



# Mayor's Update

Armondo Pavone, Mayor



FRIDAY  
OCTOBER 1, 2021

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## Human Services funding

City Council increases Human Services budget almost three-fold; approves three projects through HB 1590



Sunset Gardens

Friday, October 1, 2021 | No. 6

During their annual retreat, Renton City Council identified the importance of increased funding for human services programs.

As we move into the last quarter of the year, I'm pleased to report we have increased this funding from \$800,000 at the beginning of the year to \$3.4 million, which is 2.8% of our city budget. This amount does not include dedicated staff time.

This nearly three-fold increase in funding comes in part from our decision to retain the one-tenth of one percent sales tax revenue generated by HB 1590. From these funds we were able to form a new [Equity, Housing, and Human Services](#) department.

[HB 1590 funds became available](#) to use in the spring of 2021. A minimum of 60% of these dollars must be used for construction of affordable housing or mental health/behavioral health-related facilities, plus their operation and maintenance costs. Up to 40% of the funds can be used for mental and behavioral health services and housing-related services.

Council has authorized three initial projects to be launched in the near term:

- **Sunset Gardens** (\$1.5 million total: \$1.0 million from 2021 and \$500,000 from 2022). A Renton Housing Authority (RHA) project, Sunset Gardens will include 76 studio and one-bedroom affordable housing units, all eligible for HB 1590 funding. Target populations include veterans (38 units), persons with disabilities (16 units), and seniors (22 units). All units will be subsidized, with half serving those at or below 30% of Area Medium Income (AMI) and half serving those at or below 50 percent of AMI. Sunset Gardens, RHA's fifth (and largest) Sunset Terrace public housing replacement project, is part of the Sunset Area Community Revitalization effort. It will be located on the current RHA site, one block from the Renton Highlands Library and Sunset Neighborhood Park, and within walking distance of Sunset Neighborhood Center.
- **Mental Health Navigator Program** (\$210,000 total: \$30,000 from 2021 and \$180,000 from 2022). Renton Police Department will implement a navigator program, partnering a police officer with a mental health professional. This new unit will respond to calls-for-service involving subjects experiencing a behavioral or mental health crisis. They will connect them with wrap-around services, which may include referrals to local and state programs.
- **Behavioral Health Center** (cost TBD) We are currently evaluating locations for a new center. The center will offer resources for those experiencing homelessness or near homeless, and provide mental health evaluations and counseling, including outreach services. Assistance for housing navigation, transitional housing, and job training will also be available. The center may become the permanent location for our severe weather shelter. We also anticipate Renton police sharing the facility for their navigator program.

Longer range use of the funds will be informed by the recently completed Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (Housing Program), a Social Services Needs Assessment (Human Services Program) planned for next year, and other community input. Additionally, we anticipate that the soon-to-be-formed Equity Commission will have input as well as our Human Services Committee.

Responding to the human services needs of our community is vital. Through this new funding and the realignment of city investment in programs, we have new and exciting opportunities ahead.

In future updates I'll share more about how I am working toward our goals with the realignment of our city departments and focusing on council priorities.

Send story ideas or comments to [communications@rentonwa.gov](mailto:communications@rentonwa.gov).

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