

Snohomish County Affordability, Behavioral Health & Sheltering/Bridge Housing Strategy

November 24, 2021



Snohomish County

Agenda

1. Affordability, behavioral health, and homelessness in Snohomish County
2. Stakeholder feedback across these issues
3. Priorities to address systemic issues in Everett and countywide
4. Hotel/Motel as shelter/bridge housing
 1. Overall strategy
 2. Engagement thus far
 3. Proposal
 4. Budget
 5. Timeline
5. Questions



The Challenge: Affordability, Behavioral Health, Homelessness

- The pandemic has exacerbated issues of affordability, behavioral health, and homelessness.
- The need for increased access to affordable housing, behavioral health services, and shelter/bridge housing with comprehensive services is interconnected.
- Challenges are being faced across Snohomish County, including in Everett.

The Challenge: Lack of Affordable Housing

- Lack of affordable housing a pervasive challenge across the county.
 - Displaces long-time residents, with a particular impact on seniors
 - Pushes working families to the brink of homelessness
- County has an estimated rental vacancy rate of 1.9%
- Supply not keeping up with population growth.
- For no household to spend more than 30% of income toward housing, County would need 127,215 additional affordable housing units by 2040

28.6%

Cost-burdened by mortgage payments

67.1% of Snohomish County residents are homeowners

49.3%

Cost-burdened by rent payments

32.9% of Snohomish County residents are renters

The Challenge: Lack of Behavioral Health Services

- The most pervasive and visible indicator of the intersection between the lack of affordable housing and lack of behavioral health services is homelessness among Snohomish County residents.
- Of the 673 individuals identified as unsheltered in the 2020 Point in Time (PIT) Count, 46.4% reported a serious mental illness and 40.7% reported a substance use disorder.
- Number of chronically homeless (long periods of homelessness plus one or more disabling condition) individuals increased more than 3.5 times between 2015 and 2020

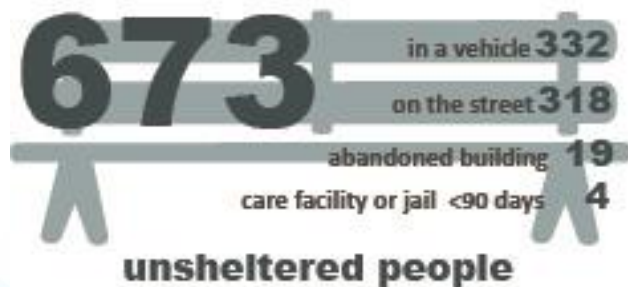
Washington State Demand for Behavioral Health Occupations: 2016-2030

	2016 Base-Year Unmet Need	Projected 2030 Unmet Need
Psychiatrists	-380	-550
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	-400	-210
Addiction Counselors	-30	-1,010
Mental Health Counselors	10	-850

The Challenge: Homelessness & Shelter/Bridge Housing

- Number of individuals experiencing homelessness has steadily increased in recent years.
- 2020 PIT count identified a total of **1,132 individuals** experiencing homelessness (unsheltered and sheltered).

January 22, 2020: 1,132 total people

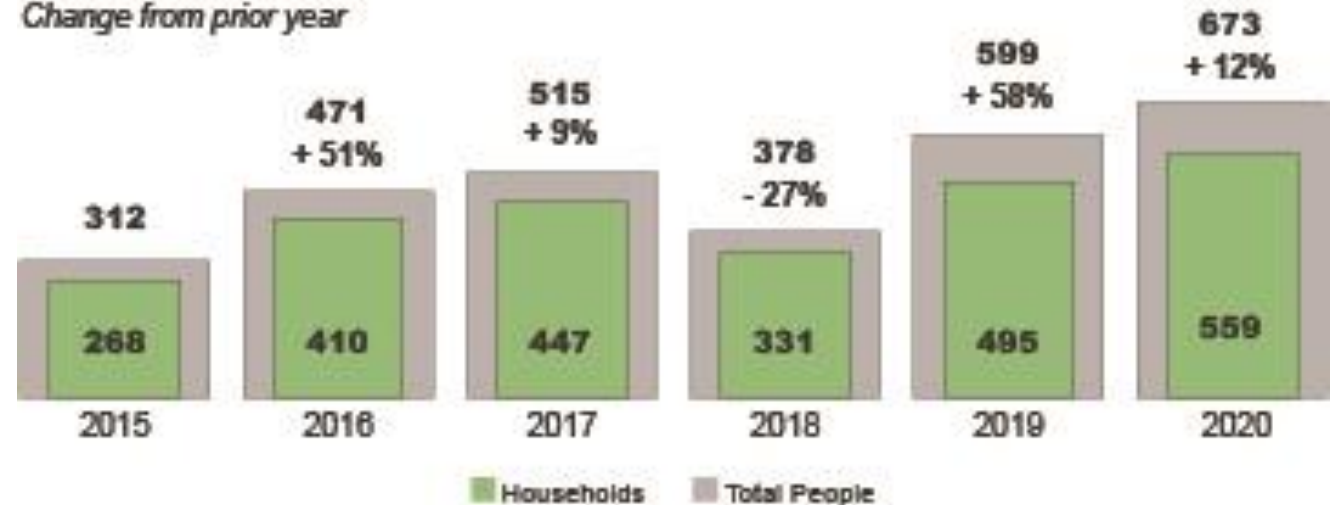


The Challenge: Homelessness & Shelter/Bridge Housing

- The number of individuals living unsheltered increased significantly from 2018 to 2020.
- Among Snohomish County cities, Everett saw the highest population of individuals living unsheltered.
 - 300 individuals
 - Next highest population was 61 individuals

2020 Unsheltered Point-in-Time Count

Change from prior year

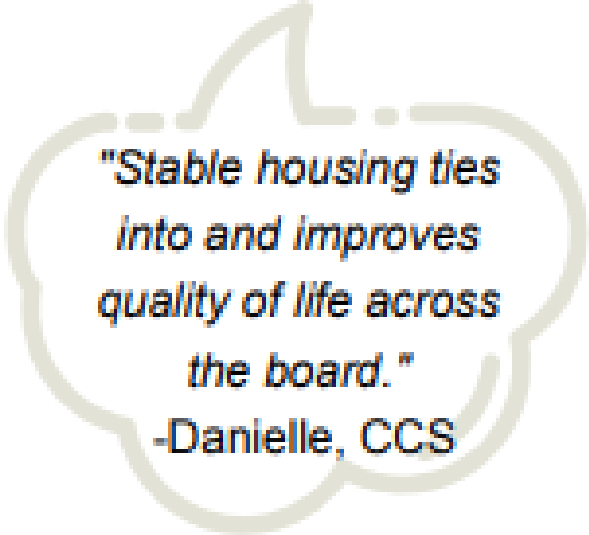


The Challenge: Homelessness & Shelter/Bridge Housing

- Pandemic had a significant effect on homelessness across the county
- Due to the pandemic, there was no PIT count in 2021, however, other data sources show a clear increase in homelessness:
 - There were 16,517 calls to 211 with requests for housing and shelter resources from 1/1/20 – 10/31/20.
 - For this year during that same timeframe, there have been 26,283 requests related to housing and shelter (59% increase).
- Everett has likely seen a significant increase in unsheltered homelessness during the pandemic:
 - In April – October of 2021, the Everett Community Outreach and Enforcement Team (COET) has engaged with 714 unique individuals.

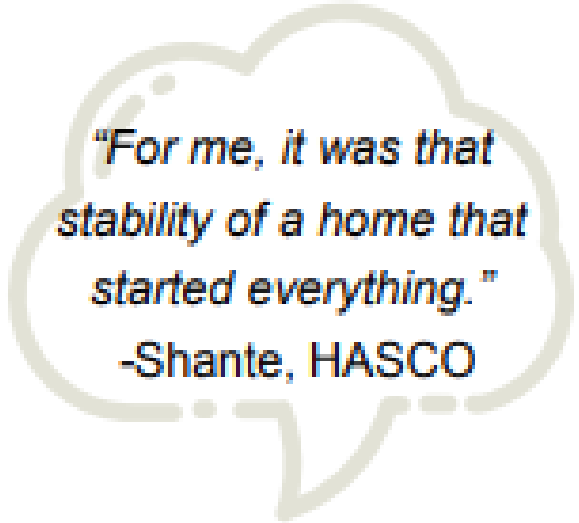
Community Feedback

- Snohomish County has been regularly engaging cities, service providers, businesses, and residents on issues relating to affordability, behavioral health, and homelessness.
- Several clear themes emerged:
 - Need a significant increase in behavioral health services across the county to meet the needs of chronically homeless individuals
 - Need a significant increase in shelter/bridge housing with wraparound services to increase throughput and prevent individuals from repeatedly cycling through the system
 - Need to increase affordable housing stock to keep working families in the county and prevent vulnerable households from falling into homelessness
 - Addressing homelessness – particularly chronic homelessness – creates a clear benefit for all members of a community, including small business owners and residents



"Stable housing ties into and improves quality of life across the board."

-Danielle, CCS

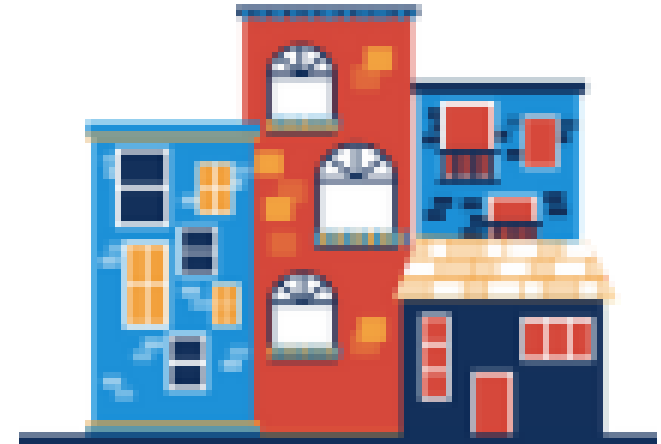


"For me, it was that stability of a home that started everything."

-Shante, HASCO

The Solution: Addressing Affordability

- In the last five years, Snohomish County has contributed resources to the construction of 222 units of affordable housing.
- In the next five years, we anticipate another 200 new units of affordable housing coming online.
- In the coming years, we must scale up the creation/construction of affordable housing and creation/construction of emergency, bridge and permanent supportive housing.



The Solution: Increasing Behavioral Health Services

- In the last five years, Snohomish County has directly invested \$89M in behavioral health services through the Chemical Dependency and Mental Health Sales Tax fund
- We are investing an additional \$2.5M in behavioral health efforts using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds
 - Will support city and tribe-led projects
 - All dollars allocated by July 2022
- Widespread consensus to increase on-demand behavioral health evaluation, treatment, and follow up close to home

The Solution: Increasing Shelter/Bridge Housing with Services

- Currently 646 year-round and 88 seasonal shelter beds in Snohomish County, including hotels/motels.
- Delta between number of year-round shelter beds and number of people experiencing homelessness (as of 2020 PIT): 486

The Solution: Increasing Shelter/Bridge Housing with Services

- By 2023, we anticipate at least 150 new shelter/bridge housing beds coming online. Strategies include:
 - **Pallet Housing:** The City of Everett will expand its current 20-unit pallet housing project by an additional 40 units.
 - **Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing:** Purchase of at least one hotel/motel in Snohomish County to provide 24/7 shelter and services, with the goal of stabilizing chronically homeless individuals.
 - **Other Strategies:** The County and other cities are meeting regarding other possible strategies which include master leasing of hotel/motel rooms, expanding Micro Emergency Shelter Housing (MESH), citing pallet housing in other locations, and other options.

Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing Strategy

- Purchasing hotels/motels to serve as non-congregate, 24/7 shelter/bridge housing is one approach among many to combat homelessness in the county.
- First hotel in Everett but will pursue options elsewhere in the county in response to available partners and scale of need.
- This strategy is highly effective at moving people off the streets and onto a path to permanent housing.
- Everett chosen as the site of the first location due to:
 - Clear need for immediate and comprehensive shelter (Everett has 44% of entire county's unsheltered population)
 - Extensive service provider network
 - Transit accessibility

Engagement: Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing Strategy

- Ongoing engagement of cities, businesses, service providers, and residents, coupled with data and recommendations from national best practices organizations, informed the strategy.
- Need for additional non-congregate, 24/7 shelter/bridge housing identified as a priority by:
 - Mayors of cities throughout Snohomish County
 - Law enforcement partners, downtown Everett partners, and business leaders
 - Nonprofit partners who conduct street outreach and sheltering efforts for target populations
 - People living unsheltered
- Hotels as a sheltering strategy supported by:
 - CDC
 - National Alliance to End Homelessness
 - U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

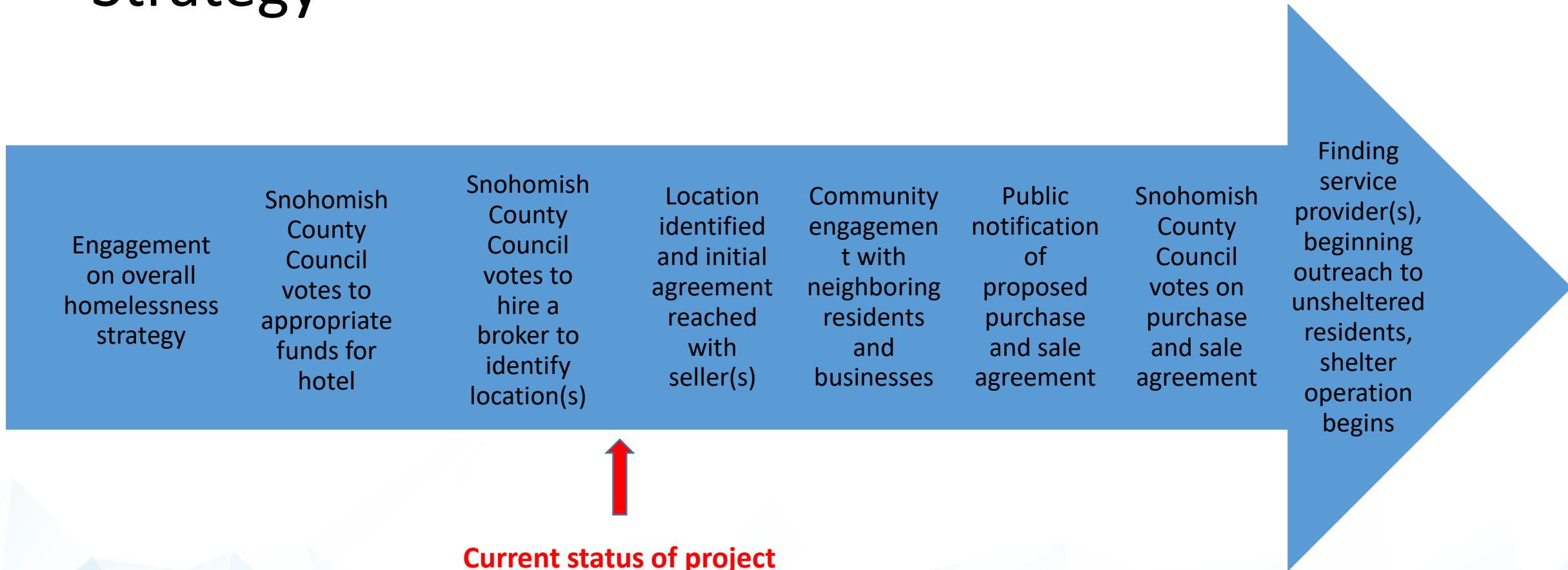
Proposal: Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing Strategy

- Snohomish County and the City of Everett have the following shared goals for the initial facility:
 - Operates 24/7, year-round
 - On-site services including, but not limited to, meals, hygiene, storage, staff to support transition to permanent housing
 - Ideally, a partner organization will be brought in to provide on-site behavioral health services
 - Customized workforce development services
 - Can shelter between 100 – 150 individuals at once, bringing between 30 – 50% of Everett’s unsheltered population (2020 PIT count) off the street with one facility

Budget: Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing Strategy

- Financial analysis conducted by the Human Services Department shows that the cost of being an owner/operator of a pre-existing facility (either directly or through a subcontractor) is far less expensive than renting or building rooms at market rate.
 - Would require an initial investment of \$5-10M in ARPA dollars
 - Ownership, as opposed to rental, is more fiscally prudent and significantly better use of taxpayer dollars
 - Acquiring, as opposed to building, a facility is more cost effective

Timeline: Hotels as Shelter/Bridge Housing Strategy



Current status of project

Questions?