

## **Washington State Rights of Way Initiative in Thurston County**

Updated October 25, 2023

### **What is the Washington State Rights of Way Initiative?**

The state has identified five counties, one of which is Thurston County, that have encampments on the Department of Transportation's state rights of way. "Rights of way" in this context refers to the highways and freeways that the state oversees. The Rights of Way Initiative (ROW) provides funding to these counties with the goal to move people living on ROW sites into better living situations and permanently clear these encampments.

In June 2022, Thurston County, the City of Lacey, the City of Olympia and the City of Tumwater collaborated on a proposal to the Department of Commerce for using these funds and it was accepted. The funding runs from 2022-2025 and is managed by the Washington State Department of Commerce by direction of the Governor's Office.

### **Where are the ROW sites in Thurston County?**

In Thurston County, there are currently five encampment sites identified for the Rights of Way Initiative. Additional state and city ROW sites are being identified to possibly be included in this initiative.

1. I-5/Lilly Rd. Underpass (encampment cleared)
2. I-5/City Center (encampment cleared)
3. I-5/Sleater-Kinney (encampment cleared)
4. I-5/Wheeler (encampment cleared)
5. I-5/Pacific Ave Interchange

### **About the Thurston County ROW Initiative**

The Thurston County partner jurisdictions and homeless response organizations are working together to implement the ROW initiative. One activity funded through the ROW is coordinated outreach to people living in the identified encampments. Outreach specialists are working together with camp residents to build rapport, describe the housing options that are becoming available, and help camp residents prepare to transition to new shelter housing. This is a process that will take time as camp residents gradually move. Residents who refuse to participate in shelter

placement will be trespassed once the site is officially closed. Once the encampments are cleared, they will be monitored by Washington State Patrol to ensure people do not move back.

The ROW Initiative funding holds up to up to 24 beds at a local shelter for people moving out of the ROW encampments and a local domestic violence service provider is offering a hotel program for individuals fleeing violence. There are a few families with children living in the encampments and ROW Initiative funding includes hoteling and rapid rehousing for up to seven families. In summer of 2023, two new large-scale shelter projects, Maple Court and Franz-Anderson Tiny Home Village, were completed and began moving people in from the right of way encampments.

### **Maple Court and Franz-Anderson Tiny Home Village**

[Maple Court](#), previously a Days Inn, is on Quinault Drive at Marvin Road in Lacey. This facility serves as an enhanced shelter, which means there are staff on site to help people access services and move into permanent housing. Maple Court has 118 furnished rooms for residents and six rooms for staff and case-management offices. The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) manages Maple Court. They manage a similar property in Tacoma and other supportive housing facilities around the state. LIHI has established a community advisory group to meet monthly to address any potential questions and concerns from local business owners and residents.

Franz Anderson Tiny Home Village has 50 tiny homes to serve as temporary residence for previously unhoused adults. The village is operated by Olympia Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP) and offers onsite services including case management, mental health and substance use support, and employment navigation. The site offers 24/7 staff support, daily meals, hygiene facilities, and a community space.

At this time, the new shelter housing is solely offered through the coordinated outreach to people living at the ROW encampments.

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