

Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability

Meeting Highlights

March 10th:

1. **Meeting with Thurston County to Review the Housing Pipeline and Discuss the Regional Response to Homelessness and Housing Affordability** -- we learned about County's proposed Housing Pipeline anticipates 172 new affordable housing units over the next five years with 50% of those being permanent supportive housing. We learned that LIHI has submitted a proposal for another mixed use project in Olympia consisting of 60 units targeting homeless families, homeless adults, veterans, disabled and workforce housing. This project is anticipated for 2018. The other significant project scheduled for Olympia is the Family Support Center's Pear Blossom Place II with 44 units of supportive housing targeting families with children, mentally ill, workforce families and victims of domestic violence. Panza also plans another project, however, they have not designated a location other than in Thurston County. They anticipate 30 units in 2020.
2. **Discussion of the Housing Tool Kit and Developing Options for Implementation** - The Committee reviewed the City of Seattle's [Pathway's Home](#). This document was developed by the City of Seattle to help guide decisions around homelessness and affordable housing. As we've seen with so many of the City's successful efforts over the years: good plans lead to good results. A good plan is a tool that we need to develop. Much of the work at the CIP is consistent with the major principles included in the [Pathway's Home](#) document. These include:
 - A. It is clear that the focus on the development of a comprehensive system, rather than exemplary individual programs, is critical to successfully reducing homelessness.
 - B. Now is the time to demonstrate our commitment to better serving those experiencing homelessness and provide meaningful access to the necessary services to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time.
 - C. Better align our efforts with local and national best practices.
 - D. Heavy focus on basic intervention services, such as shelters and hygiene centers focused on immediate crisis, rather than a cohesive and comprehensive continuum of strategies designed to end people's homelessness.
 - E. Expanding funding for program approaches that are most effective at exiting people from homelessness such as diversion, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.
 - F. Prioritizing shelter and housing access for people living unsheltered and people who have the longest histories of homelessness.

- G. Orienting all aspects of the homeless response system towards exits to permanent housing.
- H. Working together urgently and boldly to implement meaningful solutions.
- I. A systemic response to homelessness involves more than having quality individual programs available. Those programs must be accessible, coordinated, and achieving results.
- J. Form a person-centered crisis response system.
- K. Only by concentrating investments on programs with a relentless focus on permanent housing can our system obtain enough throughput to adequately begin to address our large unsheltered population.
- L. Living unsheltered with young children creates a serious health and safety risk with potentially lifelong negative consequences.
- M. Shelter must be perceived as a preferable option to living outdoors.
- N. By embracing a housing first, low barrier, service-oriented shelter model, the City is committed to making shelter accessible and moving away from survival only shelter models to comprehensive shelters that focused on ending a person's homelessness.

Staff Note siting and development of ADUs will be addressed through the ongoing Missing Middle Process as will and exploration of other tools and strategies to encourage the production of affordable housing.

April 3, 2017

1. Meet with Representatives from the County and the Homeless Housing Hub to better Understand the County's Five Year Plan

The 5-year goal outcome is to achieve functional zero unsheltered homelessness overall. The strategies for reaching the desired outcome are:

Increase inventory of diversion, rapid rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- objective 1: successfully identify and divert all applicable households
- objective 2: quickly rehouse all eligible households
- objective 3: develop sufficient PSH stock to serve the most vulnerable
- objective 4: solidify existing shelter capacity without undercutting resources for housing

Provide adequate support services for housing stability

- objective 1: ensure that voluntary supportive services and flexible retention funds are available to all people placed into permanent housing to prevent a reoccurrence of homelessness should the household face a crisis that threatens housing stability

- objective 2: increase job and income growth for people placed into permanent housing once housing stability is achieved

2. Homeless Service System and Affordable Housing Options Briefing

Warming/Day Center Debrief:

- A. The committee received a report from Meg Martin with the Interfaith Works on the 2016/2017 Warming Center. Meg noted that the shelter served nearly 200 people per day when located at 408 Olympia Avenue.
- B. Ms. Martin noted that in their survey they found that 35% were originally from Thurston County. 65% of those from outside Thurston County report they have been in the County for seven years. While only 16% reported that they have been in the County for less than one year. The average person served at the Warming Center was a 40+ year old, white male experiencing mental illness, physical disability or chronic health condition or substance abuse challenges. Clearly part of Olympia's most vulnerable population.
- C. Funding for the 2016-2017 Warming Center - total \$131,000
 - Thurston County: \$40K
 - City Of Olympia: \$17K
 - City of Lacey: \$15.6K
 - City of Tumwater: \$7200
 - Interfaith Works: \$36K including \$5K from United Way emergency fund and \$11K from the Unitarian Church

Projected cost for 2017/18 season: \$210K/5 months = \$42K/month

This would include reasonable staffing accommodations (still under our preferred staffing ratio but higher than this past year), supply purchases and an estimated low rental cost similar to that of Alpine Experience (\$3k/month) but obviously we can't predict that without a clear location in mind. We asked for this full amount to the county and expect to not get funded at the full amount.

- D. Ms. Martin identified the following successes:
 - Served a high number of people
 - Broad range of people served
 - Served the most vulnerable
 - Coordinated with the Family Support Center
 - Formed partnerships with service providers
 - Had a positive impact on the streets of downtown

E. Ms. Martin identified the following challenges:

- Lack of adequate (and well located) outdoor space
- Inadequate restrooms for the size of the facility and the number of guests served
- Impact on neighbors
- Low staffing ratio of 48/1
- Lack of a pet area
- Magnet

F. The County's 2013 Gaps Analysis notes that, "In the short-term, a low-barrier shelter program needs to be developed that can also meet the need for a day center. This solution would also address the need for a public restroom that is accessible to people during the night. This resource will also fill an outreach and engagement gap in the system for those who are chronically homeless."

G. *Staff Note:*

- *Start work on a 2017-2018 shelter now*
- *Pursue regional support for a cold weather shelter through a regional task force*
- *Find a location that meets operational and community needs*

2013 Thurston County Gaps Analysis:

Top 5 Gaps in Thurston County's Homeless System (in no order of priority)

- Youth Shelter*
- Youth Bridge Program
- Low Barrier Shelter Program for Adults*
- Rapid Rehousing for Families
- Permanent Supportive Housing for Adults

**immediately needed to plug short-term gaps*

County-wide System Delivery Gaps

In addition to analyzing the gaps in the system by population type, it is important to look at how the system works as a whole. This section describes some of the needs to improve the ability of the homeless system *to deliver seamlessly and effectively*.

There is a lack of a **coordinated entry** by which people that are homeless access information, housing and services.

There is a lack of **outreach and engagement services** for those who routinely fall through the cracks of the existing system, i.e. chronically homeless adults often with mental illness, addictions and with multiple barriers to stable housing.

Capacity building is needed as a few programs serving homeless people are relatively new and/or have taken on big projects and need to get their feet under them before they can reach their full potential or before more can be asked of them.

The Gaps Analysis identifies the following needs:

1. 50 rapid rehousing slots for various programs for families with children
2. 40 beds of year round, low-barrier shelter, harm reduction model for singles and couples
3. 40 Rapid Rehousing or Transitional Housing slots for singles and couples
4. 48-60 Rapid Rehousing or Transitional Housing for youth

Existing Shelter Bed Capacity According to City Staff:

City staff reported that there are currently 210 shelter beds. There are 138 permanent beds that are approximately 90% full. There are an additional 72 winter shelter beds. These are 44% full on average. (see Pathways Home item M. above)

Point and Time Census:

The 2016 Point in Time Count (PIT) found that there were 586 homeless in Thurston County of which 189 were unsheltered, 223 were in emergency shelter and 174 were in transitional housing. 2016's 586 was above last year's 476 and below the 976 identified in the 2010 PIT. Of the 301 individuals surveyed 90 or 29% were from outside Thurston County and 205 reported at least one significant disability.

The 2017 PIT was conducted on January 26, 2017. Results of the 2017 PIT are still being tabulated.

April 19, 2017

Overview of Bellingham, Vancouver, Seattle and Everett's Affordable Housing and Homelessness Response efforts:

Bellingham:

City staff presented an overview Bellingham's housing levy. In 2012 Bellingham voters approved a property tax levy of \$21 million over a 7-year period (2013-2019) to provide, produce, and/or preserve affordable housing. 2/3rds of the funding must benefit those households earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Through the first five years of the Bellingham Home fund they have preserved or produced a total of 568 units exceeding their goal of 417. Bellingham has also provided rental assistance to over 4,700 people far exceeding their goal of 2,250 people.

The Bellingham Fund provides for ongoing administration of the program and has established an annual monitoring fee.

Bellingham has a rental registration and inspection program that helps to ensure the quality of the rental housing stock is maintained overtime. This program can also be tied to issues such as source of income, notice of rent increases and notice of no cause evictions.

Staff Note: Bellingham moved quickly on its housing levy with the process being initiated in January of 2012 and the vote in November of that same year. This effort was preceded by a yearlong community conversation in 2008 known as the County-wide Affordability Task Force (CHAT).

Vancouver:

The City of Vancouver is the most recent community to adopt a housing levy in the state of Washington. It is anticipated that their levy of .36/\$1,000 of assessed value will generate over \$42,000,000 over the next seven years. Projects will be aimed at those earning 50% of the area medium income or less. They plan to use 67% of the revenue for production or preservation of 790 affordable units, 25% for rental assistance, 5% for shelter and 3% for implementation.

The City of Vancouver adopted three ordinances early in their process:

- 45 day notice of rent increase beyond 10%
- 60 day notice of no cause eviction
- No discrimination based on source of income

Staff also learned that Vancouver uses its multifamily tax exemption program to strategically leverage low income housing production.

- 8-year exemption for projects with 20% of units affordable to households earning up to 100% of area median income (AMI).
- 10-year exemption for projects with 20% of units affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI.
- 12-year exemption for projects with 20% of units affordable to households earning up to 60% AMI.
- In addition to the above requirements, households in income-restricted units must pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities.

The City of Vancouver in cooperation and partnership with the Vancouver Housing Authority and Share, a local not for profit serving the homeless community, operated a downtown warming center and are pursuing construction of a permanent day center in downtown Vancouver.

The City of Vancouver adopted the following ordinances early in their process to help provide some minimal levels of protections for vulnerable renters:

- 45 day notice of rent increase beyond 10%
- 60 day notice of no cause eviction
- No discrimination based on source of income (Olympia adopted this language in 2016)

Should Council direct staff to move forward with these ordinances staff recommends that outreach be done to land lords, property owners and rental management agencies to inform them of these proposed changes and receive their feedback.

Staff recommends that we examine how we can fine tune our multiple family tax exemption program to pursue housing affordability goals while continuing to encourage downtown housing development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Seattle:

The City of Seattle passed a housing levy in 2009 and in 2016 and is planning on pursuing a sales tax levy to support homeless housing and services in conjunction with the County.

Everett:

The City of Everett engaged a broad based stakeholder process known as the Community Street Initiative in 2014. The Community Streets Initiative Task Force developed dozens of recommendations focused on changing the “street level social issues” in their urban core.

We believe a strong systems approach is needed to effectively address street level social issues in Everett. Efforts must be coordinated. Agencies must evaluate actions by identifying and addressing cross-system impacts and coordinating between criminal justice, human services, housing and service provider systems/communities. (12) 1 Moreover, we believe this system analysis and engagement must occur not just within Everett, but on a countywide basis. (72), 74(R). Everett should not be the single locus of activity to address what are in fact countywide challenges.

Some of the strategic highlights from the report include:

Category 1: Improving Public Safety and Reducing Crime

- Strategy 1.1: Expanded use of effective traditional policing practices
- Strategy 1.2: Expand efforts to divert non-violent homeless individuals and others suffering from mental illness and substance abuse problems to more effective, less expensive alternatives to detention.
- Strategy 1.3: Take steps to ensure individuals leaving the County Jail are less likely to become homeless.
- Strategy 1.4: Provide skills and outreach services to businesses and residents in the commercial core areas to help reduce crime, more quickly identify emerging problems and ensure prompt response when problems arise.

Category 2: Providing More and Enhanced Services to Street Populations

- Strategy 2.1: Increase capacity of, and access to, drop-in day centers in the City. Supporting tactics/actions endorsed by the Task Force include: Expand the hours of existing drop in centers. (20) Explore the need/feasibility of establishing additional centers. (20) 10 Where possible, expand services and amenities available at day centers (e.g., showers, laundry). (20) • Careful consideration must be given to minimizing impacts on commercial core areas and neighborhoods. One specific tactic of this nature: Request accommodation by the Health Department to allow Compass Health clients to smoke in a less visible location than the sidewalk and lawn on Broadway, one of the City's gateway arterials. Help other facility operators as appropriate secure similar accommodations. (54)(R)
- Strategy 2.2: Expand availability of basic service facilities available for homeless individuals in commercial core areas of the City.
- Strategy 2.3: Expand countywide capacity to effectively serve the specialized treatment needs of homeless populations.
- Strategy 2.4: Expand outreach services to both homeless youth and adults.

- Strategy 2.5: Take steps to keep people from becoming homeless in the first place.
- Strategy 2.6: Ensure the City's multiple faith-based feeding programs operate with best practices and engage them in helping to reduce potential negative impacts on neighboring businesses/residents.

Category 3: Providing More Housing and Shelter

Strategy 3.1: Build more shelter bed capacity to serve a range of populations in need. (50)

Strategy 3.2: Increase supply of permanent supported subsidized housing. (52)(R)

Category 4: Improving Public Understanding

Strategy 4.1: Enhance public understanding of the complexity of street level social issues and work to build a more inclusive and welcoming community

Category 5: Improving Inter-Agency Coordination & Communication

Category 6: Advocacy

Strategy 6.1: The City, County, service providers, and business community should join forces to advocate for additional state, federal and private funding resources to help address the City's street level social issues.

Strategy 6.2: Broaden the discussion to include all Cities and other key agencies in Snohomish County.

Staff Note: The Mayor of the City of Everett convened a broad based task force to examine street life issues effecting downtown Everett. This group met from July of 2014 until November of 2014 and developed 63 recommendations for consideration by the City. Two of the more interesting actions included in Everett's plan are the Embedded Social Worker and the Chronic Utilizer Alternative Response Team. Both efforts would appear to be approaches worth exploring in Olympia.

Review the Downtown Strategy Recommendations Regarding Homelessness and Affordable Housing

The Downtown Strategy recommends the following actions for housing (H):

- H1. Develop a Comprehensive Housing Strategy to establish a mixed income residential community in downtown
- H2. Dedicate additional resources for an ongoing housing program to implement the Housing Strategy described in H1.

The Downtown Strategy recommends the following elements for a Housing Strategy:

- Consider downtown housing in a citywide and regional context
- Establish affordability goals · Identify implementation measures and funding
- Create means to monitor progress and adapt to changing needs

The Downtown Strategy recommends the following actions for homelessness (HS):

- HS1. Convene a broad range of community stakeholders to form an action plan leading to a more coordinated response to homelessness/street dependency and the impacts of downtown
- HS2. Initiate a discussion with regional policymakers about future social service siting, funding and support needs throughout the region

Staff Note: The Downtown Strategy encourages council and the city to take a leadership role in convening a broad based community conversation about housing, homelessness and its effects on downtown.

Overview of the Coordinated Entry System and the Vulnerability Index

The vulnerability index is a triage tool for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population for housing according to the fragility of their health based on if they have/are/have had:

- More than three hospitalizations or emergency room visits in a year
- More than three emergency room visits in the previous three months
- Over 60 years of age · Cirrhosis of the liver
- End-stage renal disease · History of frostbite, immersion foot or hypothermia
- HIV+/AIDS · Tri-morbidity (co-occurring psychiatric, substance abuse and chronic medical condition)

The current state requirements for coordinated entry are:

- In each county in the state where there is a consolidated homeless grant; each county must develop a small set of processes and policies
- At a minimum, a community must identify a coordinated entry lead agency or governed body · Each community must identify coordinated entry access points and partners, and advertise them widely
- Use a standardized assessment tool at each of the coordinated entry access sites that matches households with the most appropriate service interventions and also prioritizes families and households with the highest needs, although you can access different populations on different metrics
- There must be a procedure to describe how referrals will be made
- There must be a policy that ensures the assessment is uniform · There must be a protocol for rejecting referrals

Steps in the coordinated entry process are:

- Eligibility screening · Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data collection

- Diversion
- Vulnerability assessment
- Program matching and master list placement

Staff Note: City Staff has continued its efforts to better understand the coordinated entry process and what models are most effective. Jeff Spring recommended that staff contact Kitsap County. Leonard Bauer and Keith Stahley had a telephone conference with Monica Bernhard the Director of Housing and Community Support for Kitsap Community Resources. Monica described their coordinated entry system. Most significantly they are the sole provider of coordinated entry for the entirety of Kitsap County (same population as Thurston County and similar homeless population), they provide coordinated entry at five different locations throughout the county, they receive \$295,000 in funding from Kitsap County (\$100,000 in Thurston County) and the County does not include this funding in their competitive process.

May 1, 2017

Consider options for educating the general public about the housing affordability and homelessness issues.

Need for a broad public process that engages all stakeholders:

- Service providers
- People experiencing homelessness
- Registered Neighborhood Associations and the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations
- Business and commercial building owners

Three Primary Impacts of Homelessness:

- Individuals/families with children
- Public resources
- Surrounding neighbors (residential and businesses) and environment

Vulnerable Renter Protections -- Identify a timeline for public process to ensure we reach all stakeholders, including:

- Renters
- Landlords (Washington Landlord Association and other organizations)
- Other public stakeholders concerned about regulating Business

Include vulnerable renter protections as part of a more comprehensive homeless planning process.

Public Participation Efforts Related to Housing Actions by Other Washington Cities:

- Bellingham - levy first, task force second approximately 10 months from inception. Preceded by the County-wide Housing Affordability Task Force in 2008
- Everett - task force first, many actions but not a levy approximately five months
- Vancouver - task force first, public process, then levy approximately 18 months from inception

Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability Recommendations for Public Participation:

- Design a comprehensive public process
- Initiate Council level discussion soon on options for vulnerable renter protections

Staff Note: Continuing Staff Work Related to Public Participation:

- *Present options for public participation re: funding option;*
- *Present options for public participation re: vulnerable renter protection; and*
- *Present options for whether or not City Council should direct staff to further flesh out a broader public participation plan around housing affordability and homelessness*

If Council intends to proceed with a November ballot measure a decision must be made by July 25, 2017 and transmitted to the County no later than August 1, 2017. This leaves little time to convene and conduct a thorough stakeholder and public participation process. The public safety and housing survey will need to serve as a proxy for this process. Staff recommends that a public information piece be prepared similar to what was prepared for the MPD. All other public outreach would need to be conducted by private parties. Later dates will allow for more robust public outreach and stakeholder involvement.