



## **Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability**

### **Meeting with Thurston County to Review the Housing Pipeline and Discuss the Regional Response to Homelessness and Housing Affordability**

**Agenda Date:** 3/10/2017  
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#### **Title**

Meeting with Thurston County to Review the Housing Pipeline and Discuss the Regional Response to Homelessness and Housing Affordability

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Review the Thurston County Housing Pipeline and discuss the regional response to homelessness and housing affordability. No action requested.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to discuss the Thurston County Housing Pipeline and discussion of the regional response to homelessness and housing affordability.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Keith Stahley, Director Community Planning and Development Department 360.753.8227

##### **Presenter(s):**

Keith Stahley, Director Community Planning and Development Department  
Bud Blake, Thurston County Board of County Commissioner

#### **Background and Analysis:**

The growing urgency and impact of homelessness and the effect of cost-burdened households is evident throughout Thurston County. The recently opened Warming Center is seeing over 200 people per day pass through its doors. According to the survey of Downtown business owners done by the Thurston Economic Development Council, as a precursor to the Downtown Strategy, the impacts of homelessness on downtown businesses is one of their primary concerns. According to

the United Way of Thurston County's ALICE Report, over 35 percent of Thurston County residents and 41 percent of Olympia's residents struggle to afford basic necessities. The necessities include: housing, food, child care, health care and transportation.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction reports that countywide 1,526 students were identified as homeless in the 2014 - 2015 school year, up from 889 in 2009 - 2010 - a 71 percent increase. School-age homelessness continues to impact our region with over 444 students being identified as homeless in the Olympia School District and 754 in the North Thurston School District. Of the 1,526 students identified as homeless in 2014 - 2015, 85 were identified as unsheltered.

Housing affordability and homelessness are important regional issues and require a regional approach. Thurston County has approximately \$3.2 million per year from a variety of federal, state and local sources to allocate for affordable housing. The City of Olympia has approximately \$400,000 per year in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that could be used to address housing affordability and homelessness. In addition to its CDBG resources it has also used its staff time, land and buildings to actively support services and facilities in such ventures as LIHI's (Low Income Housing Institute) Billy Frank Jr. Place and the Family Support Center's Pear Blossom Place.

Olympia's Downtown is visibly and significantly impacted by homelessness, and Olympia will need the support and cooperation of Thurston County, the Cities of Lacey and Tumwater and the local housing and homelessness service providers to begin to have a positive impact on this situation. Concerns about homelessness and its impacts on downtown have been consistently raised throughout the Downtown Strategy process.

Olympia is home to many of the region's most vulnerable homeless citizens. The lives of these individuals are threatened by a lack of a targeted and adequately funded response. These individuals have significant impacts on City and regional services, as well as collateral impacts on downtown businesses and property. A solution to this dilemma is needed.

Affordable housing, workforce housing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, emergency shelter, and day center are all part of the full spectrum of affordable housing and services needed in our region to respond to and prevent homelessness and its impacts. Resources are limited for these services and facilities, while the need for these services is high, so resources must be allocated to have the maximum benefit and in a highly coordinated and strategic manner. It is also critical to support and incentivize the private and non-profit housing market to provide housing units that are affordable to people with low to moderate incomes (i.e. below Thurston County median income). This should be accomplished by preserving and rehabilitating existing housing units as well as construction of new units.

Homelessness and housing affordability are regional issues and must be addressed at a regional level both from a policy and an operational perspective. Facilities and services should be sited in a manner that allows for effective access and utilization by targeted populations, while minimizing the impacts to the surrounding properties, businesses, residences and neighborhoods. Services and facilities should be distributed throughout the region.

The Community Investment Partnership (CIP) recently approved a five-year schedule of housing projects known as the Thurston County Housing Pipeline (Attached). The CIP members agree to

work together and join resources to address common needs in meeting basic health and human service needs in the Thurston County Region. The Pipeline was in response to a request for information issued by the Housing Action Team in 2016. The Housing Action Team is part of the County's Thurston Thrives planning effort.

The Thurston County Community Investment Partnership (CIP) is soliciting project proposals for funding from the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG), Affordable Housing Grant (SHB 2060), and Homeless Housing Grant (SHB 2163), Veterans Assistance Fund (VAF), Community Investment Partnership (CIP), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). Federal funding (HOME) totals approximately \$606,200, state funding (CHG) totals approximately \$372,700, Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) totals approximately \$1,478,800, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) totals approximately \$128,000, local funding (2060 and 2163) totals approximately \$1,063,700, the (VAF) totals approximately \$47,230 and (CIP) funding totals approximately \$632,977. Total available funding is approximately \$4,329,607. Responses are due to the County on April 7, 2017.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Homelessness and affordable housing are community-wide issues.

**Options:**

Receive report and engage in discussion.

**Financial Impact:**

None at this time.

**Attachments:**

Housing Pipeline  
CIP Priorities and Desired Outcomes