COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS WORKGROUP
CONTINUUM OF HOUSING

“Identify key issues, and recommend strategies, actions, and solutions to address homelessness and the continuum of housing and service needs by fall 2017.”
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 1</strong>: Hold first meeting (July 27). Define scope of work and timeline; overview presentation by staff of data and trends.</td>
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<td><strong>Task 2</strong>: Hold 4 working meetings. Proposed topics for each meeting include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Review inventory of subsidized housing (Aug 10, Sept 14)</td>
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<td>▪ Review data, key issues, needs and gaps (Aug 10, Sept 14)</td>
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<td>▪ Develop set of criteria for establishing priorities (Sept 28)</td>
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<td>▪ Recommend strategies and actions (Oct 12)</td>
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<td><strong>Task 3</strong>: Hold final meeting and produce recommendations (Nov 2)</td>
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<td><strong>Task 4</strong>: Communicate out on recommendations</td>
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<td><strong>Task 5</strong>: Staff use recommendations to inform Consolidated Plan (Strategic Plan chapter) and next Housing Levy</td>
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CONSOLIDATED PLANNING PROCESS

**Phase 1**
Gather & incorporate stakeholder feedback

**Phase 2**
Preliminary analysis & needs assessment

**Phase 3**
Complete first draft of CP and seek public input

**Phase 4**
Finalize and adopt CP & Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Summer 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Winter 17/18</th>
<th>Spring 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff tasks include</td>
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<td>Assessment of Fair Housing Survey</td>
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<td>Schedule public hearings</td>
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<td>CDAB &amp; CSW meetings</td>
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<td>Updates to City Council</td>
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<td>Data collection and analysis</td>
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<td>Facebook Posts and Public Notices</td>
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<td>Public Comment Period</td>
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<td>Facilitate meetings &amp; events</td>
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<td>Compile/respond to Comments</td>
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CP = Consolidated Plan
Housing Continuum
Housing and homelessness in context
Our region as a whole is experiencing population growth, and Bellingham is no exception.

The population of Bellingham is growing, but not more so than many other places in the state and county. **Our growth since 2010 is actually a little below state average** and Whatcom County average.
People are moving to Washington state because we are leading the country in economic growth

Highest GDP growth in the country!
Development of new housing units lags behind job growth in the state

Sources: WA OFM post-census estimates of April 1 housing units; WA ESD Nonagricultural wage and salary employment, not seasonally adjusted
Housing prices are steadily increasing statewide

Sources: https://www.zillow.com/bellingham-wa/home-values/
...And regionally
As are rental prices

Sources: https://www.zillow.com/bellingham-wa/home-values/
Increasing rental costs have been linked to increasing levels of homelessness.

Annual number of persons experiencing homelessness and % change in rental costs in Whatcom County by year: 2008-2016

Sources: HUD Fair Market Rents; Whatcom County Point-in-Time counts
The proportion of people experiencing homelessness in Whatcom county is a bit higher than the state average.

Number of people homeless per 10,000 residents by county (2016)

Sources: WA Department of Commerce: 2016 Point in Time Count (www.commerce.wa.gov/pit)
Homelessness has become a critical issue, regionally and nationally.

The problem of homelessness is most acute up and down the West Coast. Alaska, California, Oregon, Hawaii and Washington all saw an increase in homelessness in recent years, even while other parts of the country saw a decrease.

Many cities have declared states of emergency in response to the homelessness crisis.

Sources: PEW Charitable Trusts: Cities, States Turn to Emergency Declarations to Tackle Homeless Crisis (Nov 2015); National Alliance to End Homelessness, State of Homelessness in America 2016 Report
The influence of population growth is exacerbated by Bellingham’s very low vacancy rate

The residential vacancy rate in Bellingham is **1.8%**, which is lower than the state average of **2%**.

And WA state’s vacancy rate itself is very low compared to other states.
There is a mismatch between home values and the income necessary to afford to purchase those homes

The median income for a family of four in Bellingham is $68,300. At this level of income, a family could afford* to buy a house that costs $338,000. However, the median list price of a home in Bellingham right now is $415,000.

*That assumes they can save up a down payment of at least 10% ($33,800).

There is also a lack of affordable housing stock to buy. About 1/3 of the homes in Whatcom County are affordable to median-income earners (about 25,000 homes). Meanwhile, there are about 40,000 households earning below 100% of median income in the county.

During the recession, housing supply fell behind population growth

Since 2016, the population of Bellingham grew by 1,870 residents. These residents would need approximately 860 new housing units.*

Since April 2016 there have been 821 new housing units completed. Of these, 66% were multi-family units in buildings with 5+ units (usually rentals).

An additional 946 units are reflected in permits that have been issued for projects currently under construction.

Together, the new units and those in under construction equate to an additional resident capacity of 3,710.

Sources: City of Bellingham internal permit data; Census data population estimates.
* Uses average rate of 2.1 people per household
For low income households, there is a substantial gap between the cost of rentals and what they can afford.

Bellingham’s rent standard for a 2-bedroom apartment is $1,065 (110% of HUD’s fair market rent). At that price, housing would be unaffordable to a family of three earning less than about 85% of the area median income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income level for a family of three</th>
<th>Monthly income</th>
<th>Affordable housing costs (30% of income - $150 for utilities)</th>
<th>Difference (rent - affordable housing cost)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% AMI</td>
<td>$1,476</td>
<td>$293</td>
<td>$ (772)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% AMI</td>
<td>$2,460</td>
<td>$588</td>
<td>$ (477)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% AMI</td>
<td>$3,936</td>
<td>$1,031</td>
<td>$ (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% AMI</td>
<td>$4,920</td>
<td>$1,326</td>
<td>$ 261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average renter income</td>
<td>$2,340</td>
<td>$552</td>
<td>$ (513)</td>
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Housing cost burden in Bellingham is above average

The percentage of households in Bellingham that pay over 30% of their income for housing is above the average in the county, the state, and the US.

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<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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<td>&lt;30% of income going to housing</td>
<td>Not cost burdened</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%-50% of income going to housing</td>
<td>Cost burdened</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;50% of income going to housing</td>
<td>Severely cost burdened</td>
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Sources: HUD. CHAS data (2011-2015 ACS), Bellingham.
Far more renters than home owners are severely cost-burdened

In Bellingham, about 46% of households are homeowners and 54% are renters.

- Among cost burdened households, 59% are renters.
- Among severely cost burdened households, 80% are renters.

Sources: HUD. CHAS data (2011-2015 ACS), Bellingham.
The need for shelter, services, and affordable housing is exceeding our current capacity

While Bellingham has over 3,000 subsidized rental units, there are 10,750 households making less than 50% of AMI. 742 people are homeless at a point in time, and over 1,700* people experience homelessness over the course of a year.

There are currently 30 households on Kulshan CLT’s waiting list, pre-screened and ready to buy, but waiting for housing stock to become available.

Sources: HUD. 2010-14 CHAS data; *Number of new intakes to the housing interest pool of people becoming homeless between 6/1/16-5/31/17; Kulshan CLT
Mental health disability is the most common health problem in our community, especially among the homeless population.

Among the entire adult population age 18-64, cognitive difficulty is the most common type of disability, affecting 5% of Bellingham residents (2,934 people).

Of the 621 homeless households on the housing interest pool (as of May 2017), 49% self-reported a mental health disability.

Sources: 2011-2015 ACS; Homeless Service Center
In many cases, more than just a roof is needed to house someone stably. In addition to those having a mental health disability, another 9% are medically fragile. Altogether, at least 59% of the homeless population will require ongoing supports beyond housing assistance alone. Also, these two categories do not account for other needs such as case management or treatment for addiction, or health issues that are not self-reported.

Sources: DSHS database of registered residential facilities; Waitlists updated monthly at bellinghamhousing.org.
Federal funding to Bellingham for housing and homelessness issues have declined over time.
Different priorities lead to different results

The number of individuals in families with children becoming homeless per year increased by 129% between 2012 and 2017.

Over the same period, the number of individuals with no children becoming homeless per year increased by 149%.

But the focus on families with children led to very different outcomes between these groups...
Despite the increased need for services, the average number of days that families with children experienced homelessness decreased by 48% (from 189 days to 99 days).

Meanwhile, the average number of days individuals with no children experienced homelessness increased by 10% (from 235 days to 259 days).
The City provides about $5,000,000/year in housing and services funding.
Discussion
“Identify key issues, and recommend the strategies, actions, and solutions to address homelessness and the continuum of housing and services needs by fall 2017.”

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO SERVE?

What are the service gaps?

What are the obstacles and barriers to appropriate housing?

What additional information or data do we need in order to understand these issues?