Report to the Thirtieth Hawaii State Legislature 2017

In Accordance with the Provisions of Section 1, Act 212, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017 on the Establishment of Safe Zones for Persons Experiencing Homelessness.

Department of Human Services
Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness
December ____, 2017
REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAFE ZONES, PURSUANT TO SECTION 1, ACT 212, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII (SLH) 2017

Act 212, Section 1(C), SLH 2017, required the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), in conjunction with and with the advisement of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), to establish a working group to examine the issue of safe zones for persons experiencing homelessness and to submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2018.

Based on its review of the above, the working group has the following recommendations:

- There is a limited body of research relating to Safe Zones, and more information needs to be collected to evaluate their overall effectiveness in addressing unsheltered homeless persons.
- The Camp Kikaha pilot in Kona, Hawaii should be further evaluated and data should be gathered to determine the effectiveness of the safe zone specifically relating to:
  - Number of people served.
  - Demographics of target population (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)
  - Average length of stay.
  - Monthly and annual operating cost.
  - The number of persons transitioned to longer-term shelter and permanent housing.
- Data gathered from the Camp Kikaha pilot should be shared with the Legislature and the four Counties to inform the development of longer-term policy.
- Vacant land parcels identified by the working group should be considered for housing projects for homeless individuals similar to the Hale Mauliola Navigation Center, Kakaako Family Assessment Center, and the Kahauiki Village project.
- The State should expand its search for vacant land to look beyond land under the direct jurisdiction of the Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR).

This report provides background regarding the purpose and membership of the working group, methodology used in determining the recommendations above, and a detailed explanation of the group’s recommendation.

A. Mission and Purpose.

The purpose of the working group is to examine and develop recommendations related to the establishment of safe zones for persons experiencing homelessness.

Act 212, SLH 2017 directs that the group shall consider the following factors in its deliberations:

- The target population to be served by safe zones.
- Recommendations of potential sites to be designated as safe zones; provided that the sites shall be state lands designated within the urban district by the land use commission.
- The type of facilities or dwelling units permitted within a safe zone, including the use of modular structures.
- Strategies to transition inhabitants of a safe zone to permanent housing that utilizes the housing first approach.
- The timeline necessary for planning and implementation of a pilot safe zone for persons experiencing homelessness.
- The estimated costs of planning and implementing a safe zone.

Act 212, SLH 2017, appropriates $25,000 for fiscal year 2017-2018 to support the activities of the working group.

B. Working Group Membership and Quorum.

The working group consists of five members:

- Scott Morishige, Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (Chair)
- Harold Brackeen III, Homeless Programs Office Administrator, DHS
- Renee Sonobe Hong, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, Department of Public Safety (PSD)
- Brian Johnson, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Pastor Daniel Kaneshiro, Faith-based representative to the HICH

All five members also serve as members of the HICH, and have been established as a permitted interaction group for the HICH to study and examine the issue of safe zones. A majority of members on the working group – 3 out of 4 members – constitute a quorum.

The working group works in conjunction with and with the advisement of the Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) who is represented by the following advisory member:

- Pua Aiu, Cultural Resources Manager, DLNR

The advisory member is a non-voting member of the working group.

C. Working Group Meetings

HICH established the Act 212, SLH 2017, Safe Zones working group at its regular meeting on June 19, 2017. The working group convened a number of public meetings, received public testimony, reviewed
the current and past position of federal and state agencies regarding safe zones, and researched a number of authorized homeless encampments in Hawaii and other parts of the United States. A list of agendas and minutes for the working group meetings can be found on the DHS website.


A. Public testimony.

The working group held a number of public meetings and received public testimony from a range of individuals, including legislators, nonprofit organizations, advocates, community members, and persons experiencing homelessness.

The following were key points mentioned in public testimony to the working group:

- The number of unsheltered homeless individuals in Hawaii is increasing at the same time that the overall number of homeless individuals appears to be decreasing.
- Enforcement of criminal trespass and sit-lying laws may have an adverse impact on homeless individuals and, in some cases, break up well-established communities.
- It is beneficial to seek input from people experiencing homelessness to inform potential solutions to homelessness.
- While some homeless camps have an established leadership structure, other camps are unsafe for individuals residing in them due to high levels of crime and drug use.
- If the State is to designate new areas or parcels as safe zone areas, the State should solicit feedback from the surrounding community, including homeless people in and around the area. Criteria should also be established for potential safe zones, such as existing homeless communities that have established leadership and internal organization.
- While outreach workers consistently offer emergency shelter as an alternative, persons experiencing homelessness are reluctant to utilize homeless shelters due to concerns about safety, lack of privacy, and a distrust of homeless service providers. These same factors may discourage homeless individuals from utilizing a safe zone administered by a service provider.
- A key contributing factor to homelessness is the lack of affordable housing, and more specifically the lack of affordable rental inventory.

The working group also received testimony from community members who were adversely impacted by homeless encampments on public lands. Specifically, the working group received testimony from multiple residents of an apartment building located in Iwilei on Oahu. The residents of the apartment building reported frustration about government being unable to respond to their concerns, despite multiple calls to 9-1-1 and various law enforcement agencies. The residents of the apartment building described situations that were unsafe both for the individuals in the encampment near their building, as well as for the general public – this included descriptions of individuals standing or lying in the roadway in the middle of oncoming traffic on a busy street.

Finally, the working group received public testimony from the Office of the Mayor for Hawaii County in regard to the Camp Kikaha encampment in Kona on Hawaii Island. The testimony from Hawaii County, including responses to questions from working group members, highlighted the number of people served
by Camp Kikaha and the operating costs to run the facility. Initially, Camp Kikaha served 30 individuals, and served about 22 individuals as of October 2017. According to Hawaii County staff, Camp Kikaha transitioned 8 individuals into emergency shelter at HOPE Services, and six of the 22 residents were employed. Hawaii County explained that Camp Kikaha provides portable toilets and an outdoor shower, but has no access to other utilities (e.g. electricity). The initial start-up cost for Camp Kikaha was $4,000.00 and ongoing monthly operating costs were $21,207. A breakdown of monthly operating costs is provided in the chart below:

The Monthly Cost of Running Camp Kikaha:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homeless Specialist</th>
<th>$4,316</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security (Started with 1 security 24/7 = $15,372/mo) Hours were recently cut back by 11 hrs. per wk = $14,433/mo</td>
<td>$14,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Toilets (2 at campsite) (cleaned out 2x a week)</td>
<td>$1,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash Pick up was $400/mo. Just arranged for P and R to pick up rubbish</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and Food (much is donated)</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$21,207.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: County of Hawaii County (October 12, 2017)*

**B. Review of the current and past positions of federal and state agencies regarding safe zones.**

The working group reviewed written reports relating the positions of both the HICH and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) in regard to safe zones. This review included the following written documents:

- Act 105, Section 4, SLH 2012 – Report on the designation of safe facilities in various locations throughout the State for homeless persons for overnight stays

The working group also asked member Brian Johnson for the position of HUD in regard to safe zones. In response, HUD clarified that “HUD generally does not support the creation of safe zones or more commonly referred to as tent cities.”

In 2012, when the HICH previously examined this issue, it recommended against establishing zones primarily for the following reasons:

- The establishment of safe zones is inconsistent with federal and state programs that emphasize permanent housing as the key to ending homelessness.
• Resources to address homelessness are scarce, and the establishment of safe zones would divert these resources from permanent housing, and could encourage the continuance of homelessness and a nomadic lifestyle for people experiencing homelessness.

• Concerns regarding the safety and well-being of homeless individuals residing in safe zones, as well as safety for neighborhoods surrounding safe zones.

Similarly, in 2015, the USICH acknowledged that the formation of encampments does not represent an end to homelessness, and can “serve to distract communities from focusing on what is most important – connecting people experiencing homelessness to safe, stable, permanent housing.” The USICH also acknowledged that there are costs associated with ensuring security for authorized encampments, and that this could result in funding being redirected from other programs that more directly address housing. The USICH report acknowledged the diversity of people living in encampments, and the need to consider a range of services – including permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and mainstream affordable housing.

The USICH report recommended four specific actions address homeless encampments and connect individuals in encampments with long-term housing:

1. Preparation and adequate time for planning and implementation, including the identification of area land owners and development of meaningful housing options.
2. Collaboration across Sectors and Systems, including collaboration between a cross-section of public and private agencies, including the faith-based and philanthropic sector.
3. Performance of intensive and persistent outreach and engagement, including identifying leadership within the encampment.
4. Provision of low-barrier pathways to permanent housing, including a connection to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and offers of interim housing (e.g. including shelter, bridge housing, or other temporary arrangements).

The USICH recommended that communities also plan to prevent encampments from being recreated. According to the USICH, these plans could include additional security and outreach measures, as well as plans for ongoing cleanup of the impacted area.

C. Review of legal homeless encampments in Hawaii and in other communities.

The working group examined the operations of four authorized homeless encampments that are currently in operation. Camp Kikaha in Hawaii County is currently the only authorized camp in Hawaii. The four authorized camps that the group examined are:

(1) Camp Kikaha (Kona, Hawaii)
(2) Opportunity Village (Eugene, Oregon)
(3) Nickelsville-Ballard (Seattle, Washington)
(4) Camp Hope (Las Cruces, New Mexico)

In general, the authorized camps had the following factors in common:

• **Small population size** – The number of individuals in the camps ranged from 25 to 50 individuals.
• **Self-organized governance structure** – All four camps utilize a leadership council of residents to make decisions regarding camp rules, and recommendations regarding individuals entering the camp.

• **No access to electricity** – None of the camps had access to electricity, although some had access to portable toilets and shared shower facilities.

• **Access to social services** – All four camps offered access to services, either through a direct contract with a nonprofit organization or through location near an existing service provider.

The ongoing operation costs of the four authorized camps varied widely. Annual operating costs ranged from a low of $8,000 (Camp Hope) to a high of $254,484 (Camp Kikaha). The costs were primarily for staffing, security, and access to water and toilet facilities. Camp Kikaha and Nickelsville-Ballard were primarily government funded, while Opportunity Village and Camp Hope both utilized a combination of rental income and donations for funding.

In addition to diversity in funding, a range of physical structures were used in the four authorized camps. Camp Kikaha and Camp Hope both utilized tent and tarp structures. Opportunity Village utilized 30 tiny houses that ranged from 60-80 square feet each. The Nickelsville-Ballard camp used a combination of tents and tiny houses. In all four camps, the land was provided by a City or County government agency.

More information regarding the four authorized camps is detailed in the chart below.

**Comparison of Authorized Camps – Hawaii and U.S. Mainland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Location)</th>
<th>Number of Residents</th>
<th>Monthly or Annual Cost</th>
<th>Type of Housing</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
<th>Role of Government</th>
<th>Other Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camp Kikaha (Kona)</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $21,207</td>
<td>Tent</td>
<td>Hana directly on site, but access to social services at Hope Services’ homelands</td>
<td>County-owned land. City planning 100% of operational costs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Cost: $254,484</td>
<td></td>
<td>resource center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Per person: $706 to $848 mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Village</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $3,750</td>
<td>30 tiny houses</td>
<td>Hana on site, but partnerships with existing service providers (human services,</td>
<td>County-owned land leased to nonprofit for $1/year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eugene, Ore.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Cost: $45,000</td>
<td>(60-80 square feet each)</td>
<td>crisis management, domestic violence, food pantry, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Per person: $107 to $125. mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickelsville-Ballard</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $11,862</td>
<td>12 tents, 5 tiny houses</td>
<td>Nickelsville partners with Low income Housing Authorities (LIHA) to provide housing referral services</td>
<td>Self-managed community (residents elected leadership and other positions)</td>
<td>24-hour security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Seattle)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Cost: $142,351</td>
<td></td>
<td>In 2015, city passed on ordinance allowing creation of three tent or tiny house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Per person: $599 to $747 mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td>villages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Hope (Las Cruces, N.M.)</td>
<td>80 individuals (no families or children allowed)</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $666</td>
<td>Tents (Zoning rules forbid structures without sprinklers)</td>
<td>Hana on property, but Maxilla Valley Community of Hope provides restrooms, showers and social services nearby (health care, housing, financial solutions)</td>
<td>City-owned property. Maxilla Valley Community of Hope provides services. Residents required to perform 6 hours of service weekly.</td>
<td>Funding provided by the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Cost: $8,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Per person: $13. mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (2017)*

**D. Vacant State lands identified by DLNR.**

The DLNR liaison to the working group identified nine separate land parcels on Oahu that are currently vacant. Due to time limitations, the working group limited its search primarily to lands under the direct jurisdiction of DLNR. The land parcels are listed below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>TMK</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Neighbors</th>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Trust Status</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupukea</td>
<td>Unencumbered</td>
<td>59031011</td>
<td>Ag lands</td>
<td>residential</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(b)</td>
<td>2.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waialae</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>58001053</td>
<td>EO To CCH</td>
<td>no infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(b)</td>
<td>20.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waialae</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>58001054</td>
<td>part of Wallace Beach Park</td>
<td>BWRE Hawaii LLC</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(b)</td>
<td>11.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaimuki</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>32036010</td>
<td>in residential area</td>
<td>residential</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(a)</td>
<td>0.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapunapua</td>
<td>11064006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>small lot</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 e</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halawa</td>
<td>99012046</td>
<td></td>
<td>medical contamination</td>
<td>park lands</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(b)</td>
<td>0.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halawa</td>
<td>99012047</td>
<td></td>
<td>medical contamination</td>
<td>park lands</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(e)</td>
<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimitz Viaduct area</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>12021035</td>
<td>no vehicular access</td>
<td>environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(b)</td>
<td>0.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimitz Viaduct area</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>11006003</td>
<td>medical contamination</td>
<td>environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td>5(e)</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DLNR identified various concerns relating to the identified parcels, including:

- **Location** – Parcels may be located in a residential area, or on a hillside slope that would make residential use difficult. One parcel is located in a flood inundation zone.
- **Lack of infrastructure** – All nine parcels lack water and sewer access. In addition, some parcels lack vehicular access to the property.
- **Size** – Two of the identified parcels are less than 0.5 acres in size, and may not be large enough to support a residential use.
- **Medical waste** – Two of the identified parcels have previously been used to store medical waste materials, and may require substantial remediation prior to residential use.

The concerns related to the parcels will likely impact the upfront cost of developing a campsite or a longer-term use for housing.

While some parcels may not be large enough to support a campsite or longer-term housing project, smaller parcels could be used to site portable toilets, hygiene facilities, or locker space to address the needs of unsheltered individuals living in nearby encampments.

The working group also acknowledged that the State has identified parcels for a number of recent private and public projects to serve the homeless population, including: Hale Mauliola, the Kakaako Family Assessment Center, Kahauiki Village, and the Hawaii County planned homeless project at Village 9 in West Hawaii.

**E. Other information considered.**

The working group also considered the following information in its deliberations:

- **Connection to the Coordinated Entry System (CES)**
- **Cost and capacity of recent housing navigation centers**
- **The financial impact of unauthorized homeless camps**

**Coordinated Entry and homeless encampments.**

The CES is a requirement for organizations that receive federal funding from HUD, and local Continuum of Care (CoCs) must have CES policies and procedures in place by January 2018 to be compliant with HUD requirements. The CES will serve as a way to standardize referrals to shelter and housing programs. The intent of the CES is to increase the efficiency of referrals to shelter and housing, and ensure that homeless individuals are matched with the most appropriate resource based on their situation (e.g. length of homelessness, medical conditions, etc.).

Homeless outreach providers and emergency shelters currently serve as access points for CES on Oahu. Homeless individuals can be assessed using a common assessment tool through an access point, and are placed on a By Name List (BNL) from which referrals will be made to shelter and housing programs. Individuals on the BNL are prioritized into three main categories of need, with the highest level of need meeting the criteria for permanent supportive housing, the medium level meeting the criteria for rapid rehousing, and the lowest level meeting the criteria for transitional housing. Homeless individuals and families will not appear on the BNL if they have not provided consent to share their information on the
BNL, or if they have not yet been assessed by an access point (e.g. outreach or emergency shelter provider).

If the State were to officially authorize homeless camps or safe zones, it was discussed that the camps should be identified as an access point for CES so that homeless individuals utilizing the camps can be better connected to longer-term housing services.

Cost and capacity of recent housing navigation centers.

Within the past two years, two new facilities for homeless individuals and families have opened on Oahu. These facilities differ from a traditional emergency shelter, and have been labeled as housing navigation centers or assessment centers. The two facilities include:

- Hale Mauliola
- Kakaako Family Assessment Center

The working group specifically examined the target population, operating cost, and outcomes for the two housing navigation centers. The working group also noted that Hale Mauliola had initially been intended to be an authorized homeless camp with tarp and tent structures, similar to Camp Kikaha. However, after conducting a series of community meetings and receiving feedback from service providers, Hale Mauliola significantly changed its design to incorporate modular container structures and low-barrier policies for entry.

A chart comparing information for the two housing navigation centers is below:

**Comparison of Costs for Two Local Assessment/Navigation Centers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Location)</th>
<th>Number of Residents</th>
<th>Monthly or Annual Cost</th>
<th>Type of Housing</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
<th>Rate of Government</th>
<th>Other Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Assessment Center</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $64,416</td>
<td>Warehouse - Cullodial</td>
<td>Housing-focused case management, Partnership with other service providers (e.g. PID, KPHC, DOE, DOM, etc.)</td>
<td>State-owned facility, State funds 100% of operating costs.</td>
<td>93% placement rate (39 out of 42 households), 79-day average length of stay (intake to exit), 24-hour staffing, no security, Total persons served: 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale Mauliola</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Monthly Cost: $81,666</td>
<td>25 refurbished shipping containers - divided into 39 individual units and 24 two-person units</td>
<td>Housing-focused case management, Referrals provided to other social service programs.</td>
<td>State land, leased to City, City funds 100% of operating costs.</td>
<td>62% placement rate (96 out of 154 people), 25% stayed longer than 60 days - with 4.5% staying longer than 180 days, 24-hour security and staffing, Total persons served: 134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness (2017)

While the cost per person for the housing navigation centers are slightly higher than for an authorized camp, the housing navigation center cost also includes professional staff and the delivery of housing-focused case management. Both Hale Mauliola and the Family Assessment Center reported high rates of placement to long-term housing – a 93% placement rate for the Family Assessment Center, and a 62% placement rate for Hale Mauliola. In addition, both facilities reported relatively short lengths of stay for residents – with the Family Assessment Center averaging 79 days from intake to placement/exit.
Financial impact of unauthorized homeless camps

It was suggested through public testimony that the group examine the financial impact and composition of unauthorized camps in addition to looking only at authorized camps. Based on this suggestion, the working group examined two unauthorized encampments on Oahu:

- Kakaako Makai Homeless Camp
- Pu‘uhonua O Waianae

The Kakaako Makai homeless camp has been in existence for over two years and, at its largest, was estimated to include nearly 300 individuals in August 2015. The Kakaako Makai camp population is currently estimated at between 55-65 individuals, and largely consists of single adults and couples. The Kakaako Makai camp has moved between various locations within the Kakaako area, Makai of Ala Moana Boulevard. The Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA), the State agency that has oversight of the Kakaako Makai area, recently estimated that individuals in the homeless camp had caused $500,000 in damages to the area parks. In addition, HCDA staff have estimated increased water and electric usage in the Kakaako park area that is associated with unauthorized use of utilities by the camp residents.

The Pu‘uhonua O Waianae camp has also been in existence for over two years and its size has fluctuated from a high of 319 to a low of 170 people. The Waianae camp is located on land owned by DLNR, and DLNR staff regularly visit the camp to conduct a census of its population. There is a significant difference in the current estimated size of the Waianae camp, which is estimated at 210 individuals by DLNR and at 170 individuals by the camp residents. DLNR staff reported that the water bill for the neighboring Waianae Boat Harbor has significantly increased since 2013, and DLNR believes this increase is related to increased usage of water from the harbor by the camp residents. According to DLNR, the cost of the water bill for the Waianae Boat Harbor alone now exceeds the revenues generated by harbor fees that had been intended to cover utility costs. DLNR noted that in addition to the financial impact, the Waianae camp is believed to have negatively impacted environmental and cultural resources located on the DLNR property. In 2016, DLNR staff visited the property and found that a number of rock terraces that had previously been reported on the site, and were identified as cultural resources, were no longer in existence. Biologist with the Division of Aquatic Resources are concerned that the encampment is adversely affecting the rare anchialine shrimp that live in ponds on the property.

III. Rationale for Working Group Recommendations

The working group carefully considered public testimony, written reports, and presentations from HICH staff and the community. Based on its review of this information, it is clear that there is support for the concept from homeless advocates and individuals experiencing homelessness. It is also clear that the federal government – both HUD and the USICH – have serious concerns regarding the implementation of safe zones, and the diversion of scarce public resources away from strategies that emphasize permanent housing.

The working group also noted that the USICH report, public testimony, and information from HCDA and DLNR highlighted the negative aspects of unauthorized homeless encampments. Specifically, unauthorized encampments were associated with damage to public facilities, and high increases in water and other utility costs. In addition, public testifiers noted that unauthorized encampments result in dangerous circumstances both for homeless individuals and the general public, as unauthorized camps are sometimes located near heavily trafficked roadways or other unsafe areas.
Because safe zones are an emerging practice – with Camp Kikaha in Hawaii County being the only authorized camp in Hawaii and being less than six months old – the working group recognizes there is a need to further examine the effectiveness of safe zones. The working group believes that the $25,000 appropriated through Act 212 can best be utilized to support the existing operations at Camp Kikaha, and to assist in collecting more detailed data regarding this local effort.

In the meantime, the working group is also attaching a list of the nine vacant parcels identified by DLNR, and suggests that this list be expanded to include vacant properties under the jurisdiction of other State and County agencies. While the identified parcels have various challenges associated with them – including location and lack of infrastructure – these challenges are not insurmountable, but will affect the overall cost of any future project. It is important to note that the State has supported a number of recent efforts to address homelessness through the identification of vacant lands, and that the lands identified by the working group may serve a similar purpose.

A key theme in the public testimony, as well as in the USICH report on homeless encampments, is the need to focus efforts on the development of affordable housing and increasing pathways for homeless individuals to access permanent housing. It was also noted that the new housing navigation center model of shelter included a specific focus on permanent housing, and that both Hale Mauliola and the Family Assessment Center reported high rates of permanent housing placement. If the Legislature chooses to move forward with the implementation of safe zones, it is recommended that safe zones include the delivery of housing-focused services and should include practices incorporated by Hale Mauliola or the Kakaako Family Assessment Center.

If there are any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness at (808) 586-0193 or by e-mail at gov.homelessness@hawaii.gov.
KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Affordable housing – In general, housing is considered “affordable” when the cost is less than 30 percent of a household’s income. When housing costs exceed this amount, a household is considered to be housing-cost burdened. With an estimated 57.5% of renters paying more than one-third of their income to rent, Hawai’i has the second highest number of cost-burdened renters in the nation. The households who face the most severe lack of affordable housing are the extremely low income, who earn less than 30% Area Median Income (AMI), or less than $28,750 per year for a household of four in Honolulu.

Authorized camp – A homeless encampment that is officially recognized and sanctioned by federal, state, or local government. Authorized camps are alternatively referred to as Safe Zones.

Coordinated entry system – Coordinated entry is a process to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs. A coordinated entry system helps communities to prioritize housing and homeless assistance based on a homeless person’s vulnerability and the severity of their needs, so that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Federal law requires that CoCs establish a coordinated entry system.

Emergency shelter – An emergency shelter generally is a facility with overnight sleeping accommodations that provides short-term, temporary shelter for homeless persons and does not require occupants to sign a lease or occupancy agreement. Emergency shelters differ from transitional housings (also known as transitional housing) that typically allows a maximum stay of up to 24 months.

Hawai’i Interagency Council on Homelessness – The HICH was formally established in July 2011 through executive order by then-Governor Neil Abercrombie. Hawai’i was the first state in the nation to create a state interagency council patterned after the U.S> Interagency Council on Homelessness. In 2012, the HICH was established in statute through Act 105 by the state legislature. Composed of state department directors, federal agency representatives, and community leaders, the HICH is tasked with providing solutions to end homelessness and strengthen the continuity of efforts to end homelessness across future state administrations. Housed administratively within the Department of Human Services (DHS), the HICH is chaired by Scott Morishige, appointed in August 2015 to serve as the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness.

Homeless outreach – The work of homeless outreach includes meeting homeless persons on streets or sidewalks, or in remote rural areas that includes beaches and valleys. Outreach providers assist with the completion of program applications, the determination of program eligibility, housing search and placement, and work with the person to obtain identification and other vital documents (e.g. birth certificate or social security card).

Housing First – Housing First is a philosophy that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. In a Housing First approach, there is an immediate and primary focus on accessing and sustaining permanent housing for all homeless populations. In addition to the Housing First philosophy, the term is used to refer to specific permanent supportive housing programs

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operated by the state and the city and county of Honolulu. The state and city Housing First programs adopt the philosophy, but also specifically target chronically homeless households for services.

**Permanent supportive housing (PSH)** – PSH is a service delivery model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to enable homeless persons to attain and maintain permanent housing. PSH programs typically target chronically homeless persons, or homeless persons who experience multiple barriers to housing and are unable to maintain housing stability without supportive services. PSH program have been shown to not only impact housing status, but also result in cost savings to various public service systems, including health care. The state and city Housing First programs that target chronically homeless persons are both examples of a PSH program.

**Rapid rehousing** – Rapid rehousing places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The duration of financial assistance provided in a rapid rehousing program can include either short-term (up to 3-months) or medium-term (6-months to 24-months) support. In general, the core components of rapid rehousing are housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management.

**Transitional housing** – Transitional housing, also referred to as transitional housing, is designed to provide homeless persons and families with temporary stability and support, so that they are able to eventually move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing is generally for a period of up to 24 months of housing with accompanying supportive services.