfamiliar with the camp, showing that the camp was open to visit; and two, give the campers a schedule of when they could expect to see visitors coming through.

Community relations

Camps should attempt to be transparent with their intentions, because people fear the unknown. There will be apprehensive community members who object to the camps' presence, and it will be important for the camp to have calm, assertive, eloquent speakers and advocates. Forming a nonprofit is a strong move to empowering the campers as a group, and is a proactive way to help the group access resources such as dental health services, housing services, counseling services, and job services. In the case of Camp Unity, the camp owns a van, and will take groups of people to make use of these services. Once again, partnering with other organizations is important in adding legitimacy to the camp. Sharing with the public the code of conduct, rules, and application process for joining the camp is another good idea to assuage neighbors' fears, and educate people. Many camps have a website that shares this information, plus personal stories, photos, and contact information to become involved with volunteering or to donate. These websites also help people identify with campers. Pointing out other successful camps or bringing in advocates who can share personal stories also can assist with community relations during public meetings. The police department usually is in attendance at TUP meetings and this also goes a long way to supporting the camps. Having open camp meetings that everyone is invited to attend is another way of being transparent. Events, such as fundraisers, are also a good way of reaching out for assistance and raising awareness at the same time.

Locational process

For any self-organized camps going forward, it is important that organizers explore relationships between hosts and camp before the hosts commit to receiving the camp. Talk through all scenarios, set up clear expectations and have a structured plan for interactions, in addition to being open to casual interactions as well. This flexibility and type of relationship is evident between Camp Unity Eastside and Lake Washington United Methodist Church. It is important to locate the camp close to the actual structure or structures on the host's land. A close physical relationship shows a close emotional relationship. Clearly marked boundaries help show that the camp is organized and a visual barrier can help campers with more privacy. Camp Unity's scrim-like visual barrier is unintentionally translucent, but based on this research it is beneficial to both the campers and the community to be able to see movement and general outlines through it. It is a physical manifestation of the organization's efforts at transparency.

LIMITATIONS OF WORK

This thesis represents a point in time when Camp Unity Eastside was very new, and just starting out on their own. One of the interesting things about this camp and the communities on the eastside is that the relationships between the camp and the hosts are constantly evolving, and by the time this is published, I am sure that the camp will have advanced past some of their challenges. I had limited time and resources to conduct my interviews and collect information, and not everyone was available for interviews. This made it challenging for me to find some information because documentation for the history of camps in general is limited. Much of the background I needed was communicated orally through my interviews, but I tried to present a complete a picture as possible. In my documentation of Camp Unity Eastside, I also refer frequently to the history of Tent City 4 and SHARE/WHEEL because

that camp laid some of the groundwork on the eastside, and because multiple campers have been residents of both camps. I refer to Tent City 4 throughout this thesis while still being cognizant that Camp Unity has been trying to differentiate and disassociate themselves from it, and I would like to be clear that I was using it to explain the history of self-organized camps on the eastside, and using it to compare and contrast with Camp Unity.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This topic of policy, community relations, and locational process for self-organized camps is ripe for future research. Following up with Camp Unity would be very informative, as well as getting more detailed information from city planners and communities other than Kirkland. One area of further research would be the success rate of campers moving into permanent housing as a result of participating in Camp Unity. This information could assist both the camp and planners to expand their influence on policy supportive of the camps' role as a transition out of homelessness. This would include following up with former campers, some of whom are still in contact with and assisting the camp.

Further study could also include looking at all the camps in the Seattle metro area, and the subtleties of their interactions with hosts and communities. Another avenue to explore is investigating self-organized camps in other areas of the country, or even in other countries to compare their circumstances and camps to Camp Unity.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While Camp Unity Eastside has been beneficial for the campers, no one is under the illusion that the camp is a solution to homelessness; it is merely as temporary fix, or a stepping stone toward more stable, permanent housing. The religious organizations involved in these camps have a unique position to help the homeless campers because they can use their land and resources with more discretion than most places, thanks to the freedom of religion. As mentioned in Chapter Four, a series of lawsuits were brought against host organizations for housing homeless people on their properties, but ultimately the law sided with the camps and the churches or temple, and the campers were allowed to live on these sites for a temporary period. Camp Unity's emergence among these various camps has been much smoother than previous camps, thanks to the fights already fought. They have been able to step farther than previous camps, because they are autonomous, and are living out their mission to empower their residents. Their future is uncertain, but they are determined to succeed. Their hosts and partners recognize the high level of motivation and drive the campers exhibit. One person who regularly assists the camp says, "It's absolutely amazing how positive, how happy they are to see people, even on a crappy, rainy, cold day. They're some of the most positive people I've ever been around."

APPENDIX A: HUD DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

The Final Rule for the HEARTH Act under HUD defines homelessness as:

- (1) Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided;
- (2) individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
- (3) unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; and
- (4) individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.¹

The document cited below also contains detailed definitions and clarifications for each of these categories.

The HEARTH Act defined “at risk of homelessness” as a family or individual with income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area (referred to as “extremely low income in housing programs); with insufficient resources immediately available to obtain housing stability and having moved frequently because of economic reasons; living in the home of another because of economic hardship; already notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated; living in a hotel or motel or severely overcrowded housing; exiting an institution; or otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.²

1. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, HUD, “Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining ‘Homeless,’” *Federal Register* 76, no. 233, Rules and Regulations (December 5, 2011): 75995, https://www.onecpd.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf.

2. Mary Ellen Hombs, *Modern Homelessness: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 183.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY DOCUMENTS

Interview questions for campers

1. How long have you lived in Camp Unity?
2. Were you part of Tent City 4?
 - a. How long did you live there?
3. How did you first hear about Camp Unity or Tent City 4?
4. What were some of your first thoughts about it after moving in?
5. How do you feel about living in Camp Unity?
 - a. What are the benefits you have noticed, either for yourself or others?
 - b. What about drawbacks?
6. What kind of interactions do you have with other Camp Unity residents?
7. Have your impressions about Camp Unity changed as you live in it?
8. What impressions do you have about the other groups of people, such as the church, city planners, neighborhood groups, and non-profits, which have interacted with Tent City 4 and Camp Unity?
9. If you have lived in other camps, how is Camp Unity different?
 - a. How is it similar?
10. Can you describe your interactions with your hosts, both here and if you have been part of Camp Unity at other locations?
11. How do you feel about living in this particular location in Kirkland?
 - a. Do you feel welcome? How so, or how not?
 - i. If not, do you think there is anything that could change this? (e.g. talking with neighbors)
12. I know that there are community meetings before the camp moves to a location. Have you attended any of these meetings?
 - a. If so, can you describe your impressions of the community from that meeting?
 - b. What were the general reactions and attitudes of neighborhood residents towards the camp that you saw at the meeting?
13. Can you describe what the camp looks like physically from the outside?
 - a. Do you think its physical appearance has an effect on how receptive the neighborhood residents are to Camp Unity residents?
14. Do you prefer when the camp is set up near the road, or set back off the road?
15. How has having access to the church facilities changed the camp's interaction with the church community?
16. In regards to the physical appearance, what do you think would make people more receptive toward a camp in the neighborhood?
17. How well do you think the camp is arranged internally (the layout of tents)?
 - a. Do you think it can be improved? How so?
18. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing Camp Unity?
19. What do you think are its greatest strengths and contributions?
20. Are there any other things you would like to share with me about your experiences with Camp Unity?

Interview questions for host organization members

1. How long have you attended (insert name of host organization here)?
2. Do you also live in the neighborhood?
3. Are you involved with the church outreach to the homeless?
 - a. If yes, can you describe what you do?
4. How did you first hear about the self-organized camps?
5. What were some of your first thoughts about it?
6. What kind of interactions have you had with camps, if any? (prompts: talking with camp residents, volunteering)
7. Have your impressions about the camps changed as you learned more about them?
8. What impressions do you have about how other organizations or groups of people interact with Tent City 4?
 - a. ... Camp Unity?
Probe: for city planners, neighborhood groups, and non-profits
9. Have you noticed a change in the receptiveness of any of these groups?
10. Have you attended any of the neighborhood meetings?
11. Do you know anything about the camps moving process?
 - a. If yes, can you describe what you know about that process?
 - i. Have you noticed any areas in which that process could be improved?
12. Can you describe what the camp looks like physically from the outside?
 - a. Do you think its physical appearance has an effect on how receptive the neighborhood residents are to camp residents?
 - b. How does the placement on the site affect interactions between the camp and the neighborhood?
13. What do you think would make people more receptive toward a camp in the neighborhood?
14. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing Camp Unity?
15. What do you think are its greatest strengths and contributions?
16. Is there anything else you want to share with me about Camp Unity?

Interview questions for municipal planners

1. What is your official job title?
2. When did you begin working at your current job?
3. What are your job responsibilities?
Probe: For any experience or responsibilities specifically relating to working with or considering homeless people
4. How did you first hear about tent cities?
5. What were some of your first thoughts about it?
6. In your job, how do you interact with tent cities, if at all?
Probe: SHARE/WHEEL, the host organizations, neighborhood groups or individual citizens in Kirkland
7. What differences do you see between Camp Unity and Tent City 4?
8. What impressions do you have about how other organizations or groups of people interact with the tent cities? (differentiate between TC 4 and Camp Unity)
Probe: for SHARE/WHEEL, the host organizations, neighborhood groups or individual citizens in Kirkland
9. What are your overall impressions of the permitting process for homeless camps in Kirkland?
 - a. Have your impressions changed over time? If yes, how so?
10. What are your overall impressions of the community's response to the tent cities?
Probe: for NIMBYs, pleased citizens
 - a. Have your impressions changed over time? If yes, how so?
11. What are your impressions of other municipalities' receptiveness to tent cities?
Probe: for conflicts with neighborhood groups, elected officials, etc.
12. Can you describe what the camp looks like physically from the outside?
 - a. Do you think its physical appearance has an effect on how receptive the neighborhood residents are to the tent city residents?
 - b. Do you think that its placement on the site influences how the tent city is perceived?
13. What do you think would make people more receptive toward a tent city in the neighborhood?
14. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing tent cities?
15. What do you think are its greatest strengths and contributions?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about Tent City 4 or Camp Unity?

Oral Consent and Screening Questionnaire

Hello, my name is Virginia Werner, and I am a graduate student at the University of Washington working on my master's thesis for the Landscape Architecture Department and the Urban Planning Department. I am interested in learning more about Camp Unity and self-organized homeless camps, as well as the various organizations, agencies, jurisdictions and individuals that interact with the camps. In my research I am limiting participants to those people who are over the age of 18, and who are willing to share their experiences and opinions about the camp and the other involved parties.

If you are willing to share your thoughts, I have some questions I would like to ask you about your experiences with Camp Unity. This interview should take about 45 minutes. I'd like to record this interview to help ensure accuracy in my data collection. I will be the only one who has access to the recording, and I will delete it after I transcribe the interview. The transcription will be kept secure in a password-protected file on my computer. If you would like any information you share to be kept confidential, please let me know. If you would like to remain anonymous in any written document I produce, please tell me. However, if you share incriminating information regarding a crime, I am required by law to report it to the appropriate authorities. If you are uncomfortable answering any question, please let me know and we will skip it. All questions are completely voluntary; if you change your mind at any point we will end the interview.

Do you understand what I have explained about the study?

Do you have any questions?

Are you willing to let me interview you on this subject?

May I tape record this conversation to conduct the data analysis?

Observation Guide for Public Meetings

Date: _____

Location: _____

Meeting start time: _____

Meeting end time: _____

Number of people (approximate): _____

General Instructions:

During the observation, be alert for and document the following:

Describe general atmosphere of meeting (Is it tense? Relaxed? Are people chatting or sitting quietly?)

Does it change over the course of the meeting?)

What information is presented by whom and how?

What is the general response to this presentation from attendees?

Statements in support of the camp – from which group of people (camp residents, community member, city planners, host organization members, non-profit members), and why they support it

Statements of concern – from which group of people, what are they concerned about and why

Questions – what questions are being asked, from which group of people

Question responses – from which group of people, and does it satisfy the questioner

APPENDIX C: COMPARISON MATRIX



Mercer Island Temporary Encampment Ordinance Comparison Matrix

Mercer Island code sections cited are within the approved ordinance

	Mercer Island	Bellevue	Bothell	Issaquah*	Kirkland	Redmond	SeaTac
<i>Minimum Time Application must be Submitted Prior to Arrival</i>	75 days 19.06.090(A)(9)	Not specified	None specified	None specified	None specified	30 days. RCDG 20D.190-10.030.3.a	Notify city 30 days prior to arrival and 14 days prior to application. SMC 15.20.045.A.1
<i>Time Limit for Returning</i>	Must not be located within half mile of any site that contained a temporary encampment within the last 18 months. 19.06.090(A)(6)	May be located at the same site no more than once every 18 months. 20.30U.125(A)(5)	Shall not be allowed in one location for more than 90 days, either consecutively or cumulatively, during any 12-month period. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.c	No criteria found in ordinance or Special Event/Use Permit SPE07-00032.	The City may not grant a temporary use permit at the same site more frequently than once in every 365-day period. KZC 127.30.	Limited to a maximum of 110 days within any 365-day time period at one location. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.c	“The duration of the homeless encampment shall not exceed 90 days or exceed 180 days in any 2 year period.” & “No more than one homeless encampment may be located in the City at any time.” SMC 15.20.045.D.1 &2.
<i>Length of Stay.</i>	Cannot exceed 90 days, except that the code official may allow up to five additional days to accommodate moving on a weekend 19.06.090(A)(5)	Cannot exceed 60 days. LUC 20.30U.125(A)(4). (Consent decree allows for 90 days)	90 days + weekend if 90 th day is on a Friday. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.c.	90 days. Special Event/Use Permit SPE07-00032.	Cannot exceed 92 days. KZC 127.30.	110 days “at one location”. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.b	Cannot exceed 90 days. SMC 15.20.045.D.1
<i>Encampment Setback from Abutting Properties.</i>	20 feet or more, 19.06.090(A)(11)(a)	20 feet or more, LUC 20.30U.125.	20 feet or more, unless approved by adjacent property. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.b.2	No setback requirement in Permit. (IMC 5.14.050.A.10 allows for other conditions deemed necessary)	20 feet or more. KZC 127.25.	Planning Director’s decision. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.ii	None.
<i>Sight Obscuring Fence or Screening Required?</i>	Yes. 19.06.090(A)(10)(b)	Yes. LUC 20.30U.125.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.b.3	Yes, Use Permit # SPE07-00032.	Yes, KZC 127.25.	Planning Director’s decision. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.ii	Yes. SMC 15.20.045.B.9 and 15.20.045.B.10
<i>Lighting Regulation.</i>	Lighting must be directed inward toward encampment. 19.06.090(A)(11)(c)	Glare and reflections must be contained within Camp. LUC 20.30U.125.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.e.2	None in Permit.	Lighting must be directed downward and containing within camp. KZC 127.25.	Planning Director’s decision. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.ii	None.

Mercer Island Temporary Encampment Ordinance Comparison Matrix

	Mercer Island	Bellevue	Bothell	Issaquah*	Kirkland	Redmond	SeaTac
Maximum Number of Residents at Encampment.	100 persons. 19.06.090(A)(10)	100 persons. LUC 20.30U.125.	Based on land area. No max #. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.b.1	100 persons. Use Permit # SPE07-00032.	100 persons. KZC 127.25.	100 persons. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.b	100 persons. SMC 15.20.045.B.6
Parking Requirements at Site?	Yes. 19.06.090(A)(2 & 3)	Yes. LUC 20.30U.125.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.b.4	Yes. Use Permit Condition 5.	Yes. KZC 127.25.	Yes. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.d	Yes. SMC 15.20.045.B.7
Proximity to transit Required?	Yes. Within ½ mile of a public transit stop. 19.06.090(A)(4)	Yes. Within ½ mile of a transit stop. LUC 20.30U.125.	Yes. Within ½ mile of transit stop. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.b.5	No requirement in Permit # SPE07-00032.	Yes, Within ½ mile of a transit stop. KZC 127.25.	Planning Director's decision. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.iii	Yes. Within ¼ mile or provide carpool/shuttles. SMC 15.20.045.B.8
Children Prohibited from Staying in Encampment?	No, but must be accompanied by parent/legal guardian. 19.06.090(A)(12)	Yes. LUC 20.30U.125.	Not Prohibited.	No. Not under Permit # SPE07-00032.	Yes. KZC 127.25	Planning Director's decision. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.ii	Not Prohibited.
Code of Conduct for Persons in Encampment?	Yes. 19.06.090(A)(19)	Yes, LUC 20.30U.125	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.e.4	Not mentioned in Permit # SPE07-00032.	Yes. KZC 127.25	Yes. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.f.i	Yes. SMC 15.20.045.C.3
Specific Health, Safety and Fire Protections Apply?	Yes. 19.06.090(A)(7), 19.06.090(A)(8), 19.06.090(A)(13), 19.06.090(A)(14) 19.06.090(A)(15)	Yes.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.d	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.2.d and 20D.190-10-030.3.f	Yes. SMC 15.20.045.B.2 and 15.20.045.B.3
Identification, and Warrant and Sex Offender Checks Required For Persons at Encampment?	Yes. 19.06.090(A)(17) and 19.06.090(A)(19)	Yes. 20.30U.121	Yes, when deemed necessary. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.e.3	Not mentioned in Permit # SPE07-00032. (may be in separate agreement with Police Depart.).	Yes. KZC 127.25.	Only identification required. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.3.e	Yes. SMC 15.20.045.C.5 and 15.20.045.C.6
Inspections Required?	"shall permit inspections". 19.06.090(A)(15)	Not addressed in 20.30U.	"may be conducted". BMC 12.06.160.B.3.d	Yes. Temp Use Permit.	Yes. KZC 127.25.	Not addressed.	"shall permit inspections". SMC 15.20.045.E.3
Is Notice Provided to Neighbors Prior to Decision?	Yes. 19.06.090(C)(1) and 19.06.090(C)(2)	Yes. LUC 20.35.510 & 525.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.a.2 and BMC title 11	Not required for special use permit per IMC 5.14	Yes. KZC 127.42.	Yes. RCDG 20D.190-10-030.4	Yes. Notify property owners prior to application. SMC 15.20.045.A.2

Mercer Island Temporary Encampment Comparison Matrix

	Mercer Island	Bellevue	Bothell	Issaquah*	Kirkland	Redmond	SeaTac
<i>Must Notify, and Meet and Confer with Nearby Schools and Daycares?</i>	Yes. Any within 600 feet of the encampment. 19.06.090(C)(2)	Yes. Any within 600 feet of site. LUC 20.30U.122.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.a.4	No. Not in Temporary Use Permit.	No. (does require compatibility with surrounding uses).	Not Prohibited.	Not Prohibited
<i>Can There be Immediate Enforcement of Violations?</i>	Yes. Mercer Island Codes 8.04.120, 8.30.030, 17.14, 17.15, and 19.15.030	Yes. LUC 20.30U.125 and BCC 1.18	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.a.7	Yes. IMC 5.14.090	Yes.	Yes. Chapter 1.14, 9.34, 14.04	Yes.
<i>Are There Any Penalties for Violating Codes or Agreement?</i>	Yes. Civil fines and penalties for City and State Code violations. Mercer Island Codes 8.04.120, 8.30.030, 17.14.113, 17.14.115, 17.15.030, 19.15.030, & RCW 70.95.240(2)(b-c)	Yes.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.a.7 and 11.20.010	Yes. Civil fines or by imprisonment. IMC 5.14.060 and 5.14.090	Yes.	Yes. Chapter 1.14, 9.34, 14.04	Yes. Expulsion or Termination of Temporary Use Permit. SMC 15.20.045.C.3 or 15.20.045.F.1
<i>Is there a provision for hold harmless / indemnification for City taxpayers?</i>	Yes, City is held harmless and indemnified.	No.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.f.1	Yes. Special use Permit Sec. 14.	No.	No.	No.
<i>Process For People Evicted From Tent City?</i>	Yes. Process for eviction or unlawful detainer. RCW 59.12. See RWC 59.16-59.20. See also Mercer Island City Code 9.14, Trespass, to which usual police procedures apply.	Yes.	Yes. BMC 12.06.160.B.3.e.3.D & C	Yes.	Yes. In Temp Use Permit ZOzn08-00001.	No.	No.
<i>Application Fee</i>	\$0. Must be submitted if required. A \$250 refundable deposit for a public notice sign would be required. A fee of \$69 was charged for a temporary power permit for Tent City	\$440 total. \$110 land use fee, \$225 fee for land use sign, \$62 for fire inspection, \$43 for Right-of-Way use	Hourly rate based on time to process land use permit. Land use planner hourly rate is \$140.80	\$188.80 total. \$20 for special use permit, and \$168.80 for plumbing permit	\$212 for a Temporary Use Permit	\$1,601.77 for a Temporary Use Permit	\$60 for a Temporary Use Permit

*Issaquah regulates Temporary Encampments with a "Temporary Use Permit" (which also includes many other temporary land uses) and is not specific to Temporary Encampments. Language is provided in the Issaquah Municipal Code that allows the city to place restrictions on the permit that are not necessarily spelled out in the code, subject to a legal nexus.

APPENDIX D: KIRKLAND DOCUMENTS

Selected relevant sections of Chapter 127 governing Temporary Uses.

The Kirkland Zoning Code is current through Ordinance 4417, passed September 3, 2013.

127.25 Dimensional Requirements and Development and Performance Standards

The City shall establish dimensional requirements and development and performance standards as part of the approval of each temporary use permit. The City will use the nature of the proposed use and the character of the surrounding area as guides in establishing these requirements and standards.

In addition to these requirements and standards, the following definitions and standards apply to homeless encampments:

1. Definitions
 - a. Homeless Encampment – A group of homeless persons temporarily residing out of doors on a site with services provided by a sponsor and supervised by a managing agency.
 - b. Managing Agency – An organization that has the capacity to organize and manage a homeless encampment. A “managing agency” may be the same entity as the sponsor.
 - c. Sponsor – An entity that has an agreement with the managing agency to provide basic services and support for the residents of a homeless encampment and liaison with the surrounding community and joins with the managing agency in an application for a temporary use permit. A “sponsor” may be the same entity as the managing agency.
2. Standards
 - a. An application for a homeless encampment must include a local church or other community-based organization as a sponsor or managing agency. *Within the disapproval jurisdiction of the Houghton Community Council, an application must include a local church as a sponsor or managing agency.*
 - b. The encampment shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from the property line of abutting properties containing residential uses.
 - c. Sight-obscuring fencing is required around the perimeter of the homeless encampment unless the Planning Director determines that there is sufficient vegetation, topographic variation, or other site conditions such that fencing would not be needed.
 - d. Exterior lighting must be directed downward and contained within the homeless encampment.
 - e. The maximum number of residents within a homeless encampment is 100.
 - f. Parking for five (5) vehicles shall be provided.
 - g. A transportation plan is required which shall include provision of transit services.
 - h. The homeless encampment shall be located within one-half (1/2) mile of transit service.
 - i. No children under 18 are allowed in the homeless encampment. If a child under the age of 18 attempts to stay at the homeless encampment, the managing agency shall immediately contact Child Protective Services.

- j. No animals shall be permitted in encampments except for service animals.
- k. A code of conduct is required to be enforced by the managing agency. The code shall contain the following as a minimum:
 - 1) No drugs or alcohol.
 - 2) No weapons.
 - 3) No violence.
 - 4) No open flames.
 - 5) No loitering in the surrounding neighborhood.
 - 6) Quiet hours.
- l. The managing agency shall ensure compliance with Washington State and City codes concerning but not limited to drinking water connections, human waste, solid waste disposal, electrical systems, and fire-resistant materials.
- m. The managing agency shall take all reasonable and legal steps to obtain verifiable identification from prospective encampment residents and use the identification to obtain sex offender and warrant checks from the appropriate agency. All requirements by the Kirkland Police Department related to identified sex offenders or prospective residents with warrants shall be met.
- n. The managing agency shall permit daily inspections by the City and/or Health Department to check compliance with the standards for homeless encampments.

127.30 Frequency and Duration of Temporary Use

1. The City may not grant a temporary use permit at the same site more frequently than once in every 365-day period. The City may only grant a temporary use permit for a specified period of time, not to exceed 60 days.
2. Exceptions
 - a. Temporary staging facilities for public projects may be approved for a time period not to exceed the duration of their construction.
 - b. Homeless encampments may be approved for a time period not to exceed 92 days.

127.42 Notice Requirements for Homeless Encampments in New Locations

1. Applicability
The following notice requirements apply only to new locations for homeless encampments. If an encampment has previously located at a site, the provisions of KZC [127.44](#) apply.
2. Public Meeting
A minimum of 14 calendar days prior to the anticipated start of the encampment, the sponsor and/or managing agency shall conduct a public informational meeting by providing mailed notice to owners of property within 500 feet of the subject property and residents and tenants adjacent to the subject property. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the surrounding community with information regarding the proposed duration and operation of the homeless encampment, conditions that will likely be placed on the operation of the homeless encampment, requirements of the written code of conduct, and to answer questions regarding the homeless encampment.
3. A Notice of Application for Homeless Encampment shall be provided prior to the Planning Official's decision. The purpose of the notice is to inform the surrounding community of the application. Due to the administrative and temporary nature of the permit, there is no comment

period. The notice shall contain at a minimum the date of application, project location, proposed duration and operation of the homeless encampment, conditions that will likely be placed on the operation of the homeless encampment, requirements of the written code of conduct, and how to get more information (i.e., City website). The Planning Department shall distribute this notice as follows:

- a. The notice, or a summary thereof, will be published in the official newspaper of the City at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the Planning Official's decision.
 - b. The notice, or a summary thereof, will be distributed to owners of all property within 500 feet of any boundary of the subject property and residents and tenants adjacent to the subject property at least 14 calendar days prior to the Planning Official's decision.
 - c. If located within the jurisdiction of the Houghton Community Council, the notice shall be distributed to the members of the Community Council at least 14 calendar days prior to the Planning Official's decision.
 - d. The notice will be posted on the City's website.
4. A Notice of Decision for Homeless Encampment, or summary thereof, shall contain the decision of the Planning Official and appeal procedure and be distributed as required for notice of application within four (4) business days after the decision.

127.43 Option to Modify Standards for Homeless Encampments

The applicant may apply for a temporary use permit that applies standards that differ from those in KZC [127.25](#). If a modification is proposed, then the application will be processed according to Process I, Chapter [145](#) KZC, including a comment period and appeal to the Hearing Examiner. In addition to all other permit application requirements, the applicant shall submit a description of the standard to be modified and shall demonstrate how the modification will result in a safe homeless encampment under the specific circumstances of the application. In considering whether the modification should be granted, the Planning Director shall consider the effects on health and safety of residents and the community.

127.44 Notice Requirements for Homeless Encampments at Repeat Locations

1. A minimum of 14 calendar days prior to the anticipated start of the encampment, the sponsor and/or managing agency shall provide mailed notice to owners of property within 500 feet of the subject property and residents and tenants adjacent to the subject property. The purpose of the notice is to inform the surrounding community of the proposed duration and operation of the homeless encampment, applicable standards, requirements of the written code of conduct, and how to get more information.
2. A minimum of 14 calendar days prior to the anticipated start of the encampment, the City shall update the City's website with the date of application, project location, proposed duration and operation of the homeless encampment, the conditions that will be placed on the operation of the homeless encampment, requirements of the written code of conduct and how to get more information.
3. If the encampment is proposed with the jurisdiction of the Houghton Community Council, the City shall notify the Houghton Community Council no later than 14 calendar days prior to the anticipated start of the encampment.



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS - REGULATIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Zoning Regulations

The City of Kirkland Zoning Code regulates the use of land, including temporary uses. A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) allows a use to be conducted, on a short-term basis, which would not otherwise be allowed in the zone in which it is located. Temporary uses may include homeless encampments, community festivals and fresh vegetable stands. A TUP is an administrative permit that is decided by the Planning Director (Director).

Following receipt of a TUP application, the City mails a Notice of Application to property owners within 500 feet of the subject property and residents or tenants adjacent to the property. The Notice will be mailed within 14 days before the Director's decision is made and will be published in the Seattle Times at least seven days prior to the Director's decision. The same mailing list will receive a Notice of Decision four days following the decision. There is a 21 day appeal period following the decision. Appeals may be filed with King County Superior Court.

Homeless Encampment Standards

In 2006, the City adopted regulations specific to homeless encampments. The maximum stay allowed per code is 92 days. In addition, the code requires that a "Managing Agency" and "Sponsor" be identified on the TUP application.

The Managing Agency for TC4 is SHARE/WHEEL, a combined advocacy agency of the Seattle-Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE) and the Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL). The Managing Agency is responsible for organizing and managing the homeless encampment.

The sponsor (typically a church) holds a public meeting at least 14 days prior to the encampment locating in the City. City representatives attend the public meeting to answer questions about the permitting process and public safety.

The following standards must be met in order for the homeless encampment TUP application to be approved:

- The TUP application must include a local church or other community-based organization as a sponsor or managing agency (in Houghton, the sponsor or managing agency must be a church).
- The encampment shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from the property line of abutting properties containing residential uses.

- Sight-obscuring fencing is required around the perimeter of the encampment unless the Planning Director determines there is sufficient vegetation or other site conditions that could function as fencing.
- Exterior lighting must be directed downward and contained within the homeless encampment.
- The maximum number of residents is 100.
- Five parking spaces must be provided.
- A transportation plan is required and must include transit services.
- The encampment must be located within ½ mile of transit service.
- Children under 18 years of age are not allowed. If a child under 18 attempts to stay, the managing agency shall immediately contact Child Protective Services.
- No animals are permitted, except for service animals.]
- A code of conduct is required to be enforced by the Managing Agency and must have, at a minimum, the following requirements:
 - No drugs or alcohol
 - No weapons
 - No violence
 - No open flames
 - No loitering in the surrounding neighborhood
 - Quiet hours
- The Managing Agency must comply with Washington State and City codes concerning, but not limited to, drinking water connections, human waste, solid waste disposal, electrical systems, and fire-resistant materials.
- The Managing Agency shall take reasonable and legal steps to obtain verifiable identification from prospective residents and use the identification to obtain sex offender and warrant checks from the appropriate agency.

- The Managing Agency must also comply with all requirements imposed by the Kirkland Police Department related to identified sex offenders or prospective residents that have arrest warrants.
- The Managing Agency must allow the City and/or Public Health Seattle-King County to conduct daily inspections to ensure compliance with the homeless encampment standards.

Public Safety

The Kirkland Police Department (KPD) has the duty to minimize impacts when large scale events occur within the City. The KPD conducts daily area checks and checks in the encampment. Officers familiarize themselves with TC4 residents, particularly the encampment's security team. TC4 has a Code of Conduct that, in the City's experience, has been effectively and efficiently enforced. Residents found to violate the Code of Conduct are ejected from the encampment.

Persons wanting to enter the encampment and current residents are required to provide valid identification. Sex offender and arrest warrant checks are conducted on persons wanting to enter the encampment. KPD is contacted when a resident is expelled from the encampment or when someone is denied entry to the encampment.

In addition, the City assigns an Inspector from the Fire & Building Department to conduct regular inspections of the encampment to ensure compliance with the TUP conditions of approval.