



# City of Wilmington

# Homelessness Task Force

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**Office of Mayor Carney**

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

# Executive Order Objectives



- Evaluate and examine existing City policies and procedures surrounding engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness;
- Convene interested parties, groups, and individuals impacted by homelessness to inform the Taskforce's recommendations, as needed;
- Recommend and promote effective strategies to provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness, while limiting the negative effects to other City constituents;
- Recommend processes and approaches for effectively engaging unhoused individuals to contribute to moving such population into stable housing; and
- Recommend ways to coordinate the use of resources and provisions of services for unhoused populations.

# Executive Order Objectives



- **Wilmington's interaction with the broader unhoused population living on the street.**
- **Wilmington's interaction with the unhoused population suffering from co-occurring challenges, specifically substance use disorders and mental health challenges.**
- **Assigning a specific location(s) for Wilmington's unhoused population on the street to go in the absence of steady, affordable, and available housing options.**

# Executive Order Objectives



- Ideas for mitigating the negative impacts on the broader community while making connections to the appropriate entities to provide the services for this populations.
  - Examine how we work to ensure sanitary environments
  - Examine how we work to reduce the number of bags and boxes in public spaces
  - Examine how we work to coordinate meals in a consistent manner

# Executive Order Objectives



- Examine the City's role is reversing the adverse effects of homelessness within the City's ability and resources.
- Identify the individuals and entities providing services to the unhoused population living on the street.

# Five Areas of Focus for Recommendations



1. Establish a location in a City-owned park for a safe site for unhoused individuals
2. Explore a Tiny Homes option
3. Create additional Day Center(s) in partnership with a local service provider(s)
4. Establish a personal item storage facility
5. Explore affordable housing options

# Meeting Dates



- **May 6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>**
- **June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>**
- **July 8<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>**
- **August 26<sup>th</sup>**
- **September 9<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>**
- **October 7<sup>th</sup> (if needed)**

# DRAFT Recommendations

## City Park

- **Tharros Model Option:** Temporarily allow tents in Christina Park using the structured Tharros model from Lewes, DE. Formal agreement with a service provider, limit number of tents to 28. There will need to be funding for bathrooms and shower services. Service providers would organize food delivery, healthcare services, drug abuse referrals, help finding jobs. License agreement would allow use of Christina Park and require outreach efforts to build trust with unhoused individuals living on the streets in other parts of the city to relocate to Christina Park. Unhoused individuals allowed to live in tents in Christina Park temporarily would have to be registered.
- **3-4 month Timeframe:** Use of Christina Park for tents and day services would be temporary until a modular “tiny homes” shelter village and additional Day Centers would open by early January 2026.

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

## **City-owned land**

- **Mayor's office should explore area near 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, N. Pine, N. Church Streets to allow tent village for unhoused individuals, partnering with a nonprofit service provider.**

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

## **“Tiny Homes” Village**

The low-barrier shelter center would be constructed as module private rooms, with shared shower and bathroom facilities.

It could house 50-60 people, with wrap-around services including food, clothing, trauma-informed care, mental health services, and substance abuse referrals.

The center is meant to serve as transitional housing, with the goal of connecting residents with permanent, stable housing.

The Springboard Delaware model includes intensive outreach efforts to build trust with unhoused, unsheltered individuals and persuade them to join the village community.

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

## **Day Centers**

- Converting the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) building at 600 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, with meal services provided by the Ministry of Caring and other services provided by other nonprofit organizations, including the YWCA or Friendship House.
- If the City allows unlicensed individuals to temporarily use Christina Park until a “tiny homes” village can be constructed, if funding is available, the City should consider partnering with nonprofit organizations on a “Pop-Up” or temporary tented day center in Christina Park, including showers, an appropriate toilet structure, regular trash pick-up, and organized meals.

# DRAFT Recommendations

## Day Centers

- The St. Patrick's Center operates until 10:30 am, however, the Church previously provided a Day Center as well. The City should work with the St. Patrick's Center and local developers on other suitable locations near St. Patrick's Church to re-establish the Center's services during the day so that unhoused individuals in the northern area of the City have a place to go rather than on the street, in Rodney Square, or the Wilmington Public Library.
- The Friendship House Empowerment Center in Wilmington currently operates in a small, confined space. The nonprofit organization has expressed interest in offering expanded Day Center services in partnership with the City.

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

## **Personal Belongings Storage**

The Task Force understands that its recommendations to create a personal item storage facility should include the best practice of a heat chamber to prevent the spread of bed bugs or other unsanitary conditions.

Our recommendation to establish such a facility recognizes the most efficient location would be in conjunction with Day Centers and at existing shelters.

The storage facility could take the form of oversized, industrial containers large enough to hold bags and suitcases.

Another option would be a locker-type structure on the grounds of a Day Center.

A more unconventional idea might include repurposing a state-owned transit bus or school bus on the grounds of a Day Center or near the Delaware Transit Center on Front Street. The seats of the bus could be numbered and assigned to an individual to store his or her belongings. The bus could be decorated by local artists to further show community support.

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

## **Affordable Housing Options**

- Rent-stable apartments – WHA and other non-profit organizations to partner with developers to create 50/100 rent-stable units over the next 10 years. These rent-stable units would be rented at 20-30% below fair market rent.
- For housing developments approved for city funding (UDAG), require that at least 20% of the housing units be affordable below-market rent.
- Recommend that WHA utilize project-based vouchers with the new tiny homes shelter village to transition people into long-term housing.
- Encourage nonprofit organizations to work with local developers on a Housing First Hub that incorporates a mix-use development model.

# DRAFT Recommendations

- Coordinated Outreach team with wrap-around services – Horizon House, FH, Bridge team, Wilmington Police Department and Partners in Care Teams
- Lighting under Amtrak Bridge on Front Street
- Cameras on Lombard & Second Streets
- Biohazardous clean up of Christina Park and City streets frequented by unhoused individuals
- Street Cleanings on MWF along Front Street, Poplar Street, 8<sup>th</sup> & Orange Streets, with signs posted on these streets providing notice of the days/times
- Daily Trash Pick-up in Christina Park
- Police walking the street, on foot patrols, building relationships with the unhoused individuals and staff at center.
- Purchase of power washer for public works department (similar to Downtown Visions)
- Food delivery clean-up requirement for organizations that deliver food to homeless individuals

# **DRAFT Recommendations**

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