

Flash survey finds support for homeless shelter

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NEWS EDITOR

The city of Hermiston's first flash survey revealed only 8.9% of respondents don't want to see any kind of year-round homeless shelter in Hermiston.

The issue was one of five questions in a brief survey that 139 people responded to. The city plans to push out one survey per month.

In answer to a question about what kind of shelter people in Hermiston would want to see, 8.9% people said no year-round shelter, 33.7% said the city should allow a shelter to run but

not give it any funding, 20.8% said the city should help pay start-up costs for a shelter, 18.8% said the city should help pay ongoing operational costs for a year-round homeless shelter and the rest said they were not sure.

Sixty one percent of survey takers said that there is "a lot" or "a little" more homelessness in Hermiston compared to a few years ago, and a majority of respondents reported seeing instances of people sleeping on sidewalks and other signs of homelessness in the area.

When asked what the



Photo contributed by Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless
A proposed emergency shelter for the homeless in Hermiston, known as Stepping Stones, would be modeled after the sleep center created by Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, pictured here.

city's top three funding priority should be, however, only 33% listed improving

homeless services as one of their top three choices. The top answer was improv-

ing streets, followed by encouraging more affordable housing and improving infrastructure to attract more businesses.

The survey provided an open-ended answer portion, to which residents gave varying answers. One stated that homelessness was only going to grow and the city needed to stay ahead of the curve in providing services, while others stated they were concerned increased shelter options would draw more homeless people to Hermiston.

The city is still recruiting people to take the

monthly surveys through FlashVote, a third party service.

Residents who sign up online at flashvote.com/hermiston will receive one-minute surveys about issues of concern in the city, such as public safety or recreation offerings. Those who sign up to participate can choose whether they would like to receive the surveys through email, phone or text message.

Surveys are open for 48 hours once sent, and results will be received by city staff, elected officials and the public on an anonymous basis.



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