

March 25, 2016

Aaron Rodriguez  
ACR Business Consulting

RE: Homelessness Planning Services

Hi Aaron,

It was a pleasure to meet with you last week. I was glad to learn about your involvement in the update of the County's 10 Year Homeless Housing Plan. I think your involvement in that process presents a unique opportunity to link that regional housing work with an effort to address not just the housing needs, but also the ancillary impacts of concentrations of homelessness in Olympia's downtown.

I need help:

1. Designing a survey instrument and approach to help us document the number and characteristics of the homeless population that lives in and around Olympia's downtown.
2. Reviewing, summarizing and synthesizing the existing data and reports relevant to homelessness in our community.
3. Developing a scope of work for a planning process that would lead towards a more coordinated response to homelessness and its impacts, particularly in our downtown. I envision this in the form of an action plan with clear responsibilities, partners, timeframes and regular and ongoing reporting. This action plan would be directed towards expanding housing and shelter opportunities as well as addressing the impacts of homelessness on our downtown. To be successful it would require broad partnership between the City of Olympia, County, other cities, not for profits and faith based organizations.

This scope would set the stage for next steps coming out of the City's ongoing Downtown Strategy process and should include an estimated cost, key deliverables, methods and opportunities for public involvement and key participants.

I would appreciate a proposal from you to conduct the work outlined above. Previously, I mentioned that we had done some brainstorming around the topic of homelessness. Our notes are included below. I hope they help to further illustrate our objectives. Please let me know if you have questions or need further information to formulate a realistic proposal.

Sincerely,

Keith Stahley, Director  
Community Planning and Development Department

## Develop a Homelessness Engagement Action Plan

We recognize that much good work has been done over the years by many dedicated people in the private, not for profit and governmental sectors and yet the problem of homelessness has persisted and by some measures grown. Olympia's downtown seems particularly effected.

In the summer of 2015 the City of Olympia commissioned a survey of Downtown business owners to support the development of the Downtown Strategy. This survey confirmed that there are extensive concerns about homelessness and its impacts on our Downtown. These concerns spanned the full spectrum from concern about the impact on the business and cultural environment of downtown to concerns for the welfare of individuals experiencing homelessness. Our objective is to create a more coordinated approach to begin addressing this broader spectrum of concern.

- **Target:** Advance a regional conversation culminating in an action plan/strategy for how regional partners coordinate, communicate and use resources to address homelessness in our community and impacts on the downtown business and cultural environment.
- **Downtown Strategy (DTS):** Homelessness and the impacts of homelessness on downtown and the business and cultural environment have been repeatedly raised in the DTS process. The DTS will gather community input about issues facing downtown and begin to outline next steps to feed into the development of a coordinated homeless strategy.
- **Strategic Priorities/Tactics:**
  - Leadership of elected officials required
  - 360 degree approach social service, business, faith and government represented
  - Joint responsibility
  - Diverse stakeholders involved in conversation
  - Address
    - Housing
    - Continuum of care
    - Impacts on other goals
  - Recognize what has already been done
  - Tell the story with data
  - Address perception vs. reality
- Regional issue that disproportionately affects downtown Olympia
- County is significant partner
- Housing is dispersed region-wide; while social services are concentrated in downtown
- Most planning efforts need to look at the issue and solutions from all perspectives:
  - Social
    - Housing

- Continuum of Care
  - Safety/perceptions of safety
- Environmental
  - Sanitation
  - Impacts of 'camps' on the natural environment
- Economic
  - Impacts to businesses in downtown
  - Impacts on cultural facilities
  - Investment
  - Private property

### **Next Steps:**

- (2016) Develop draft scope of work
- (2016) Choose a strong facilitator
- (2016) Review what's been done (10-yr plan; Social service providers; Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team; United Way, Olympian and League of Women Voters forums; EDC Downtown Business Survey; City's Downtown Project; PBIA/ODA; Downtown Strategy; Action Plan; Parks/Artesian Commons; OPD, etc.)
- (2016) Identify sources of data, and draw out data points that 'tell the story'
  - Problem
  - Impacts
  - Need
- (2016) Share scope with regional partners. Develop shared vision, goals and commitment including time and resources.
- (2016) Coordinate with the County's 10 Year Housing Plan Update
- (2017) Gather data about downtown homelessness to understand the who, what and why of the issue.
- (2017) Prepare and adopt an Action Plan.
- (2017) Form an implementation group of diverse stakeholders that agree to monitor progress toward agreed upon goals and periodically report to key decision makers, stakeholders and the community.