

November 28, 2016

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Eastside Men's Shelter and Supportive Housing Project

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POLICY ISSUES

The City Council created a strong policy basis for siting a homeless shelter for men with permanent supportive housing in Bellevue. The City Council Vision Priorities direct the City to work with regional partners to “establish an eastside permanent winter homeless shelter to be ready for the winter of 2018/19.” This priority echoes 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 adopted in 2015 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



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



At its November 7 meeting, the Council requested an update on the status of the project including initial feedback collected from community outreach and engagement events. Joining City staff for the presentation will be staff from the development team, Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) and Imagine Housing. The goal of Monday’s presentation is to provide additional context for the City’s proposed investment in a permanent location for the shelter currently serving men experiencing homelessness.

This context will include trends about homelessness in Bellevue and the eastside and Bellevue’s approach, in collaboration with regional partners, to investing in a network of services to prevent homelessness or making it “rare, brief and one-time.” In addition, staff will provide a synopsis of the main themes rising from public outreach conducted to date. This update serves as an interim check-in with the Council in advance of more thorough reports being developed for the first quarter of 2017.

BACKGROUND

On August 1, 2016, the City Council directed the City Manager to enter into a non-binding Letter of Agreement with King County to further evaluate siting a men's shelter and permanent supportive housing facility on property owned by King County adjacent to the Eastgate Public Health clinic and the Eastgate Park and Ride, located at 14350 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue WA 98007. The direction provided by Council allows staff from both entities, as well as potential partners Congregations for the Homeless and Imagine Housing, to continue to work together to perform “due diligence” to determine whether a shelter, day center and housing project at this location could both meet a long-term need for a permanent emergency shelter (that the City has been supporting at a variety of locations since 2008), as well as provide a key facility to meet the objective of moving men from homelessness to stable permanent housing.

BELLEVUE AND EASTSIDE RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

Bellevue, in partnership with other eastside jurisdictions, and as part of county-wide efforts to coordinate response to homelessness, has been actively responding to homeless individuals and families within our City for decades. Services and interventions to prevent homelessness and to connect homeless individuals with stable housing is a complex net of programs and services that are provided by various government agencies, non-profit service providers, medical professionals, faith communities, and law enforcement. This brief summary provides an overview to help place the proposed men’s shelter into the broader context of a more comprehensive set of efforts aimed at making homelessness rare, brief and one-time.

Homelessness in Bellevue:

As the City has grown in size and transitioned into a more urban environment, so too has homelessness. Homelessness has always existed in Bellevue, but until recent years has been largely invisible. Family violence and conflict, substance abuse, poverty, mental health issues and other factors are primary root causes of homelessness. These occur in all communities and Bellevue is no exception. What has

become more pronounced over the last several years is more visible instances of homeless. People living unsheltered on the street or in the woods, or living in cars, RV's or tents. Unsheltered homelessness has increased on the Eastside consistently over time. In 2010, 141 individuals were recorded sleeping unsheltered during the annual One Night Count. The most recent count in 2016 recorded 245 individuals.

In 2008, Bellevue began partnering with Congregations for the Homeless to open a severe weather shelter. That program has evolved and expanded to serve the greater need evidenced in the community. During the winter of 2010-2011, this shelter served 266 individuals. During the most recent winter of 2015-2016, the shelter served 571 individuals. Most of these shelter residents reported their last permanent address as Bellevue or other Eastside cities.

Similar increases in homelessness has been seen in other populations, such as families, single women, and youth and young adults. A summary of these data was assembled for this project in August and is included as Attachment 1: Bellevue Homeless Facts and Figures.

Avenues of Response:

The system of response to homelessness in Bellevue falls broadly into these categories:

- Services to prevent homelessness – basic needs provision, emergency financial assistance, counseling and treatment programs, medical care, etc.;
- Services for individuals experiencing homelessness –mental health resources, job retraining programs, housing assistance, and addiction treatment and counseling; life coaching, etc.;
- Facilities for individuals experiencing homeless –includes day centers, shelters, and other facilities where homeless individuals can not only sleep, but keep belongings, meet with case managers, and focus on addressing underlying issues that may have contributed to their situation; and
- Enforcement – response to behaviors and activities that don't comply with existing City rules and regulations. This would include police and code enforcement response to unauthorized encampments on private or City-owned property, as well as any criminal activity.

While the City is not the sole provider of the above services, we have made direct investments into these areas over time. A brief summary follows.

- Support services – through the Human Services Fund in 2016, the City invested \$712,000 in non-profits that provide shelters or direct services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The most recent City of Bellevue Human Services Needs Assessment led the Human Services Commission to identify homelessness response and one of their top priorities for funding. The preliminary 2017-18 budget currently under consideration by the Council includes an additional \$150,000 investment in homeless shelter support funding. In addition, in 2016 the City increased its funding for the case manager providing direct street outreach to homeless individuals on the eastside. That additional funding supported services to an additional 23 residents experiencing homelessness for a total of 178 served through the third quarter of this year. Bellevue Police worked actively with the mental health crisis network to locate a mental health crisis response unit here on the eastside. Space is provided in City Hall for this unit, allowing for a more rapid response to individuals in mental health crisis.

- Facilities for homeless – Between the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond we have formed a collaborative approach to providing homeless facilities. This winter, Catholic Community Services is providing temporary shelter for families in Redmond and The Sophia Way shelter for single women is currently located in Kirkland. Both of these shelters have and will cycle to temporary Bellevue locations (local church buildings) over time. Bellevue, Redmond and Medina faith communities have been hosting the original CFH rotating shelter since 1993. Bellevue is also on the regular rotation cycle for the homeless community served by Tent City 4. The construction of a permanent location for the men’s shelter that has been located in Bellevue in temporary locations since 2008 is a key part of this network of facilities. Another key piece currently missing from the eastside is a day center for single men. The day center in downtown Bellevue lost its space due to redevelopment and a new location has not yet opened. We have seen increased calls for police response to loitering as a result.
- Enforcement – Bellevue Police, Park Rangers and Code Enforcement Officers are often called to be a first point of contact with individuals sleeping unsheltered on both public and private property. The addition of the CFH homeless outreach worker has added to the ability of City staff to connect individuals with area resources and services. The established protocol for dealing with unpermitted encampments is included in Attachment 3: Public Safety FAQ.

Role of Proposed Men’s Shelter in Response to Homelessness:

As recognized in existing Council policy, emergency shelters and day centers play a role in the overall safety net of services and facilities for homeless:

- 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.

These existing policies were most recently reviewed and updated by the Human Services Commission in 2015 and represent the result of significant work looking at Bellevue’s needs, the county-wide collaboration of All Home that includes the County and all the cities in King County, best practices and other research in this area.

INITIAL RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

The following section provides a sampling of the key themes of community feedback and questions that have been received through public outreach, as well as providing summary responses. Staff has maintained a catalog of each comment and specific question submitted to date to the Council and to the staff through the outreach process, and this summary information is not intended as a final response to those detailed and specific questions. Rather, those specific answers will be provided as part of the final report being prepared during this due diligence phase, anticipated under the current schedule in the first quarter of 2017.

Is this a new shelter?

The number and type of individuals anticipated to be served in the permanent shelter is not new, but the fact that the shelter would have a permanent home is new. The City of Bellevue has partnered with Congregations for the Homeless to host the Eastside Men’s Shelter for individuals experiencing homeless since 2008. This shelter has operated in temporary locations since it began, rotating to a new

interim site every few years. These relocations have been driven by the lack of a facility specifically built for this purpose. For that reason, City staff, working with Redmond and Kirkland, have tried to find available space, year after year as shelter space gained is regularly lost after a year or two due to redevelopment. It has existed in four different locations in Bellevue, including Crossroads, Northeast Bellevue, BelRed and Wilburton. A separate day center was located in Downtown, but closed earlier this year due to redevelopment of the property. In order to provide space for homeless individuals to meet with case managers, store belongings and otherwise have the ability to focus on getting the help and resources they need, a day center is being paired with the new interim shelter at the City-owned Lincoln Center building on 116th Avenue NE.

The proposed men's shelter in Eastgate would operate with the same capacity (up to 100 men/night) and same rules of conduct that have governed the shelter since its inception. The primary differences between the existing shelter and the proposed shelter are the:

- Ability for the new shelter to remain open for twelve months instead of six (assuming operating funding for twelve months can be secured over time)
- Opportunity to add support services on-site to increase CFH's ability to successfully move men to stable housing
- Opportunity to design a place better able to promote the safety and security of the shelter guests, staff and surrounding community.

One outcome of the due diligence underway is to determine whether the above differences would result in a different set of clients and/or a different set of impacts to the surrounding area than we have seen with the current shelter and its operations. In addition, due diligence will explore whether these changes could be expected to have any positive impact on the ability to move individuals more quickly to stable housing.

What specifically does the proposed shelter entail?

The men's shelter and supportive housing project at the Eastgate location is proposed to have three components in one building: an overnight men's shelter, a day center with on-site social services, and permanent supportive housing units.

Overnight Men's Shelter The facility would include up to 5,000 square feet for the shelter, including a sleeping area with capacity to serve up to 100 men (70-80 has been the average attendance for the existing shelter). The area would be designed to provide dignity for each individual, while ensuring a safe place to shelter for the night.

Day Center and Support Services: The day center could be up to 7,000 square feet. It includes a large open cafeteria and common gathering room, space for storage of personal items, and hygiene facilities such as laundry and showers. Office and program space will allow for personal case management and on-site medical visits, employment assistance, counseling and other services designed to create a path out of homelessness for the shelter and day center users.

Permanent Supportive Housing: While the City's intent has been to find a permanent location for an existing shelter serving single adult men, partnering with King County on this King County owned site presented an opportunity to add a permanent affordable housing component, which is a high priority of both the City and County. The building, as it is currently proposed, would look like any typical

apartment building. The top stories would include approximately 50 units of affordable housing designed to serve individuals exiting homelessness. Residents of those units would also be offered a wide range of supportive services necessary to maintain their housing stability.

How does this shelter differ from other CFH shelters or homeless housing programs?

Congregations for the Homeless provides an integrated pathway for men to transition out of homelessness. Each program provides an essential step in the journey for men to access the support they need to leave homelessness. The proposed men's shelter fills a role as an emergency shelter and day center, which provides a life safety function and is one of the first entry points for those seeking to regain housing stability.

This network of facilities and services is designed to meet men where they are and provide support and pathways towards independent living. Men can enter any level of housing and services depending upon their readiness to engage. Those that need a small amount of assistance can move rapidly to permanent housing. Others that need deeper levels of assistance may spend time stabilizing in a shelter program before advancing to permanent housing.

Street Outreach: Congregations for the Homeless provides Outreach staff to work in partnership with Bellevue Police to respond to unpermitted tent encampments, vehicle residences, panhandling and homeless individuals reported by the community. Outreach staff make contact with individuals, offering connection to food, shelter and social services.

Emergency Shelter and Day Center: The proposed men's shelter and day center, with minimal entry requirements, provides access for men to come in from the elements, obtain a meal and warm place to shelter for the night. To stay at the shelter, men must comply with a behavioral code of conduct, including:

- No alcohol or drug use is permitted at the shelter
- No weapons
- Must report to CFH sex offender status (if any) and allow CFH to check reporting status. Anyone with a sex offense on record must be in compliance with their plan. Public notice then available through the King County Sheriff's reporting and notification system
- Inappropriate behavior will either be safely isolated within the shelter for the night, or removed by Bellevue Police

To date, this shelter service has been operated during winters in Bellevue since 2008. A day center has also been available at a separate location. Starting this winter and continuing for the next several years, the shelter and day center will be co-located, offering the same level of service proposed for the permanent facility.

Rotating Shelter in Congregations: The Rotating Shelter in local congregations has been operating in Bellevue for 23 years and offers an alternative shelter option for men who have committed to case management and a stricter code of conduct, including:

- Must have a current state picture I.D.
- Must allow CFH to run a criminal background check, anyone with a sex offense crime cannot be a member of the shelter
- Must be willing to be drug and alcohol-free, and willing to address any addiction issues

- Must be willing to work one-on-one with a Case Manager

Subsidized Supportive Housing: CFH, Imagine Housing and other non-profit housing providers offer housing units in Bellevue that are matched with supportive services to help keep individuals stable, once they enter back into permanent housing. The range of services is broad and is tailored to the needs of the household. As stability increases, those services and supports are scaled back until the point that the individual no longer requires assistance.

What is a ‘low barrier’ shelter or day center? Why do we need one?

Low Barrier is a term that describes a shelter or day center with minimal entry requirements. CFH has operated this type of shelter and day center in Bellevue in multiple neighborhood areas since 2008. As described above, they are often the first step for men to come inside. Anyone is allowed to come inside and stay, as long as they are willing to conduct themselves appropriately. In the absence of a day center, we have seen that libraries, shopping centers and coffee shops operate the same way. There are few entry requirements and individuals are allowed to stay as long they display generally accepted standards of behavior. However, in the case of the day center and shelter, basic needs services are available and men can learn and connect to support services to help them to transition out of homelessness.

The emergency shelter and day center is designed to encourage men experiencing homelessness to take that first step toward addressing the root cause of their homelessness. Congregations for the Homeless relies heavily on these facilities allowing for an environment that they then leverage to establish personal relationships with homeless men. CFH staff will be at Monday’s meeting to describe their approach and their outcomes. In addition, information about the program operations of CFH can be found in Attachment 2: Shelter and Day Center Operations and Outcomes FAQ.

Does the shelter and day center allow sex offenders?

Yes, the current shelter has operated since 2008 with the same approach to men who may be required to register as sex offenders. In order to stay at the shelter or day center, individuals with such an offence must declare themselves and report as they are required to remain in compliance with their court orders. If compliant, they are allowed inside. Congregations for the Homeless complies with all King County public notification requirements for sex offenders. In 2015-16, Congregations for the Homeless identified less than one percent of the homeless men served as sex offenders.

More broadly, sex offenders currently live housed and unhoused in neighborhoods across Bellevue. Residents are encouraged to regularly check King County’s list of registered sex offenders at <http://www.icrimewatch.net/index.php?AgencyID=54473>.

What has the Bellevue police crime data revealed about the impact of previous shelters on the surrounding community?

Bellevue Police researched City crime data from 2010-2016, comparing citywide data with crime data within a one-mile radius around the Eastside Men’s Shelter in BelRed (operating at this location from 2013-16) and with a one-mile radius of the Eastgate site (used as a baseline point for comparison). The research found the following:

- 1) Bellevue is a safe city. The presence of the Eastside Men’s Shelter did not appear to impact the Part I Violent Crime rate (including homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) for the

community. Citywide Part I Violent Crime rates remain remarkably low, including the area surrounding the men's shelter.

- 2) Property Crime rates, as a whole, both prior to and after the establishment of the men's shelter, follow the citywide trends. Looking at individual types of property crimes some differences between BelRed, Eastgate and the City as a whole can be seen. The statistics for crimes of opportunity (such as car prowls, auto theft, and theft) trended up in the BelRed area during the time when the shelter was open.
- 3) Warrant arrests in BelRed were higher the citywide rate, although the BelRed area started out at a higher rate prior to the shelter being located there.
- 4) The VUCSA/drug arrest rate was lower in the area surrounding the shelter than the drug arrest rate citywide or Eastgate area.

The Police Department has played an active role in partnering with CFH in securing the current shelter and planning for a future permanent facility. They have spent time analyzing the proposed Eastgate site and making initial connections with the Bellevue College Public Safety staff.

The Police Department approach to collaborating with CFH on maintaining safety and security at the shelter and day center is summarized in Attachment 3: Bellevue Police Department FAQ. A summary of the recent data analysis done by Bellevue Police can be in Attachment 4: Bellevue Police Crime Statistics Analysis.

How will you prevent this from being like Seattle? Won't this be a magnet for Seattle homeless?

Each community's response to homelessness is unique. As described above, Bellevue uses a combination of services, facilities and enforcement to strike a balanced approach to the challenges presented. The City of Bellevue is committed to using this full range of tools to address a shelter, day center and supportive housing in this proposed location, as we have throughout the City and with the prior shelter locations. These tools include partnerships with neighboring Eastside cities and Eastside-based non-profit service providers. A future permanent location for the Eastside Men's Shelter maintains current level of services already provided in Bellevue, with the enhancements of adding improved coordination to support services and permanent affordable housing, to transition men out of homelessness. The City is also committed to partnering with the community to identify best practices and mitigation strategies to address local concerns, including public safety response and on-going communications that will allow us to adjust our response and approaches as appropriate over time.

Although there is nothing to prevent homeless men in Seattle from coming to Bellevue, the majority of homeless services in King County are centered in Seattle and that is not likely to change. The experience of the past eight years has demonstrated that homeless men tend to stay in the community that they know. Eighty percent of CFH clients report that their last permanent address was in East King County. Additionally, the partnership between Bellevue Police and Congregations for the Homeless provides a solid foundation for good communication and coordinated response to address community concerns as they arise.

How was the Eastgate site selected?

The City of Bellevue has worked with Eastside cities, including Redmond and Kirkland, in a regional approach to address needed shelters on the Eastside, as one part of a broad strategy to address increasing homelessness. Bellevue agreed to identify a permanent location for the Eastside Winter Shelter for men,

continuing a service we have been providing in Bellevue since 2008. A homeless shelter for Eastside youth and young adults is located in the City of Redmond, and the City of Kirkland agreed to locate a shelter for single women and families.

Bellevue asked A Regional Coalition for Housing to explore surplus or underutilized publicly-owned properties as possible sites for the permanent location for the Eastside Men's Shelter project. Five sites, two County-owned and three City-owned, were identified as possible candidates based upon a set of screening principles. This included proximity to transit, proximity to existing supportive service providers, developable property of a sufficient size to accommodate the program, location within a predominantly commercial or mixed-use environment and other site-specific factors.

The four-acre King County-owned property at the Eastgate Public Health Center, was selected for further study as it provides a unique combination of attributes that separates it from the other sites that were screened. King County has flexibility to partner with a non-profit developer to accommodate a new building with the three components of an overnight shelter, day center, and permanent supportive housing. It provides optimal access to existing transit (directly adjacent to the Eastgate Park & Ride), collaboration opportunities with existing social services (directly adjacent to the Public Health clinic), potential partnerships with Bellevue College (employment support programs and service learning opportunities), and a location within an area that is planned for future mixed-use transit-oriented residential, retail and commercial uses.

Are any other locations still being considered?

The Letter of Agreement between the City of Bellevue and King County initiated the public outreach and exploration of the development of the Eastgate Public Health Clinic property at 14350 SE Eastgate Way. Given the opportunity to partner with King County and co-locate with the public health clinic, the current due diligence phase is focused on this site, and whether it can provide for not only the emergency shelter needs, but fit well into overall efforts to transition men to stable housing in a way that works for the surrounding community. The information developed during this due diligence period will be provided to the City Council and King County Council to make a final decision about whether to pursue the project at this site. If the answer to that question is no, then the City would continue to try to identify sites that might meet the criteria originally developed.

What are you hearing from the public outreach?

The Bellevue community has sent in a wide range of questions and opinions regarding the Eastside Men's Shelter. Written comments submitted to the City have been mixed, providing both support and opposition for the shelter. A complete written compilation of all written comments received from 8/2/2016 - 11/16/2016 is available on the project website at www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm. In addition to comments sent to the City, some community members created an online petition against the shelter that has over 2,300 signatures.

The major themes from comments of support have expressed the following:

- a) Gratitude for City Council's leadership to address the real need of homelessness on the Eastside.
- b) Confidence in the competency of Congregations for the Homeless as a shelter operator.
- c) Support for location in Eastgate, proximity to transit and coordination of social services.
- d) Personal volunteer experience or connection to the men served.
- e) Recognition that homelessness is a reality on the Eastside and these men are our neighbors.

The major themes from the comments of opposition have expressed the following:

- a) Frustration with the public process and lack of transparency.
- b) Concern regarding crime and public safety.
- c) Concern about it being a 'low-barrier' shelter.
- d) Concern about proximity to daycares, schools, residential homes, Bellevue College, etc.
- e) Concern about impact on local property values.
- f) Support for the homeless, but adamant that this is the wrong site.
- g) Desire for more time for the public process before any final decision on the site is made.

The outreach process has also generated a list of community questions regarding the site selection process, the programs and operations of the shelter, crime data, and research on best practices. The work to answer all community questions is ongoing and updated FAQ documents will continue to be posted at www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm. Additionally, public comment is still welcome and can be sent to eastsidemensshelter@bellevuewa.gov.

NEXT STEPS IN THE PROCESS

The Letter of Agreement, signed with King County, committed the City to taking a series of actions prior to a final decision on the viability of the Eastgate Public Health site. Ongoing public outreach will play a critical role. City staff are continuing work with Imagine Housing, Congregations for the Homeless and King County to develop conceptual designs to determine costs for the proposed building, a Public Outreach Report, Best Practices Report and Mitigation Plan.

Following the original schedule proposed in August, the results of this work are tentatively scheduled to be reported back to City Council in first quarter of 2017. In early 2017, the City Council would consider whether to move forward with a project at this site. Following that, the King County Council would consider granting property rights to the project team. With those approvals, the project would proceed to more detailed process of design and mitigation planning while also working to secure public and private funding. The City and neighboring community will have a vital role in this phase of the project. The City will again have a role as the project undergoes environmental review, land use approvals and building permit processes. The public feedback collected now and continuing over the next two years will inform each of these phases and decision points.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1: Bellevue Homeless Facts and Figures
- 2: Shelter and Day Center Operations and Outcomes FAQ
- 3: Bellevue Police Department FAQ
- 4: Bellevue Police Crime Statistics Analysis
- 5: Sites Screened for the Eastside Men's Shelter and Supportive Housing Project

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Public Comment Compilation 8/2/2016 - 11/16/2016 – available online at www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm