

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY      HOMELESS STRATEGIES WORKGROUP PHASE 1

## OVERVIEW OF PHASE 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Homeless Strategies Workgroup (HSW) was formed by [Whatcom County Resolution 2017-055](#) on October 24, 2017 by action of the [Whatcom County Council](#). The purpose of the HSW is twofold:

1. **Recommend site location(s) for a 200 bed low-barrier shelter in Bellingham** for further feasibility analysis, working with City of Bellingham's (COB) criteria developed during 2016-2017 conversations with the Lighthouse Mission Ministries (LMM).
2. **Identify two to three alternative solutions to living unsheltered in Whatcom County**, with priority given to solutions that can be initiated to prevent people from sleeping outside.

Whatcom County Councilmember Barry Buchanan served as the Chairperson of this Whatcom County (WC) ad hoc workgroup. Phase 1 work included six public work sessions held [December 2017 through May 2018](#). A schedule of Phase 1 tasks and member roster is provided on page 2, including links to HSW meeting presentations, handouts, meeting audio, comments, and summaries at url: <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/2747/Homeless-Strategies-Workgroup>.

### RECOMMENDATION #1 Sites for initial feasibility analysis as locations for a 200 bed, low-barrier shelter in Bellingham

HSW members examined eight potential sites for a 200-bed low-barrier shelter, as directed by WC Resolution 2017-055. The HSW: (i) worked with [criteria](#) developed [in 2016-2017 by COB](#) and the LMM; (ii) reviewed COB's initial identified sites (A-F) ; (iii) discussed additional sites (G-H) and comments; and (iv) ranked options and recommended four locations for further study:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Site A: COB-owned Bellingham Police Department</i> | <i>Site F: COB-owned Employee Parking lot</i> |
| <i>Site B: WC-owned 401 Grand Avenue lot</i>          | <i>Site H: WC-owned Health Department</i>     |

At the Phase 1 HSW's final meeting (May 10, 2018) the HSW Chair confirmed the site recommendation task was completed and reviewed the initial findings: (i) *Site A* and *Site B* were removed from the list by the property owners due to current or future jurisdictional uses; (ii) *Site H* was later withdrawn by WC Executive Jack Louws due to similar circumstance as Sites A and B, and (iii) on May 3, 2018, COB Mayor Kelli Lineville informed the HSW that ["locating a 200-bed shelter in the city center will not be feasible at this time."](#)

### RECOMMENDATION #2 Two to three alternative solutions to sleeping outdoors in Whatcom County

The HSW identified alternative solutions to living unsheltered in Whatcom County and adopted the [HSW List of Alternative Strategies and Responses 2018](#). HSW members learned about: (i) WC and COB roles in providing shelter and housing funding and services; (ii) WC's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, current goals and funding sources; (iii) strategies and partnerships currently providing Bellingham's year-round shelters (cold-weather, emergency, drop-in), transitional, and permanent supportive housing, and related supportive services (e.g., case management); and (iv) new ideas from HSW members and public comments.

The top ranked solutions are shown below and Phase 1 HSW recommends WC and COB advance feasibility analysis of these proposed solutions, which address the progression of needs, from: immediate pre-housing impacts to removing barriers on the path toward stable housing.

#### HSW Top Ranked Ideas for Phase 1 Recommendations

<p><i>Responses to address public health and safety impacts associated with the homelessness crisis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Rest Stop: mobile or fixed facility with showers, laundry check-in medical screening (12)</li> <li>— Car &amp; RV Parking Safe Space: designated site(s) for those who have "some level of shelter" (7)</li> <li>— Lockers for storage of valuables with 24 hour access (6)</li> <li>— Restrooms with 24 hour access (for shift workers) (5)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategies to end homelessness - even IF temporary or temporary for the individual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Smaller Shelters: specialized housing populations and support for re-entry at capacity of individuals (12)</li> <li>— Case Management" across the spectrum from light touch to intensive for complex individuals (11)</li> <li>— Rental Assistance including: landlord insurance, liaison, and incentives (8)</li> </ul>
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## HSW NEXT STEPS

Phase 2 lead, WC Councilman Barry Buchanan (HSW Chair) will work with WC staff, existing and new partners to advance discussion, and where appropriate, feasibility analysis on the HSW Phase 1 recommendations presented on page 1. Phase 2 work will include: (i) educational speakers, e.g., [June 19, 2018 presentation on tiny home villages](#); (ii) feasibility analysis updates on the Phase 1 recommended alternative solutions; and (iii) notification of related WC studies, decisions, and/or implementation pertaining to the HSW Phase 1 recommendations.

## HSW PHASE 1 MEMBER ROSTER

Chair, Barry Buchanan, Whatcom County Councilmember	Michael Lilliquist, City of Bellingham Councilmember
Rud Browne, Whatcom County Councilmember	Dan Hammill, City of Bellingham Councilmember
Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive	Kelli Linville, City of Bellingham Mayor
Hans Erchinger-Davis, Lighthouse Mission Ministries	Alice Clark, Downtown Network
Guy Occhiogrosso, Bellingham Regional Chamber	Mike Parker, Opportunity Council
Robin Meyer, Northwest Youth Services (NWYS)	Ken Bell, Port of Bellingham (added in 2018 for Ph2)

## PHASE 1 SCHEDULE AND TASKS

### [Meeting 1 - Dec 7, 2017](#)

### [Meeting 2 - Dec 19, 2017](#)

Review Whatcom County (WC) and City of Bellingham (COB) roles, [adopted plans](#) and exiting [strategies](#) for shelter and homelessness infrastructure, programs, and services.

[Review COB and Lighthouse Mission Ministry \(LMM\) partnership](#) and Draft COB-LMM site criteria for a 200 bed easy-access shelter.

Review shelter and housing programs supported by the WC [2017 Homeless & Housing Fund](#).

### [Meeting 3 - Jan 18, 2018](#)

### [Meeting 4 - Feb 22, 2018](#)

Discuss [short-list of potential properties owned by WC or COB](#) in the geographic area meeting the COB-LMM criteria. [Rank potential sites](#) for additional study.

Learn about existing infrastructure, discuss [current services, and explore known needs](#) identified by WC, COB, and partners providing current shelter and housing services.

Identify and compile list of known and new strategies for working with individuals and families living unhoused in WC.

### [Meeting 5 - Mar 22, 2018](#)

### [Meeting 6 - May 10, 2018](#)

[Review COB initial feasibility analysis](#) of highest ranked Sites A, B, F and H for potential as locations for 200-bed low barrier shelter.

Review, discuss, and rank [HSW's list of alternative solutions and responses](#) to living outside in WC.

Prepare recommendations for three alternative solutions to living outdoors in WC.

Completion of Phase 1 Dec 2017 - May 2018 HSW tasks.

## HSW RESOURCES

Phase 2 work will be led by WC HSW Chair Barry Buchanan. Phase 1 HSW resources and logistical support were provided by [Whatcom County Council Office](#) and [COB Planning & Community Development](#). Tara Sundin (COB contract lead) coordinated with HSW Chair and independent facilitator, Mary Dumas, Dumas & Associates, Inc, to prepare HSW schedule, agendas, and ranking tools for public meetings #1-6. Phase 1 contributions from COB Planning & Community Development (Rick Sepler, Samya Lutz, Chris Behee), [WC Health Department](#) (Anne Deacon),

WC Executive Office, and COB Mayor Office include:

- (i) develop and host [HSW webpage](#) at url <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/2747/Homeless-Strategies-Workgroup>
- (ii) compile and present COB 2016-2017 LMM criteria, initial findings and map-based analysis
- (iii) prepare HSW meeting agendas, handouts and presentations on the [10 Year Plan to End Homelessness](#) and related resources
- (iv) develop HSW ranking criteria
- (v) document WC HSW ad hoc committee agendas, information, public comments, and summaries