Men's and Women's Winter Shelters

Joint memo re: Long-term Provision of Winter Shelter in East King County

City of Bellevue

MANAGEMENT BRIEF

DATE: May 11, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and Bellevue City Councilmembers
Mayor Walen and Kirkland City Councilmembers

FROM: Dan Stroh, Planning Director, Bellevue Planning and Community Development
Eric Shields, Planning Director, Kirkland Planning & Community Development
Arthur Sullivan, ARCH Program Manager

SUBJECT: **Long-Term Provision of Winter Shelter in East King County**

Both Bellevue and Kirkland Councils have identified long-term winter shelter as a Council priority. Long-term facilities are needed for a men's shelter and for a shelter serving women and families. This remains a critical need despite collaborative efforts to prevent homelessness, and the emerging vision that for those that experience homelessness, it is a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence.

Background:
For the past six years East King County cities have funded two winter shelters: one for unaccompanied men and one for women and families. Sophia Way has operated the winter shelter for women and families, and Congregations for the Homeless has operated the winter shelter for men. These emergency shelters have been at non-permanent locations such as churches or civic buildings. The emergency shelter is a low-barrier shelter which imposes few requirements on shelter guests, other than that they do not pose a danger to other guests. Initially, the shelters were open only on severe winter nights, but they are now open all nights from mid-November through mid-April.

Siting these interim facilities has been very difficult, and has raised issues with nearby residents. The shelters have not been in optimal locations, often lacking good access to transit and supportive services. At times, the cities have faced a near-crisis in not having a shelter site identified and ready until virtually the last minute. While the men's shelter has been in a fixed site the last two winters, the former International Paper building in Bel-Red, this option will be foreclosed in another year as the building is demolished and the site prepared for the Sound Transit maintenance facility.

Developing a permanent shelter or shelters is a critical need. It will avoid the struggle to find an interim site or sites every year. It will offer a suitable location appropriate for this use, close to transit and services, and include appropriate features (e.g. hygiene facilities, storage). It may have the potential to offer daytime services and a drop-in center.

In recognition that providing shelter is a shared responsibility, member cities have asked ARCH to engage city and agency staff in the process of siting a permanent shelter or shelters. Attachment 1 is a white paper developed by this working group, which provides additional

background information. It includes principles for developing a winter shelter, quantification of need, a synopsis of “lessons learned” from public engagement to date, and an estimate of the size of building needed.

ARCH member cities began the process of shelter development in the fall 2014 funding round, by contributing $700,000 toward acquisition of a site for the men’s shelter. While no site is yet identified, Congregations for the Homeless was awarded this grant in recognition of the pressing need to acquire a suitable property and begin development.

ATTACHMENT 1: *Winter Shelter in East King County* (ARCH white paper)

WINTER SHELTER IN EAST KING COUNTY

Vision Statement

Every person in East King County has the opportunity to live in a safe, affordable, healthy home.

Value Statement

Homelessness is an experience that individuals and families may face for a variety of reasons. The reality of homelessness is extremely challenging for those experiencing it, and it can also present challenges for the community at large. Therefore, we must work together as a whole community-- across sectors and geographic boundaries-- to find solutions that are effective for those experiencing homelessness and that allow our communities to continue to thrive.

Specific Goal for Winter Shelter

As long as the capacity to shelter/house all who seek it is insufficient, the goal of providing additional shelter beds during the winter months is to ensure the health and safety of those who may otherwise have no option but to sleep outdoors. In addition, emergency shelter has been recognized as one point of entry on the path to housing.

Principles for Winter Shelter

Providing shelter is a shared responsibility of jurisdictions and community organizations throughout the Eastside.

Shelters are places for engagement and access to services and provide pathways to housing.

East King County needs a local shelter system that avoids ongoing siting.

Shelters need to be in central locations with full transit service and access to daytime services.

To be successful, the shelter siting process must engage and be sensitive to the concerns of the surrounding community.

A complete shelter strategy needs to include some level of outreach and daytime services to assist persons with accessing services and resources.

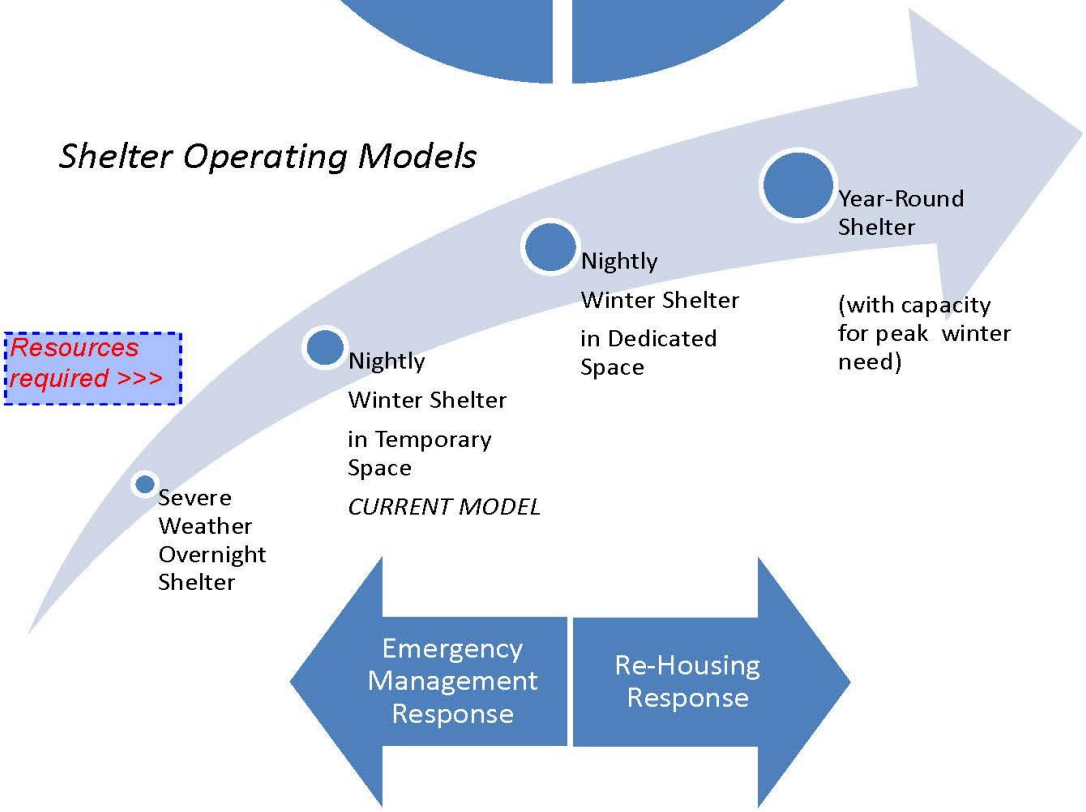
While shelter needs are more pronounced during winter months, ‘low barrier’ shelter is needed year round.

APPENDIX D

Eastside Winter Shelter

Roles of shelters in effort to end homelessness

Shelter Operating Models



Need and Capacity

The Eastside is not immune to the reality of homelessness. In fact, nearly 1000 men, women, youth and children from the Eastside were served in local shelter or transitional housing programs last year. The 2013 One Night Count of unsheltered individuals sleeping outside on the Eastside was 197 and the 2014 One Night Count was 178.

The winter shelters have been a key part of the Eastside safety net[1], serving residents from Bellevue (34%), Redmond (11%), Issaquah and Kirkland (6% each) as well as other areas. Individuals who are turned away or remain on a waitlist for other programmatic shelter programs provided by Friends of Youth, Hopelink, and Lifewire are able to access the winter shelter. Winter shelters have been at or near capacity each year. During the current winter season, the men's shelter has ranged from 50 – 75 men per night, and the women's shelter has ranged from 30 – 40 persons per night.

Men	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014 (through Feb)**
Nightly capacity	50	50	75
Total unduplicated individuals	249	210	249
Total bednights	4540	4425	5718
Average number served/night	39	36	58

Women and Children	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014 (through Feb)**
Nightly capacity	15	40-50	40-50
Total unduplicated individuals	111	123	161
	93 women	*106 women*	*119 women*
	18 children	*17 children*	*42 children*
Total bednights	1384	2207	2287
Average number served/night	12	16	19 (avg is 25 for Jan. and Feb.)

Lessons Learned

Efforts toward a sustainable and effective long-term shelter solution can be informed by our experiences operating shelters over the past 5 years. These are detailed in the attached report[2]. Some key lessons include:

- Shelters need to be in central locations with full transit service and access to daytime services. More ideal locations would be in non-residential areas.
- While shelter needs are more pronounced during winter months, 'low barrier' shelter is needed throughout the year.
- Clients are served best in a dedicated, non-shared space.
- Regulatory requirements - (fire and life safety, zoning, e.g.) leave limited siting options. Cities may need to consider appropriate changes.

[1] Appendix A: Systems Map
[2] Appendix B: Lessons Learned

APPENDIX B: Winter Shelter - What We've Learned

The evolution in the shelter model, moving from weather activated to nightly operated, has created many challenges, as well as opportunities.

- **Siting:** Since shifting to the winter model, there have been more challenges than expected with finding siting.

    - Dedicated space: Clients are served best in a devoted space. Dual use locations (i.e. community center activities during day, shelter at night) have challenges.
        - Community Centers experienced large loss of revenue due to lack of space rentals.
        - Minimal screening criteria make it hard to find facilities, even churches, willing to host the shelter.
        - Utilizing dual use space requires additional storage requirements.

    - Regulatory requirements: Finding a space that meets various regulatory requirements (fire life and safety code, zoning requirements) has limited options.

    - Non-residential area: More ideal locations would be in a non-residential area.

- **Winter shelter model (open nightly):** Opening on consecutive nights rather than based on weather criteria brought many benefits:

    - Engage Homeless Individuals: Winter shelter can be used as a point of engagement to move into year-round shelter programs and as a pathway to permanent housing.
    - Other weather conditions: Participants were spared severe weather conditions that rain and wind bring.
    - Manage daily activities: Ability for clients to navigate transportation and daytime care, work schedules, etc.
    - Positive Outcomes**:** About 60 men and 25 women have transitioned from the winter shelter to the year-round program shelter. Of the 40+ men who have completed the shelter program, over 30 of them have moved into stable, on-going housing.
    - Outreach: Having effective outreach services in place helps engage homeless individuals who wouldn't otherwise seek out shelter.

> ***"We have had many police over the years express that they are grateful to have a place to bring the homeless that are wandering the streets while it is so cold and the weather causes significant risk to life safety."***
>
> *David Johns-Bowling, CFH Director of Shelter Services*

- **Community Engagement:**

  - Broad community engagement and new partnerships**:** Providers were able to effectively engage and partner with neighborhoods, businesses, churches, libraries, police, and other community stakeholders.

  - Resource for public facilities: Shelter providers receive many calls from community centers, libraries, churches, social services agencies, mini-city hall, and individual community members who have encountered the homeless and are trying to assist with finding safe shelter.

  - Responsive shelter providers**:** Providers have found that many people, businesses, organizations, and departments feel the impact of trying to help the homeless or the impact of them using community places. By setting up on-going communication with community stakeholders, issues can usually be mitigated.

  - Engaged clients: Many of the homeless care about their community, and they want to be good community members. For example, clients have initiated and organized a community trash pickup day as well as a cleanup day for St. Peter's United Methodist Church, the host of the men's shelter for the last two years

  - Role of Faith Community**:** Faith communities have supported shelters on the Eastside in a number of crucial ways. The Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council (EISCC), created both Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) (1994) and The Sophia Way (2008). EISCC supported hosting the shelters, supplying meals for the clients, and contributing other supportive services. Congregations are major financial contributors to CFH and Sophia Way and many sponsor their annual fund raising events. CFH's year round shelter has been housed in congregations for 20 years. The Sophia Way's year round shelter is housed at St Luke's Lutheran Church.

"A couple months ago I received a call from a Bellevue detective who had just heard about our Day Center program. I told him about the services that were offered and also about the EWS. He was so happy to hear of a place men could go during the evenings and also a place during the day they could rest and receive services. About a month later he called again and said some of the issues of loitering at the bus stops had completely gone away. He said he believed this was solely because there is now a place the men can go during the day time and the evening."

David Johns-Bowling, CFH Director of Shelter Services

APPENDIX C: DEDICATED WINTER SHELTER PROPOSAL

Description

Two separate shelters (one for men, second for women and children) at a dedicated location that operate for 4 months per year. The day center could be incorporated into a shelter without needing any substantial additional space other than potentially some separate office space.

TABLE 1: Winter Shelter Program Features: Per 50 Bed Shelter / Day Center

Program Features		Area
Dining/Tables	Optional (could be done within sleeping area)	1,500 sq ft
Kitchen		500 sq ft
Bath/Laundry		400 sq ft
Sleeping		4,000 sq ft
Office	Office minimum plus extra space such as case management, computer lab. One office dedicated for day services	200 - 400 sq ft
Storage		500 sq ft
Total		5,600 - 7,300 sq ft

Development Cost

There are two primary costs associated with creating each shelter facility. First is the cost associated with securing real estate, and second is the cost of making necessary improvements and associated costs. Securing control of property could be a significant component of overall facility costs. Therefore if a suitable public site can be identified for one or both shelters it would have a significant impact on the amount of other funding that would be required. There are a variety of public and private funding sources that could be used for the acquisition and development of a shelter facility. The following table summarizes potential funding sources.

TABLE 2: Potential Facility Funding Sources

Source	Comment
ARCH	ARCH includes homeless housing as one of goal areas and uses CEH priorities for funding guidance. In 2013 CEH added homeless shelters outside Seattle as a priority for funding.
King County Housing Program	Also uses CEH priorities to guide investment for homeless housing. Often match or exceed ARCH contribution.
State Housing Trust Fund	Includes homeless housing on list of eligible uses. Often match or exceed ARCH contribution.
Private	Could include funds raised through various private sources such as foundations, churches and individuals.
In-Kind	Examples could be furniture donations, reduced labor costs. Could also include site donation / fee relief from a City.