

AGENDA
GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
Thursday, December 12, 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. Tenant Protection Options**
Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager Shealynn Smiley
- 2. Homeless Response Plan**
Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager Shealynn Smiley

ADJOURN

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

Public comment will be 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.



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

Meeting Date: December 12, 2024

SUBJECT: Tenant Protection Options

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

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PHONE: (253) 530-7070

SUGGESTED MOTION: None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The city has received numerous correspondence from concerned residents about the rising cost of housing and requesting council consider tenant protections.

In an effort to address immediate legal housing concerns, the city partnered with Tacomaprobono Community Lawyers to provide two free legal aid popups per month. To address long-term concerns, the Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager collaborated with community members, service providers, local jurisdictions, and the City Attorney to develop tenant protection options.

The purpose of this study session discussion is to provide council with an overview of potential tenant protection measures, discuss the city's legal options, and receive direction on which measures, if any, staff should prioritize for further development.

Three potential approaches to be discussed:

- 1) Strengthened Notice of Rent Increase Timelines
- 2) Establishment of a Landlord Registry
- 3) Hold off for State Legislative Action

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Tenant Protection Options Power Point

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

Tenant Protections

Shea Smiley, H3 Program Manager





Agenda

- Gig Harbor Renters
- Current Tenant Protections
- Potential Tenant Protections
- Council Discussion

Gig Harbor Renters

Units & Occupancy

5,332

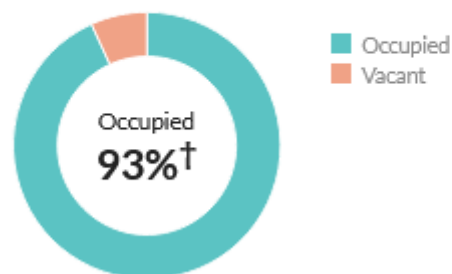
Number of housing units

the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area:

1,657,075

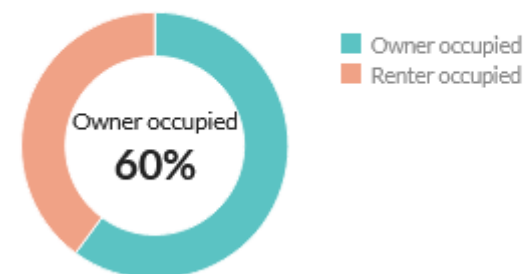
Washington: 3,216,243

Occupied vs. Vacant



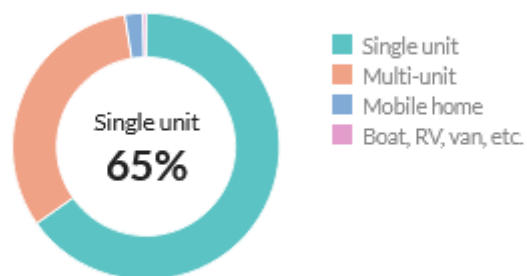
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Ownership of occupied units



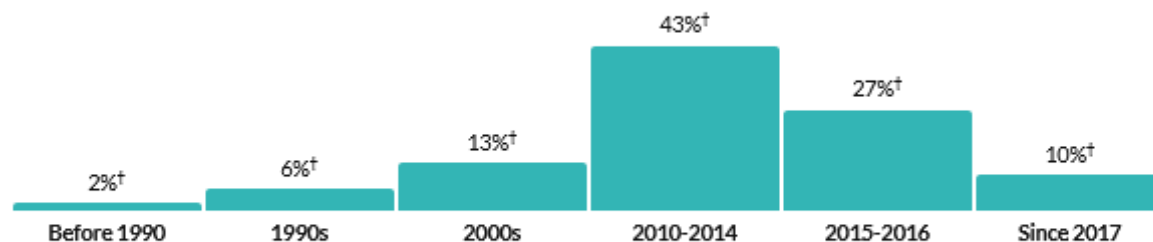
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Types of structure



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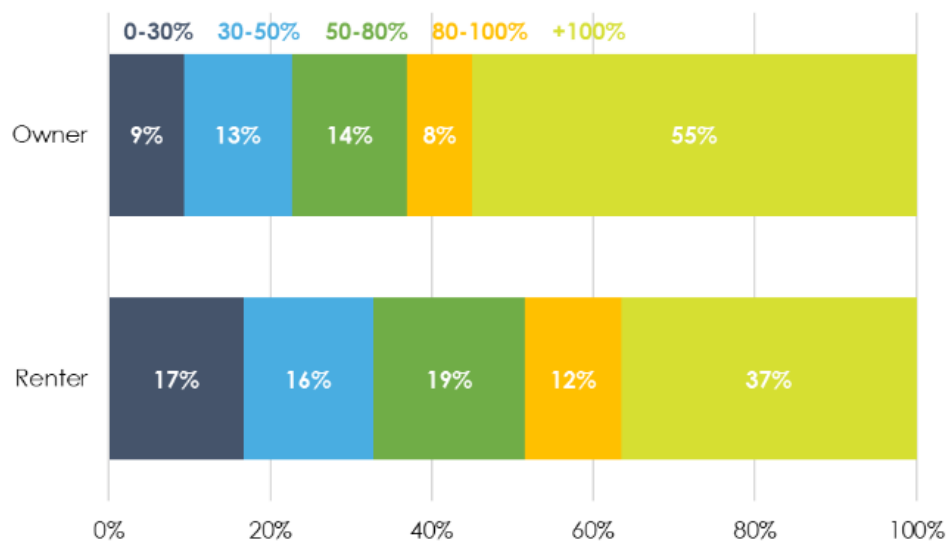
Year moved in, by percentage of population



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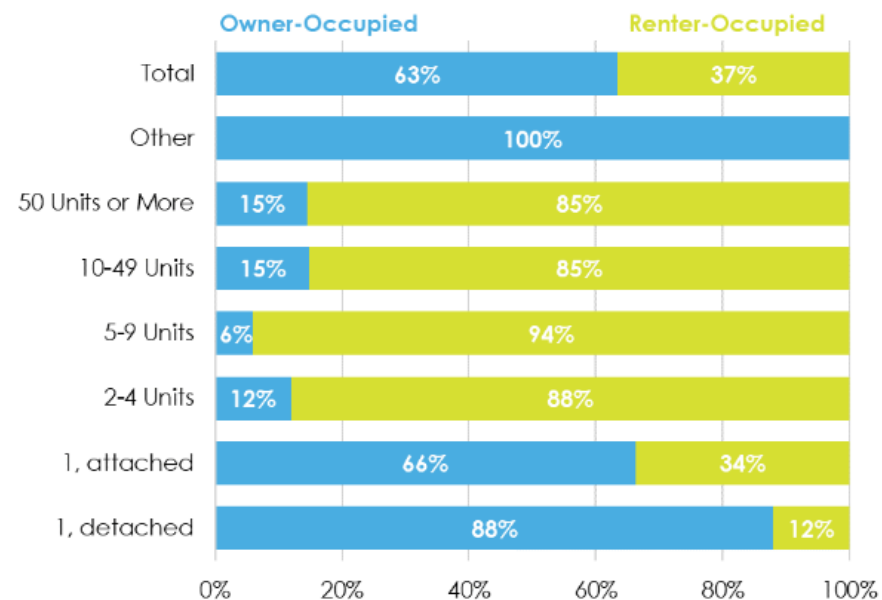
Gig Harbor Renters

Exhibit 20. Percentage of Households by AMI and Tenure, Gig Harbor, 2019



Source: HUD CHAS (based on ACS 2006-2010 and 2016-2019 5-Year estimates); CAI, 2022.

Exhibit 30. Housing Types by Tenure, Gig Harbor, 2021



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

Note: Other includes boats, RVs, vans, and mobile homes.



Landlord-Tenant Protections adopted by Pierce County Cities

City of Lakewood

Rental Housing Safety Program

- The Rental Housing Safety Program fees:
 1. Single family RHSP license will be \$50
 2. Multifamily will be \$50 for the base fee plus \$20 per additional unit
- All rental property owners with property in the City of Lakewood are required to register their rental property on an annual basis with the city
- The properties must be inspected and are required to pass City of Lakewood rental inspection protocols
 - Property owners have the option to use a City of Lakewood inspector or a qualified private inspector

City of Tacoma

Rental Housing Code (TMC 1.95)

- 120-day written notice needed before increasing rent
- Standardization of tenant screening criteria
- Limitations on imposing late fees and withholding pet damage deposits
- Stronger business license, health, and safety requirements
- New rental agreement regulations
- Requirement to advise tenants of option to pay move-in fees in installments
- Established maximum income-to-rent ratios
- Elimination of blanket bans on felony or drug convictions and arrest records
- Landlords prohibited from using Social Security Numbers as the sole tenant screening method
- No late fees exceeding 1.5% of monthly rent with a maximum limit of \$75 per month
- More time to pay move-in fees
- Landlords prohibited from pursuing eviction or increasing rent without a current City business license or if the unit is dangerous or unsafe

Landlord Fairness Code Initiative (TMC 1.100)

- A landlord cannot raise rent if the landlord has violations under TMC 2.01.050 “Minimum Buildings and Structures Code,” or violations under RCW 59.18.060, which may make the unit uninhabitable.
- It is a defense to eviction if the landlord, at the time of eviction, is in violation of the above laws.
- Late fees: The fee for late rent cannot exceed \$10 per month.
- Move-in costs: The total fee for all move-in costs cannot exceed one month’s rent.
- Pet damage deposit: The deposit cannot exceed 25% of first month’s rent, and it must be refundable if no pet damage is done to the unit.

Two separate notices are required before increasing rent (TMC 1.100.050)

- 1st notice to increase rent must be issued between 210 and 180 days before the rent increase takes effect.
- 2nd notice to increase rent must be issued between 120 and 90 days before rent increase takes effect.

If the tenant’s rent is raised 5% or more and the tenant can no longer afford to occupy the unit, the landlord is required to pay relocation assistance in the following amounts:

- If rent increases 5% to 7.5% — 2 times the monthly rent
- If rent increases 7.5% to 10% — 2.5 times the monthly rent
- If rent increases more than 10% — 3 times the monthly rent

9/4/20XX



Potential Landlord-Tenant Protections in Gig Harbor



Notice of Increase Timelines

-
- EX: 180 days required for 5% or more rent increase.

Landlord Registry

- All rental property owners in the City of Gig Harbor would be required to register their rental property with the city.
- The properties would be inspected and required to pass City of Gig Harbor's rental inspection protocols
 - Property owners would have the option to use a City of Gig Harbor inspector or a qualified private inspector
- Fees may apply (application/admin costs)

Previous Legislation

HB 2114 || SB 5961

Summary of Bill:

- Rent and Fee Increase Limit. Unless an exemption applies, a landlord is prohibited from increasing the rent and fees for a tenant subject to the RLTA or the MHLTA in an amount greater than 5 percent during any 12-month period, or by any amount during the first 12 months after the tenancy begins.

It is expected this, and similar legislation will be put forward the 2025 legislative session as well.

A row of white paper houses with one blue house in the foreground. The houses are arranged in a line, and the blue house is the only one of its color, making it stand out. The background is a light blue gradient.

Council Discussion



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

Meeting Date: December 12, 2024

SUBJECT: Homeless Response Plan

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

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PHONE: (253) 530-7070

SUGGESTED MOTION: None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The county, surrounding cities, and the City of Gig Harbor have seen an increase in unsheltered individuals staying on public properties. This agenda item introduces a new homeless response policy to provide city staff with a clear and transparent framework for addressing homelessness in Gig Harbor. The policy reflects research, community outreach, and multi-departmental collaboration to foster a cohesive strategy that aligns with the city's values.

While the city has historically taken a compassionate and person-first approach when addressing homelessness, it is agreed upon between the housing, health, and human services program (H3), police department, public works, and community development that an internal response policy is best practice. Key steps in the policy development process included:

1. Research: Met with councilmembers in small groups to discuss their priorities in addressing homelessness, reviewed best practices, and analyzed local trends to tailor the policy to Gig Harbor's needs.
2. Outreach Efforts: Direct engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness to understand their needs, as well as barriers to access services.
3. Multi-Departmental Collaboration: Facilitated input from police, parks, public works, and planning ensuring actionable and cohesive policy development.

The homeless response policy aims to:

- Mitigate Risk: Provide consistent, lawful, and respectful responses.
- Enhance Transparency: Build public trust with a clear approach.
- Coordinate Resources: Maximize program and partnership efficiency.
- Community Wellbeing: Promote safety, equity, fairness, and dignity.

While homelessness is a complex issue requiring multi-faceted solutions, establishing a clear internal homeless response policy is a critical first step toward maintaining compassionate, consistent, and lawful approaches. This discussion is aimed to be one of many conversations with policy makers surrounding the issue, outcomes will be utilized to determine further adjustments to policy and regulations.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Homeless Response Plan Presentation
2. Homeless Response Policy DRAFT

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

HOMELESS RESPONSE PLAN



AGENDA

- Homeless Response Policy
- Code Update Options



CITY'S HOMELESS RESPONSE POLICY

 CITY OF GIG HARBOR – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
TITLE: Homeless Response Policy		
POLICY MANUAL SECTION & NO.	EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2025 REVISED DATE:	APPROVED:

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the city's compassionate, coordinated, and legally compliant approach to addressing homelessness. It integrates the efforts of social services, law enforcement, code enforcement, and cleanup operations while emphasizing dignity, safety, and the offering of services to those experiencing homelessness.

POLICY

The City of Gig Harbor will make attempts to:

1. Prioritize compassionate engagement to connect individuals with appropriate services.
2. Protect public health and safety while maintaining access to public spaces for all.
3. Balance enforcement of city codes with outreach services to reduce homelessness sustainably.
4. Implement effective cleanup operations to maintain a safe and sanitary city environment.

PROCEDURE

Gig Harbor Police Department (GHPD)

- With a focus on public safety the GHPD will respond to reports of individuals experiencing homelessness first to ensure safety of all parties.
- To ensure safety and compassionate response, law enforcement will partner with the H3 Program during outreach efforts.

Housing, Health, and Human Services Program (H3)

- Conduct regular outreach with individuals experiencing homelessness within city limits, to build trust and connect them with service providers.
- Offer access to shelters and social service providers to individuals experiencing homelessness [or other housing-related needs].
- Collaborate with local non-profits, shelters, and healthcare providers to enhance service delivery.

Code Enforcement (reports of homelessness on privately owned property)

- Ensure compliance with public health and safety codes, such as fire hazards, sanitation, and unpermitted structures.
- Work closely with H3 program to address violations compassionately and provide opportunity for individuals to connect with services.

Cleanup Operations

- The city will facilitate clean up and restoration of public spaces to ensure health and accessibility for all residents, ensuring compliance with state and local laws regarding the removal of property.

Community Education and Transparency

- The city will regularly update the community on homelessness initiatives, successes, and ongoing challenges.
- The city will conduct public forums to gather feedback and adapt policies to meet evolving needs.
- The city will promote education campaigns to build empathy and reduce stigma surrounding homelessness.

The term of this Policy shall begin on January 1, 2025

CODE UPDATE OPTIONS

QUESTIONS?



Shea Smiley, MSW

Housing, Health, and Human Services Program Manager

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