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**PRESENTER:** Jani Hitchen, Pierce County Council Chair and Mary Connolly, Policy Analyst for the Pierce County Council  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Pierce County Unified Regional Approach to Homelessness and Next Steps  
**DATE:** July 9, 2026

**PRESENTATION TYPE:**  
Informational Briefing

**SUMMARY:**

This presentation provides an overview of:

- Homelessness and the homeless response system in Pierce County
- The process to develop a Unified Regional Approach to homelessness in Pierce County (URA)
- The proposed design of the URA
- Next steps for governments that are interested in joining the URA

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2022, the Pierce County Council adopted a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness via Resolution No. R2022-22s. The plan included a goal to “Create a Unified Homeless System.”

In October 2024, the Pierce County Council contracted with a third-party consultant to work with governments across Pierce County to scope, design, and implement a Unified Regional Approach to homelessness (URA) in Pierce County. From March 2025 to March 2026, the consultant convened multiple meetings with an Elected Leadership Group (ELG) consisting of elected officials from governments in Pierce County to scope and design the URA. The ELG included elected leaders from Pierce County and the Cities of Auburn, Edgewood, Fife, Gig Harbor, Orting, Lakewood, Puyallup, Tacoma, and University Place. The ELG’s work was informed by a Staff Planning Group, which consisted of staff from participating governments, and three task forces (Finance, Operations, and Governance), which had representation from homeless service providers, government staff, elected officials, people with lived experience of homelessness, and other community members.

In March 2026, the ELG reached strong consensus on a design for the URA and in April 2026, the Pierce County Council Office took the next steps on URA implementation.

**ISSUE:**

The URA design, as proposed by the ELG, includes the following:

- A vision “to substantially reduce homelessness so that it is rare, brief, and non-recurring;”
- A mission to “empower Pierce County governments to choose locally responsive solutions to respond to and prevent homelessness, while establishing a countywide framework that supports coordination and efficient use of shared resources;”
- Voluntary participation by governments in Pierce County;
- Formal establishment of the effort via Interlocal Agreement (ILA) pursuant to Chapter 39.34 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), without the establishment of a separate legal entity;



- A governance board to direct URA operations, consisting of representatives from participating governments; and
- Limited staffing to support URA operations, with Pierce County serving as employer for staff.

The ELG also proposed that while an ILA is in development, participating Pierce County governments begin to align procedures and policies related to data collection, homeless system entry, and inclement weather response.

The ELG is encouraging governments that are interested in joining the URA to adopt a resolution that states the government's intent to join the URA, directs staff to work with other governments on developing an ILA, and commits to certain activities while an ILA is in development. As of the writing of this memorandum, Pierce County and the City of Fife have passed these resolutions of intent.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information briefing only.