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Metro modeled homeless plan on LA's, which may not be working

ECONorthwest study:
Los Angeles model
isn't passing muster
with residents there

By JIM REDDEN
Pamplin Media Group

A newly released study questions whether Metro's supportive services measure will significantly reduce the number of homeless people living on the streets and in shelters.

The ECONorthwest study examines the effectiveness of an earlier measure in Los Angeles County that served as a model for the Metro measure, which was approved by voters on May 2020.

Both measures are raising hundreds of millions of dollars every year that are being spent to prevent homelessness pay to house the homeless and provide supportive service to help keep the chronically homeless housed.

The report found that, although Measure H was approved by Los Angeles voters in March 2017, polls show residents do not believe its spending has reduced homelessness.

To the contrary, the polls show Los Angeles residents believe the homeless situation has gotten worse in recent years — even though it has raised and spent \$1.8 billion over the past five years.

Despite the public health crisis and uncoordinated governance, Los Angeles County reports a remarkable level of service activity: 33,425 permanent placements and 60,201 placements in shelters and other interim housing. It's confounding that that much placement activity hasn't led to a perceptible



PMG FILE PHOTO

A new study says a homeless services plan in LA might not be working as planned.

improvement in street or shelter homelessness," said the report, titled "Postcard from the future: Lesson from Los Angeles."

Metro also is claiming a large number of placements funded by its supportive services measure that is projected to raise \$225 million per year.

But the report said that without administrative changes, residents in the tri-county area served by Metro may not see any significant decrease in homelessness, either.

"The Portland region is navigating the same long-term versus temporary solutions debate that's dominant in Los Angeles five years after the passage of Measure H," the report reads.

"At their extremes, these two options present a choice between improved housing stability for thousands, with an unclear reduction in literal homelessness, versus a reorganization of the population experiencing homelessness that reduces its visibility but increases its total number. The charge to the mayor and his elected colleagues across the region is to find a solution between these extremes that compassionately and demonstrably mitigates the

humanitarian crisis."

The report recommends that local leaders learn the following lessons from Los Angeles County:

- Remember that accelerated housing production is the long-term solution to the region's homelessness crisis. As in Los Angeles, the Portland region's homelessness crisis finds its roots in a chronically underbuilt housing market. The Portland region needs to build around 14,700 units annually for the next 20 years, with special attention to affordable units.

- Get clear, and realistic, about the relationship between housing placement activity and changes in the annual Point in Time homeless count. The regional PIT count should not be the sole outcome by which the measure's success is judged, but it will inevitably be one of them.

- Establish a goal and timetable for reductions in street and shelter homelessness. Street and shelter homelessness are narrow but highly visible aspects of the region's larger housing instability crisis.

- Systematically manage the region's encampments and set public expectations that street

homelessness will persist at gradually lower levels. Addressing the crisis in a way that is consistent with community values is not a quick process.

The best path forward involves acknowledging and addressing street homelessness, at gradually lower levels, over the course of SHS implementation.

- Fully leverage a new relationship with the Built for Zero movement (that identifies all homeless people in real time). Among the more promising developments in the early stages of SHS's implementation is the new partnership with the national nonprofit, Community Solutions, and its Built for Zero work.

- Learn from LA's self-described systemic dysfunction and identify a central entity that is accountable for SHS outcomes.

The Portland region's measure is housed at Metro because the geography of taxation made sense, not because the agency had deep expertise in the provision of supportive housing services. Consequently, a policy area already challenged by interagency coordination now has an additional agency in the mix.

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Wilsonville Garden Club to hold swag sale Dec. 3

By KAELYN CASSIDY
Pamplin Media Group

For the first time in more than two years, the Wilsonville Garden Club is holding its annual Christmas "Swag Sale" from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 3 at the Wilsonville Library.

A swag is similar to a wreath, but in a teardrop shape rather than a circle.

About 25 members of the garden club gathered at the Charbonneau Country Club Nov. 3 to make the Christmas decorations, and it all starts with a foam block. The kind used for floral arrangements works best.

Wire is threaded through the block and secured to make a hook on the back for the swag to hang from. It doesn't have to look pretty; this will all be covered up later.



PMG PHOTO: KAELYN CASSIDY

Members of the Wilsonville Garden Club craft Christmas swags.

Next is the bow. This part can be a little tricky, but the garden club members have a few tips. First, try using wired ribbon; it'll make things easier. If the ribbon begins to wrinkle, just

exhale onto it, and it'll straighten out. Finally, remember that, with enough priming and preening, any bow can look professional.

From there, evergreen tree

branches are inserted into the block. By cutting the ends of the branches at a diagonal, a sharp point is formed. This makes them easier to insert. Don't try to pull them out and stick them back in the same hole if you mess up the placement — the foam won't hold onto the branch properly and it'll fall out.

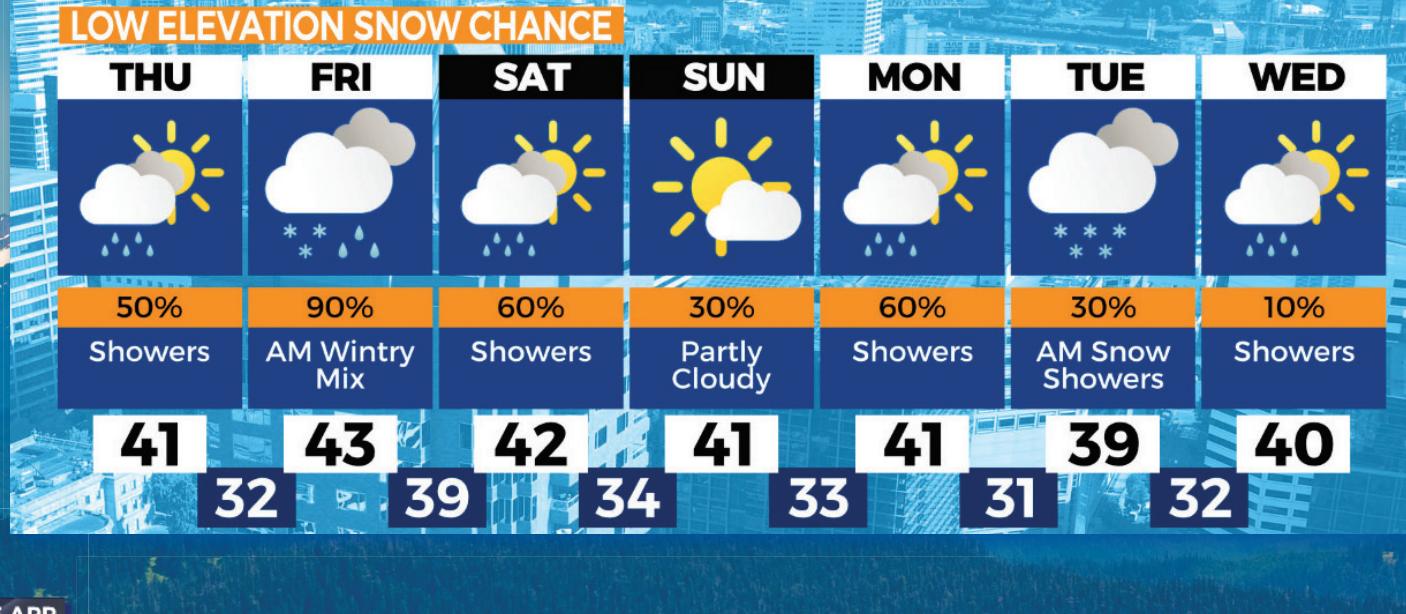
The branches are layered onto one another, creating a lush, cascading arrangement that can then be adorned with the bow and any other decorations before being hung on a door.

The club members recommend choosing decorations that will withstand the outdoors and avoiding glass ornaments that can fall off and break.

If that all seems like a bit much, the garden club will have swags for sale along with table centerpieces and other Christmas decor.

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