

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

**SUBJECT**

Eastside Men’s Shelter and Supportive Housing Project

**STAFF CONTACTS**

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**POLICY ISSUES**

The City Council has created a strong policy basis for siting a homeless shelter for men with permanent supportive housing in Bellevue. The 2015-16 City Council Vision Priorities directed to the City to “work toward an Eastside solution for permanent winter shelter.” This was advanced in the 2016-17 Council Vision Priorities, calling for the City to work with regional partners to “establish an eastside permanent winter homeless shelter to be ready for the winter of 2018-19.”

These priorities echo from the Council’s adopted 2014 Diversity Advantage plan, which includes an action item “supporting the establishment of a year-round homeless shelter on the Eastside.”

These directive actions are consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies including:

- HO-35: Support regional efforts to prevent homelessness, and make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time when it occurs. Provide a range of affordable housing options and support efforts to move homeless persons and families to long-term financial independence.
- HO-36: Collaborate with other jurisdictions and social service organizations to assure availability of emergency shelter and day centers that address homelessness.
- HS-14: Support agencies locating human service facilities in Bellevue and, where appropriate, encourage efficiencies through agency collocation and collaboration.
- HS-18: Support an intentional local community response to homelessness with housing and supportive services provided to families, youth and single adults.

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

- Action
- Discussion

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## Information

To fulfill the Council policy and direction described above, should the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into a non-binding Letter of Agreement with King County to further evaluate siting a men's shelter and supportive permanent housing facility on property owned by King County adjacent to the Eastgate Public Health clinic and the Eastgate Park and Ride?

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

Homelessness in Bellevue has been an issue of community concern for many decades. Congregations for the Homeless opened its first shelter for men in Bellevue in 1993. Over the past several years, homelessness has steadily increased on the Eastside. During 2015-16, over 1,200 unduplicated homeless men, women and children engaged with the homeless service system, receiving shelter and other service programs. The existing local homeless housing and services systems are providing services at the limits of their capacity. At the same time, Bellevue Police and Park Rangers have increasingly been called upon to monitor and interact with individuals sheltering in cars and RVs on public right-of-way and individuals camping in rights-of-way and public open space areas (see attachment A, Homelessness at a Glance).

This increase is not limited to Bellevue. It is being experienced in our neighboring cities and across the County. Consistent with the City Council's 2015 Interest Statement on homelessness, the City considers homelessness a regional issue and works in partnership with neighboring cities and King County to develop and implement responses. Eastside cities have been coordinating a regional response to address homelessness. Redmond hosts the shelter for young adults. Kirkland has made the commitment to provide shelter for women and families. Bellevue, while continuing to support prevention services that keep people out of homelessness, the City has committed to providing a shelter designed for adult men.

The shelter for men will not be new for Bellevue. The City has hosted the Eastside Winter Shelter at several interim location since 2008, providing safe overnight shelter for up to 100 men per night. Bellevue, however, does not have a permanent location and has needed to change locations over the years. In 2015-16, the Eastside Winter Shelter was located on property owned by Sound Transit. This building is now scheduled for demolition, so the shelter must move again to another suitable interim location for 2016-17. Temporary shelters are often located in less preferred locations that may have limited transit, in or near residential neighborhoods, and with facilities that are not optimally set up for shelter operations. A permanent men's homeless shelter on the Eastside can be located to best serve those in need, ensure ease of access, coordinate social services and minimize the impacts the shelter has on the surrounding community.

### **Opportunity with King County**

In November 2015, the King County Executive made a local Proclamation of Emergency regarding homelessness in King County. The proclamation states that King County will continue to work with all cities in King County on plans to address homelessness. The County and the City of Bellevue both recognize that additional efforts are required to provide shelter and housing for homeless individuals. In partnership, the County and the City identified the option of co-locating the permanent men's shelter and supportive housing at the site of Seattle King County Public Health in Eastgate.

The Seattle King County Public Health property, located at 14350 SE Eastgate Way (Attachment B, Vicinity Map), provides a unique opportunity to align services, meet community needs and minimize the impacts to the surrounding community. The site is located in Eastgate, just north

of I-90, adjacent to Eastgate Park and Ride. Seattle King County Public Health Eastside Clinic already provides direct health services to the homeless population on the Eastside. It also provides opportunity to accommodate a shelter, additional supportive housing units, a drop-in day center, public health services and other program and office space for social service providers.

The addition of a shelter and supportive housing would enable the City to support:

- Safe Shelter that provides basic services to increase safety and help people survive
- Enhancing and extending existing severe weather/low barrier shelter program
- A place for engagement and access to needed social services
- Help for individuals moving toward independence and stable housing
- Strong, sustainable program management
- Good neighbor relationships with immediate neighborhood and broader community

The site also meets other considerations held by the City for a suitable location for a permanent shelter, including:

- Avoid single-family residential areas
- Locate shelter near transit center or accessible bus lines
- Locate shelter in proximity to human and medical services
- Adequate street lighting and sidewalks

Bellevue and King County staff propose a formal exploration process to determine if this site can accommodate a new building to house a shelter space with a capacity to sleep 100 men along with a day center enriched with on-site services. Additionally, an undetermined number of new apartments will be included in the facility to offer permanent housing with supportive services to individuals departing the homelessness service system. This facility would be operated by a partnership between Congregations for the Homeless and Imagine Housing. Both non-profit agencies have a long and successful track record of providing shelter and services to homeless and low-income Eastside residents.

### **Joint Letter of Agreement**

A Joint Letter of Agreement (Attachment C) authorizes the City and King County to take steps, within a 6 month period (beginning August 2016), to negotiate an agreement for the use of the property for the purposes of developing and operating a men's shelter, homeless housing and supportive services.

The Letter of Agreement does not create rights or obligations for either party, but does express the intent of the County and the City to work together to accomplish this transaction for the benefit of the region and the City. All actions are subject to the final decision and/or approvals of the Bellevue City Council and the King County Executive and the King County Council.

As noted in the Agreement, the City will take the lead on public outreach and engagement, partnering closely with Congregations for the Homeless, Imagine Housing and King County (see material in Attachment A). In the coming months, the City will lead outreach efforts to meet with surrounding businesses, neighbors, and interested parties to further describe the project and dialogue about potential impacts to the surrounding community. The goal of the outreach is to build strong lines of communication and understanding between all parties for the purpose of charting the best possible outcomes for the neighborhood and the Eastside. Interested stakeholder group meetings will take place through August with a community meeting scheduled in

September. To request a stakeholder briefing or learn more about the opportunities for public engagement, visit [www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm).

The outcomes of the public engagement include:

- Identifying potential impacts and determine appropriate strategies to address primary concerns
- Identifying synergistic service partnerships in the community
- Exploring and recording best practices for programming/facility design/use
- Congregations for the Homeless will convene a Good Neighbor Group. This would include near-by stakeholders who would work with Congregations for the Homeless to provide input to improve/incorporate public feedback into the design and operations of the shelter program.
- Integrating public input into the facility design and operations, as well as additional strategies to serve the broader needs of the surrounding community
- Creating and maintaining an “Interested Parties List” to receive communication for the duration of the project

### **Next Steps:**

The City and King County will take all reasonable steps, within a 6-month period (beginning August 2016), to negotiate an agreement for the use of the property by the City and/or its partners for the purposes of developing and operating a men’s shelter, homeless housing and potentially supportive and public health services.

Approval of the Letter of Agreement with King County will begin the public engagement process for the men’s shelter and supportive housing at the Seattle King County Public Health site in Eastgate. A compilation report of public input received and how that input will be incorporated into the planning of the site will be shared with Bellevue City Council, the King County Executive and King County Council by first quarter 2017.

### **MOTION**

Move to authorize the City Manager to enter into a non-binding Letter of Agreement with King County to further evaluate siting a men's shelter and supportive permanent housing facility on property owned by King County adjacent to the Eastgate Public Health clinic and the Eastgate Park and Ride.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Homelessness at a Glance
- B. Vicinity Map
- C. Letter of Agreement