

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Best Practices and Recommendations relating to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

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## DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

### DIRECTION

Council will be provided an overview of staff's PSH best practices research and recommendations, specifically on neighborhood outreach, engagement and relationship building, and evaluating on-site supportive services based on populations served. Following Council discussion, staff seek direction on next steps regarding this best practices evaluation.

## RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to: (1) develop a Community Engagement Guide for PSH, outside of the Land Use Code, that includes elements of neighborhood outreach, engagement strategies and relationship building; and (2) work with PSH providers on required service units for on-site services when the City is a funding partner for the services.

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

On August 2, Council discussed whether to initiate staff work to research best practices and formulate recommendations relating to PSH. Council considered a list of five topics, and ultimately directed staff to conduct research and provide recommendations on two of the five topics: neighborhood outreach, engagement and relationship building; and evaluating on-site supportive services based on populations served. The intent was to determine if any best practices could or should be incorporated into City funding agreements for PSH, or as City regulations memorialized in the Land Use Code, or other mechanisms as directed by Council.

PSH is a type of affordable housing. It provides permanent, stable housing for its residents, many who previously experienced homelessness. The supportive housing model includes supportive services for its residents to help address barriers that may impact their ability to remain stably housed. A PSH use includes residential facilities that provide housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, paired with on-site or off-site supportive services designed to maintain long-term or permanent tenancy; connect the residents of the housing with community-based health care, treatment, or employment services; and eventually transition the residents to independent living arrangements.

### Best Practices Research

Staff have performed analysis of best practices by contacting local affordable housing partners and supportive housing providers such as A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), Plymouth Housing and

Compass Housing, and researching approaches used in other jurisdictions specific to the topics identified by Council.

### **Best Practices for Community Engagement**

Staff evaluated community engagement approaches for PSH in Seattle, Bellingham and the City and County of Denver. Seattle and Bellingham have requirements for community engagement for certain types of supportive housing as a part of their code permitting processes. Seattle requires notification to property owners within 500 feet of a proposed PSH site and a minimum of one public meeting. Bellingham requires an operations plan with a community outreach component as a part of its requirement for interim housing. Based on conversations with Seattle and Bellingham staff, the efficacy of these approaches has yet to be determined, and it is difficult to say they are a best practice at this time or appropriate for all types and intensities of PSH uses.

In contrast, the City and County of Denver has developed a comprehensive community engagement guide specifically targeted at the interaction between neighborhoods and PSH developers and providers. Participation through community engagement is encouraged, but not mandated by code unless otherwise required through specific regulations that would apply through a general development application process.

**Staff recommends that the City develop a community engagement guide similar to Denver's approach with added facets that would make sense in Bellevue.** The guide would include elements of neighborhood outreach, engagement strategies and relationship building. It would be outside the Land Use Code and would not be incorporated into City regulations, but the guide would help support prospective providers in developing a comprehensive community engagement strategy based on the populations served and scale of a project compared to its surroundings. Staff does not recommend modifying the Land Use Code to require special community engagement or notice requirements for all PSH uses or adding special engagement or notice conditions where the City is a funding partner. PSH projects would still need to adhere to any code requirements for notice or public meetings as a housing development or that may be required by the underlying land use process for the proposed PSH use.

### **Best Practices for On-Site Supportive Services**

Staff evaluated approaches used by jurisdictions for on-site services for PSH based on populations served. Staff found no examples during this analysis of city codes requiring the provision of on-site supportive services in the placement of PSH.

Staff's general research showed that programs vary between geography, service provider, and population served, but the common focus of PSH programs remains housing the unhoused. Each facility takes into account individual needs and anticipated impacts to the neighborhood due to the variation in populations served and level of services provided. Chronic homelessness, newly released from institutional care, physical disabilities, and behavioral health diagnoses are some of the lived experiences most typically supported in this type of housing. The different lived experiences come with diverse and differing needs for intensity of services, accessibility or mobility services. The range of lived experiences also produces different goals for each resident. In addition, based on the populations served, the relationship between the service provider and the individual residents can vary from project to project.

Staff found that services vary by the individual needs of tenants at each supportive housing facility. It's also important to note that not all PSH candidates need on-site services. For facilities with on-site services, the core offerings included:

- Tenancy Support
- Independent Life Skills Training
- Social Support
- Health and Wellness
- Personal Support
- Community Linkages
- Crisis Intervention
- Eviction Prevention
- Clinical Support
- Peer Support

Some common themes emerged across programs evaluated. When supportive services are offered on-site, the participating residents typically experience positive outcomes, such as increased rates of remaining in stable housing. There is significant variation in the type and level of services required on-site due to differences in resident needs, type of housing provided, and individual provider standards. And finally, the research showed that when on-site services are needed, the biggest obstacle is inadequate funding.

**Since supportive housing varies so dramatically depending on the needs of the residents being served and the emphasis area of the program and providers, staff recommends that the City work individually with providers on required service units for on-site services when the City is a funding partner for the services.** This will allow for a thoughtful approach in looking at each PSH project's needs during the City's future funding processes, and provide a framework to adjust best practices for services over time. Staff does not recommend modifying the Land Use Code to require certain on-site services in connection with PSH uses.

## POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

### Policy Impact

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan contains policies that support the provision of PSH in the community:

- **Land Use Element, Policy LU-15:** Provide, through land use regulation, the potential for a broad range of housing choices to meet the changing needs of the community.
- **Housing Element, Policy HO-38:** Support regional efforts to prevent homelessness through the provision of a range of affordable housing options, and to support efforts to move homeless persons and families to long-term financial independence.
- **Human Services Element, Policy HS-18:** Support an intentional local community response to homelessness with housing and supportive services provided to families, youth, and single adults.

### Fiscal Impact

In October 2020, the City of Bellevue adopted a 0.1 percent sales tax for affordable housing and related services authorized by State House Bill (HB) 1590. Tax collection began in January 2021, and is anticipated to generate roughly \$9 million annually. Expenditure of 2021 funds include \$1.6 million for behavioral health and housing-related services, and up to \$6 million towards capital projects. Looking

forward, the City's role as a funding partner could provide some funding to PSH providers, which would be reflected via a contract with required service units. Bellevue has funded PSH or supportive services to date through HB 1590, ARCH trust fund contributions, and the City's housing capital investment program.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Direct staff to: (1) develop a Community Engagement Guide for PSH, outside of the Land Use Code, that includes elements of neighborhood outreach, engagement strategies and relationship building; and (2) work with PSH providers on required service units for on-site services when the City is a funding partner for the services.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

- A. Best Practices Reference Library

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A