

AGENDA
GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
Thursday, November 14, 2024 - 3:00 PM
Community Rooms

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93216056382> or by calling (253) 215-8782 and entering Meeting ID 932 1605 6382.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. **2025 Legislative Agenda Discussion**
City Administrator Katrina Knutson
2. **Proposed Utility Rate Adjustments and Associated Code Revisions**
Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm
3. **Low-Income Senior Discount Program Income and Eligibility Update**
Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager Shealynn Smiley
4. **Endangerment with a Controlled Substance Ordinance**
Chief of Police Kelly Busey

ADJOURN

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

Public comment will not be accepted at this study session.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gjgharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



2025 Legislative Priorities

Commercial Fisherman's Homeport Project – \$1 Million Capital Budget Request

In recent years, some of Gig Harbor's traditional fishing vessels have lost access to affordable and suitable moorage within the Harbor. Without a secure and permanent home, our fishing vessels are at risk of displacement to other ports, eroding the presence of the industry in the Harbor. The Commercial Fisherman's Homeport Project will reverse this trend by providing secure, long-term moorage for 17 vessels, allowing these boats to stay in Gig Harbor, thereby preserving a key part of our community's identity. The city has already committed \$2.5 million towards this \$3.5 million initiative and has successfully completed all required local, state, and federal permitting. The project is ready to proceed, and with state assistance, we can restore a vital piece of Gig Harbor's historical maritime identity.

Important Topics

The City of Gig Harbor will emphasize the importance of the following issues when they are brought up for discussion by the Legislature.

Childcare: Access to quality, affordable, childcare is a significant barrier to economic development in our communities. We will support state efforts to increase access to childcare for working families, including subsidies for childcare providers and additional capital investment for facilities.

Fish Passage Funding: Given the significant number of culverts in the City that need to be replaced, this is a significant issue. The state must increase the assistance it provides to local governments for the cost of providing fish passage.

Indigent Defense: This cost of providing indigent defense services has skyrocketed and is minimally reimbursed by the State. This places a heavy burden on limited flexible funds available to the City. The State must provide additional funding for the representation of indigent individuals, particularly if the Supreme Court adopts new caseload standards that reduce the workforce available to handle these cases.

Infrastructure Funding: Cities require stable and growing infrastructure funding to meet the demands of the Legislature and our residents for: affordable housing, reliable utility services, public health and recreation, and access to other city services. The Legislature must protect and increase existing infrastructure programs relied upon by local governments.

Local Control: The best governmental decisions are those that are made closest to the people represented. Cities possess strong local authority to provide for the safety and welfare of their residents, and the Legislature must abstain from restricting, mandating, or otherwise interfering with local decisions. The City will oppose legislative actions that are inconsistent with this view.

Mobile Home Park Residents: The Legislature has recognized the importance of mobile home parks as a source of affordable housing by providing mobile home residents with additional tools to purchase parks when they are placed on the market. The City applauds these efforts and encourages the Legislature to take further action to preserve existing mobile home parks, including providing additional funding to support residents attempting to purchase parks they live in.

The City of Gig Harbor supports the Association of Washington Cities' legislative agenda.



**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: November 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Proposed Utility Rate Adjustments and Associated Code Revisions

SUBMITTED BY: Public Works Director Jeff Langhelt

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PHONE: (253) 853-7630

SUGGESTED MOTION: N/A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The following two related utility code revisions will be discussed at the November 14 study session. Depending on the outcome at this study session, these revisions may be presented to city council for adoption by ordinance as soon as the November 25 city council meeting.

Utility Rate Adjustments

The revenues from the city's sewer, storm, and water utilities are necessary to support the operating and capital needs for each utility. As you may recall, by October 2022 the city was preparing to adjust the city's sewer, storm, and water utility rates for six years beginning January 1, 2023. However, due to other priorities, the city instead elected to pass Ordinance 1503 to establish a single rate increase of 5% across all three utilities effective January 1, 2023.

The city then re-engaged with the city's utility rate consultant, Ashley Emery, in summer 2023 to consider both utility rate adjustments for a six-year period and establishing a tiered water rate structure effective January 1, 2024. These discussions developed until October 2023 when they were placed on hold. As a result, the city did not adjust utility rates on January 1, 2024.

Before the city could re-engage with Ashley in the summer of 2024 to complete the review of utility rate adjustments and establish tiered water rates, Ashley passed away. Ashley supported the city with utility rate studies for almost 30 years and the loss of this wealth of knowledge will take time to bring a new consultant up to speed.

At this point, the city must consider rate adjustments soon to keep the utilities financially supported. The rate adjustment discussions led by Ashley that concluded in October 2023 identified the following proposed yearly rate adjustments to the city's three utilities:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Sewer	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Storm	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Water	10%	10%	10%	6%	6%	6%

The 2023 discussions also developed the framework to establish tiered water rates. The tiered rates are intended to encourage water reduction while more fairly redistributing customer costs to those customers who have the highest demands on the city's water system.

Because the utilities had no rate adjustments in 2024 as suggested above, I am proposing rate adjustments effective January 1, 2025, that fall in line with Ashley's previous recommendations for adjustments in both 2024 and 2025. These proposed rate adjustments will compensate for the 0% rate adjustment in 2024 and will be a stop-gap measure that will provide the city time to consider future rate adjustments and tiered water rates in 2025.

General Utility Code Revisions

Additionally, associated with any utility rate adjustments, staff is recommending a series of code revisions to clarify utility billing processes and improve customer experience. These revisions are proposed to be made in Title 13 (Water and Sewers) and Title 14 (Storm and Surface Water Drainage) and are summarized in the attached bulleted list.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Municipal Code Amendments
-

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Strategic Plan Priority 2 - Ensure sustainable future for public services and facilities

Summary of Proposed Utility Code Changes

Associated with Utility Rate Adjustments:

Updated November 1, 2024

- Revise the city's existing low-income utility rate reduction as previously proposed by the city's Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager.
- Revise to only allow utility accounts to be held in the property owner's name.
- Establish a water turn-on fee to match the existing water shut-off fee.
- Establish a fee for city staff to check for water leaks charge if checked outside of normal water meter reading days.
- Revise to clarify that to avoid water being shut off, all fees and the entire outstanding balance must be paid in full.
- Clarify that when one parcel has both single family uses and non-single family uses, the stormwater fee will be based on the EBU charge for non-single family uses (i.e. on the total amount of hard surface for the parcel in question.)
- Clarify that where multiple (two or more) mobile/manufactured homes are located on one parcel, the stormwater fee will be based on the EBU charge for non-single family uses (i.e. on the total amount of hard surface for the parcel in question.).
- Establish a fire hydrant usage GFC for non-city parcels (fire flow only).
- Prohibit the use of the city's auto-pay system for 24 months after the second time an auto-pay request is denied.
- Clarify the necessary method of payment for all 24-hr shut-off notices.
- Revise the water service rules to allow for one adjustment due to leaks per year, regardless of where the leak falls within billing periods. Currently the code only allows for one adjustment per year and is only allowed within one billing period.



**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: November 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Low-Income Senior Discount Program Income and Eligibility Update

SUBMITTED BY: Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager Shealynn Smiley

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PHONE: (253) 530-7070

SUGGESTED MOTION: None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The city established the Low-Income Senior Discount Program (LISDP) in 2001. The last income guideline update to the program was in 2021. The economy has changed drastically since then.

Gig Harbor has a robust and resilient aging community. This is reflected in the recent housing needs assessment (HNA), estimating that 25% of the community is 65 and older. Additionally, the HNA showed "households with older adults (62 years and older) represent a larger share of extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households compared to moderate-and high-income households."

We take pride in our forward thinking and proactive approach to issues. Updating the LISDP income and eligibility guidelines, to match the income and eligibility guidelines of the Pierce County Tax Exemption Program is an opportunity to be innovative in our approach to preventing homelessness, anti-displacement, and most importantly stabilizing our community.

Suggested Updates:1. Annual household income may not exceed \$64,000. Household income

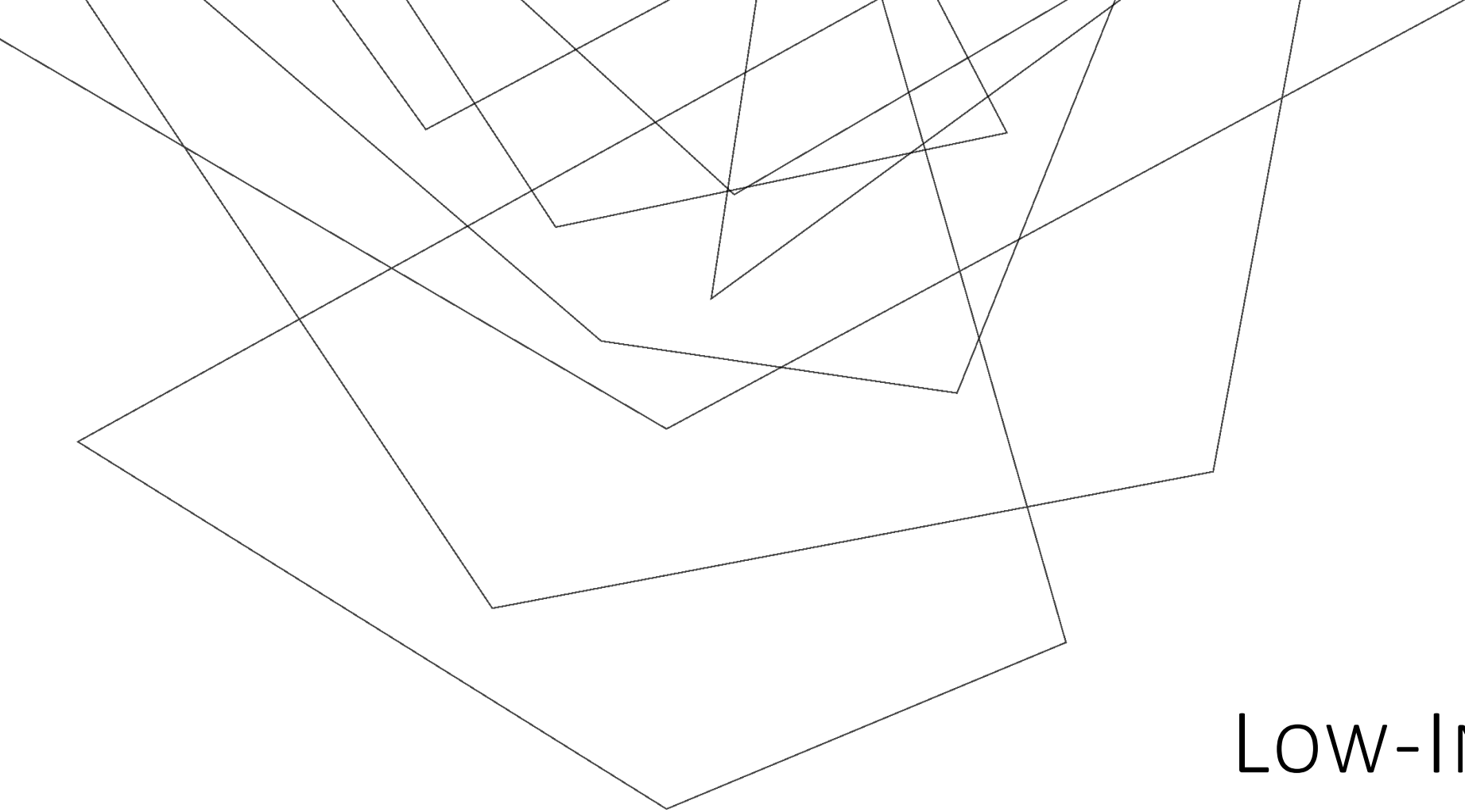
1. Annual household income may not exceed \$64,000. Household income includes your disposable income, that of your spouse and any co-tenants.
2. Include individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, so long as the individual is unable to work because of a disability. Eligibility documentation could include a doctor's statement, Social Security Award letter or 80% or higher Veterans Administration Award letter.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Low-Income Senior Discount Presentation
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STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Strategic Plan Priority 6 - Provide a safe, healthy, and inclusive community

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LOW-INCOME SENIOR DISCOUNT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY UPDATE

Municipal Code 13.04.013: Low-income utility rate reduction and connection fee waiver/delay.

History of the program:

- **Established:** 2001
- **Last Updated:** prior to 2021

Municipal Code 13.04.013:

- *Rate Reduction.* A low-income senior citizen may pay a rate equal to 47 percent of the applicable water and/or sewer rate established by the city in GHMC 13.04.010 and 13.32.010, or any amendments thereto.
- *Waiver/Delay of Connection Fees.* A low-income senior citizen may request a waiver of a connection fee to his or her property in the amount of 50 percent of the applicable water and/or sewer connection fee established in GHMC 13.04.080 and 13.32.060, or any amendments thereto. A low-income senior citizen may request a delay in the city's collection of the connection fee, as reduced by this subsection, for a period of five years, as long as the eligibility requirements of this section are satisfied for each year.

Program Definitions & Qualifications:

1. "Low-income senior citizen" means a person aged 62 years or older (if married, either spouse may be 62 years or older) who:
 - a) Is a Gig Harbor water or sewer customer and has an account in his/her name;
 - b) Is the head of the household;
 - c) Has a monthly gross household income from all sources that is not more than:

Household Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
1	\$1,550	\$18,601
2	\$2,090	\$25,082
3	\$1,510	\$32,001
4	\$3,167	\$39,128
5	\$3,706	\$44,473

Proposed Update: Match the eligibility standards of the [Pierce County Property Tax Exemption Program](#)

Income Guideline Update:

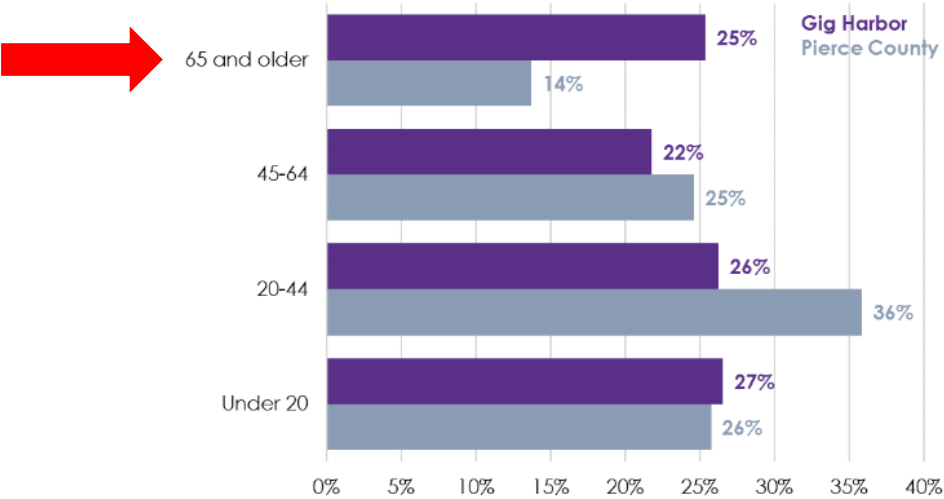
- Annual household income may not exceed \$64,000.
- Household income includes your disposable income, that of your spouse and any co-tenants.

Eligibility Expansion:

- Include individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, so long as the individual is unable to work because of a disability. Eligibility documentation could include a doctor's statement, Social Security Award letter or 80% or higher Veterans Administration Award letter.

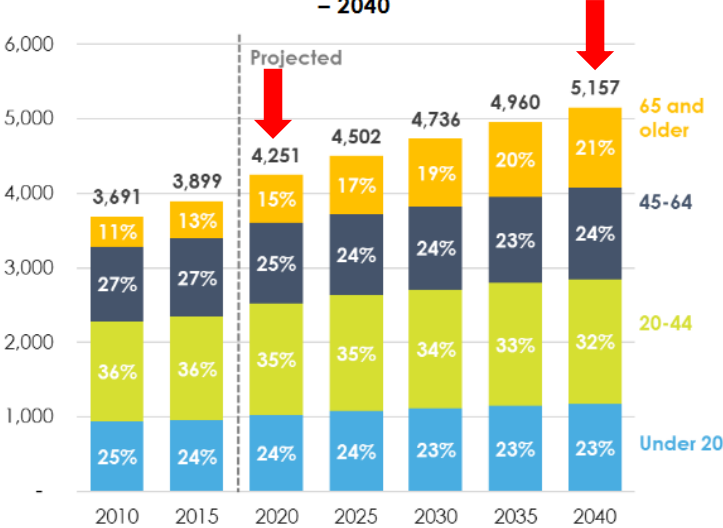
GIG HARBOR'S AGING POPULATION

Exhibit 3. Population Share by Age, Gig Harbor and Pierce County, 2021



Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021; CAI, 2022.

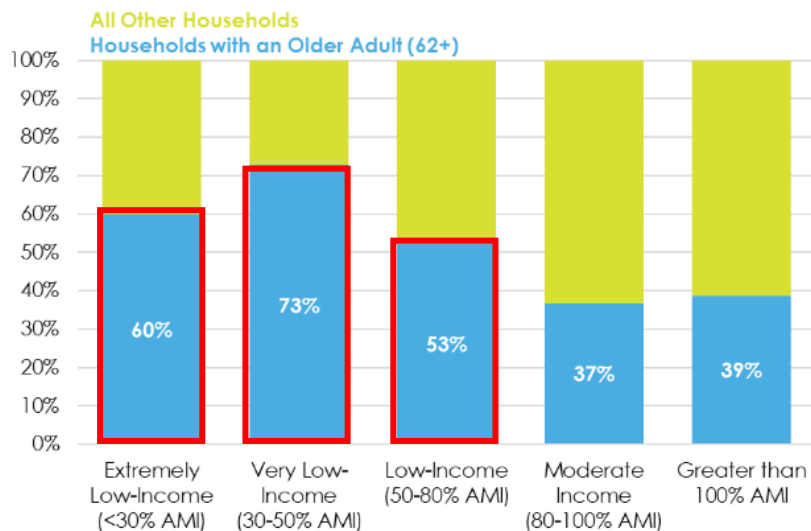
Exhibit 4. Population Projections by Age Group, Puget Sound Region, 2020 – 2040



- The share of older residents (65 and older) is projected to increase substantially from 15% in 2020 to 21% in 2040.

Data for 62+ living in Gig Harbor

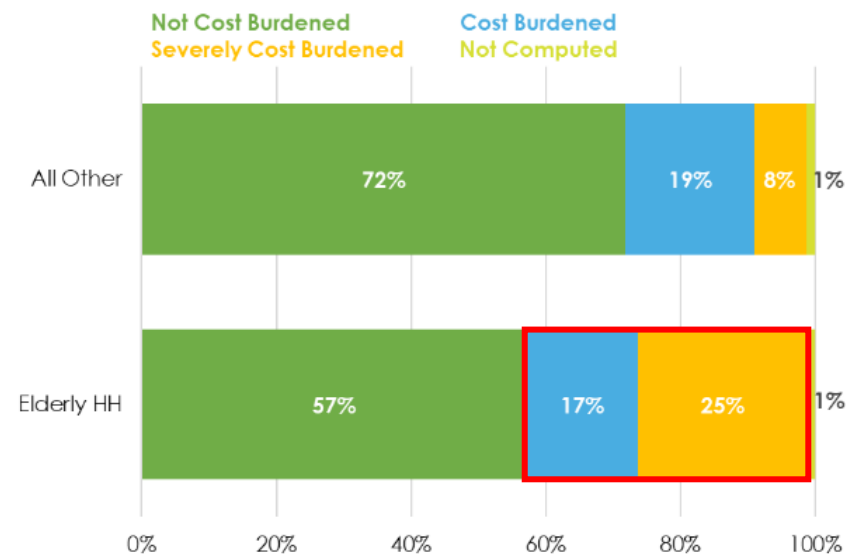
Exhibit 8. Income Brackets for Older Adult Households (62+), Gig Harbor, 2019



Source: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2016-2019 5-Year estimates); CAI, 2022.
Note: AMI = HUD Area Median Family Income.

Households with **older adults (62 years and older)** represent a **larger share of extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households** compared to moderate-and high-income households.

Exhibit 9. Cost Burden for Elderly Households (62+), Gig Harbor, 2019



Source: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2016-2019 5-Year estimates); CAI, 2022.
Note: AMI = HUD Area Median Family Income.

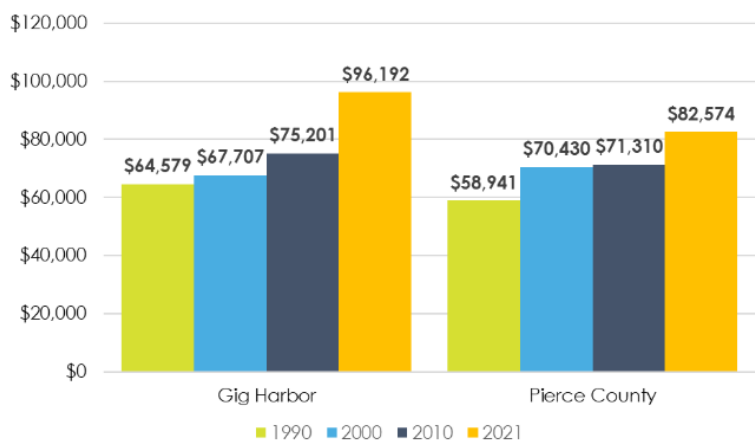
- Elderly households in Gig Harbor also have a higher share of cost burdened and severely cost burdened households compared to all other Gig Harbor households.
- Roughly 42% of elderly households pay more than 30% of their household income for housing compared to 27% for all other households.

FISH Foodbank								
Year	Total Gig Harbor residents served at the foodbank	Housing Assistance	Utility Assistance	Medical Assistance	Transportation Assistance	Other	Total Financial Assistance	Total Served for Financial Assistance
Oct 2022 - Sept 2023	2513 people	\$318,238	\$102,588	\$3,387	\$41,680	\$9,872	\$475,765	804 people
Oct 2023 – Mar 2024	1,717 people	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Faith based organization benevolence								
Year	Households Served for Utility Asst.	Utilities Assistance Total Cost	Total Households Served for any financial assistance	Total financial assistance provided				
2023	68hh	\$14,763.70	193hh	\$58,223.36				
Jan - May 2024	35hh	\$8,700.93	111hh	\$32,143.35				
Food Backpack 4 Kids - Gig Harbor Data								
Year	Food Backpacks per week	Home Deliveries per week	Summer Lunch Program per week	Care Cupboards in PSD				
2022-2023 School Year	34	16	120	8,586lb of food				
2023 - April 2024	36	25	TBD	7,915lb of food				
		55% Increase		through April				
Pierce County Property Tax Exemption Program								
Year	Seminar Attendance	Applicants						
2023	40	92						
	individuals with disabilities and seniors	Zip Codes Represented: 98332 & 98335						
2024	27	194						
	individuals with disabilities and seniors	Zip Codes Represented: 98332 & 98335						

Benefits of updating program eligibility standards are:

Anti-displacement strategy:

Exhibit 17. Median Household Income (Inflation Adjusted to \$2021), Gig Harbor and Pierce County



Source: American Community Survey, 1990, 2000, 2020, and 2021; CAI, 2022.

Census Data:

- Median Household Income for Gig Harbor 2022 \$103,688
- Median Household Income for Pierce County 2022 \$91,486

The maximum monthly SSI payment for 2024 is **\$943 for an individual and \$1,415 for a couple.**

Upstream approach to preventing homelessness:

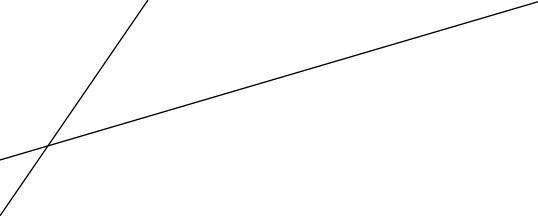
Year	55+ experiencing homelessness in Pierce County
2020	428
2021	248
2022	450
2023	463
2024	541
	16.9% increase since 2023

Roughly 6.5 new individuals aged 55+, entered homelessness each month, between January 2023 to January 2024.



And most importantly...

Stabilization of our Community



Thank you for your time...

Questions,
Comments,
&
Feedback



**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: November 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Endangerment with a Controlled Substance Ordinance

SUBMITTED BY: Chief of Police Kelly Busey

DEPARTMENT: Police

PHONE: (253) 853-2422

SUGGESTED MOTION: None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: A felony in state law, [Endangerment with a Controlled Substance](#), was passed in 2002 and only applies to methamphetamine (and only to manufacturing scenarios, at that), rather than the drugs commonly used today. The Legislature has taken up the decision to update the felony statute with [SB 5010](#), which received great support in the Senate but died in the House in both 2023 and 2024.

Consequently, Pierce County recently took the initiative to adopt a *local* ordinance of endangerment with a controlled substance. The county ordinance makes it a gross misdemeanor to knowingly or recklessly permit a child or dependent person to have contact with a controlled substance other than cannabis. The crime does not apply if the controlled substance was obtained by prescription or in the course of delivering health care services. The Pierce County Council passed this ordinance unanimously and the Pierce County Executive signed it.

The Pierce County Prosecutor has encouraged local jurisdictions to follow suit to adopt a similar ordinance and to encourage the Legislature to amend state law to make this crime a felony. This draft ordinance is presented at council request and with the full endorsement of the city administrator and chief of police.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Strategic Plan Priority 6 - Provide a safe, healthy, and inclusive community

ORDINANCE XXXX

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON, RELATING TO THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL CODE; ADOPTING A NEW SECTION 9.15 TO THE CODE TO PROHIBIT KNOWINGLY OR RECKLESSLY PERMITTING A CHILD OR DEPENDENT PERSON TO HAVE CONTACT WITH A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OTHER THAN CANNABIS; ESTABLISHING A PENALTY FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Whereas, the misuse of controlled substances in Washington State is a growing public health crisis, resulting in negative health outcomes such as addictions, overdoses, and deaths for far too many community members; and

Whereas, drug overdose and drug poisoning moved from the sixth leading cause of death among children aged 1-19 years of age in the United States in 2019 to third in 2020, which included a 110.6 percent increase in unintentional poisonings; and

Whereas, drug poisonings in Washington have increased steadily since 2014, increasing 30 percent from 2019 to 2020, another 30 percent from 2020 to 2021, and 17 percent from 2021 to 2022 according to the University of Washington Addictions, Drug, and Alcohol Institute; and

Whereas, opioid-related overdose is the most common cause of accidental death in Pierce County, outnumbering motor vehicle collisions and firearm deaths according to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; and

Whereas, between 2020 to 2022, Pierce County experienced 32.53 deaths per 100,000 residents due to overdose, a higher rate than the state average of 27.98 for the same period; and

Whereas, these risks are particularly high for children and other dependent persons who may live in close proximity to and come in contact with controlled substances through no fault of their own; and

Whereas, in children nationwide aged 17 or younger lived in households with at least one parent who had a past substance use disorder according to a 2014 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and

Whereas, fentanyl is often up to 50 times more potent than heroin and other synthetic opioids such as nitazenes and carfentanil; and

Whereas, the ease of illicit manufacture and potency of synthetic opioids has driven down illegal drug prices and caused synthetic opioids to be mixed with street drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine; and

Whereas, the Washington State Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities in Washington State September 2023 report states that over a quarter of the child fatalities and more than half of the child near fatalities involved accidental ingestions and overdoses in 2022; and

Whereas, the Washington Poison Center had 116 cases in 2020 which involved the accidental exposure of children ages 0-5 years to opioids and opiates and it is believed many more cases go unreported; and

Whereas, the Washington State Department of Health reports youth (ages 0-17) died from drug overdoses at the rate of 148 youth in 2016, 160 youth in 2017, 159 youth in 2018, 149 youth in 2019, 247 youth in 2020, 340 youth in 2021, 346 youth in 2022, and 378 youth in 2023; and

Whereas, exposure to controlled substances is a threat to the health and safety of all Gig Harbor residents, especially so for the children and dependent persons who are in close proximity to individuals who use illegal substances; and

Whereas, sufficient mechanisms must be in place to hold people accountable when children and dependent persons are exposed to life-threatening harms; and

Whereas, the Gig Harbor City Council encourages the State Legislature to consider amending RCW 9A.42.100, "Endangerment with a Controlled Substance," to include all controlled substances as a Class B felony; in the interim, the City Council finds it necessary and appropriate to take action in its capacity to establish a Municipal Code to protect public health and safety, and desires to take immediate steps to deter the endangerment of children and other vulnerable populations caused by the dangers of exposure to controlled substance; Now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON, ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS

Chapter 9.15

ENDANGERMENT WITH A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

9.15.010 Definitions.

In this chapter, unless a different meaning plainly is required, the definitions contained in this section shall apply:

A. "Cannabis" shall mean the same as the term is defined in RCW 69.50.101.

B. "Child" shall mean the same as the term is defined in RCW 9A.42.010.

C. "Controlled substance" shall mean the same as the term is defined in RCW 69.50.101.

D. "Dependent person" shall mean the same as the term is defined in RCW 9A.42.010.

9.15.020 Endangerment with a Controlled Substance.

A. A person is guilty of the crime of endangerment with a controlled substance if the person knowingly or recklessly permits a child or dependent person to ingest, inhale, absorb, or have contact with a controlled substance other than cannabis, unless the controlled substance was obtained directly from, or pursuant to, a valid prescription or order of a practitioner while acting in the course of his or her professional practice.

B. Administering or providing a controlled substance to a child or dependent person in the course of delivering health care services is not a violation of this Section.

9.15.030 Penalty

Unless otherwise specified, any person who violates this Chapter is guilty of a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in jail and a \$5,000 fine. The Prosecuting Attorney is encouraged to consider referring such cases for assessment, treatment, and other services including referral to alternative resolution courts following the formal filing of charges.

9.15.040 Preemption.

In the event the Washington State Legislature passes a law preempting this Chapter, this Chapter shall cease to have effect on the same date the statute comes into effect. Any violation of this Chapter that occurs prior to the preempting statute coming into effect may be prosecuted and punished pursuant to this Chapter.

9.15.050 Severability.

If any provision of this Chapter or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this Chapter or the application of the provisions to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

9.15.060 Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after passage and publication of an approved summary consisting of the title.

PASSED by the Council and approved by the Mayor of the City of Gig Harbor, this _____ day of _____, 2024.

CITY OF GIG HARBOR

Mayor