

Gardenview Tiny House Village FAQ

Road2Home, the Low Income Housing Institute, and the City of Bellingham are developing a tiny house village to provide shelter, safety, and community for individuals, couples, and families experiencing homelessness in Bellingham, emphasizing medically fragile and 55+ individuals. The village will include up to 36 tiny houses along with a community kitchen, hygiene facilities, case management, and 24/7 staffing. Each tiny house is 8 feet by 12 feet, is insulated, and has heat, electricity, and a locking door. The proposed site is located at 1399 Woburn St, Bellingham, WA 98229.

What is Road2Home?

Road2Home (R2H) is a local nonprofit that will provide intensive case management services for residents of Gardenview Village and currently provides Community Ally support for our neighbors experiencing homelessness while they are on their “road to home.” Our Community Ally Program trains volunteers to be allies with people experiencing homelessness. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Road2Home’s volunteer Community Allies have worked with six clients, helping place four of them in temporary or emergency shelter and helping two find permanent housing. At Gardenview Village, our community allies will provide meaningful support, bolstered by case management, to help residents achieve their goals and ultimately find permanent housing.

What is LIHI?

The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) is a nonprofit housing and service organization. LIHI owns and manages over 2,300 units of housing in 66 buildings throughout the Puget Sound region. LIHI operates 12 tiny house villages, eight in Seattle, three in Tacoma, and one in Olympia. LIHI has consulted on the development and operation of other villages across the state and country. The villages provide stability, safety, and community to 1,000 residents annually, including individuals, couples, families, seniors, veterans, and people with pets. LIHI also operates two Urban Rest Stops in Seattle, providing showers, bathrooms, and laundry service to around 500 people experiencing homelessness per day.

Where will Gardenview Village be located?

The village is proposed to be located at the corner of Lakeway Drive and Old Woburn Street by the Lakeway Community Garden, on the old Clean Green site in the Puget Neighborhood of Bellingham, WA.

Who will operate and manage the village?

LIHI and R2H will work in partnership to operate and oversee the 24/7 day-to-day management of the site. Staff include a Special Projects Manager and Village Organizers who provide security and community organizing and Housing Case Managers who support residents in accessing resources such as housing, employment, health care, and education.

Why does the site need 24/7 staff and case management?

With 24/7 operational site staff, residents of a higher level of need can be served by this program and will be able to concentrate on securing housing and overcoming challenges to obtaining housing. 24/7

staff will also ensure responsiveness to emergencies around the clock that may pose a health or safety concern to residents or the surrounding community.

This transitional program will serve as a stepping stone from homelessness to housing, with dedicated Case Management staff assisting all residents in obtaining housing, employment, health care, and other services.

What social services will be provided at the village? Are residents required to accept case management services?

There will be case management along with volunteer ally support. Residents are required to meet with the case management team to work on their goals and progress towards housing. Case management staff will help residents overcome barriers to housing in order to obtain stable housing, employment, health care, education, apply for Social Security or other benefits, get IDs and documentation organized to become housing ready, and more.

What amenities will the village include?

The village will include up to 36 tiny houses along with a community kitchen, hygiene facilities, laundry, case management, and 24/7 staffing. Each tiny house is 8 feet by 12 feet, is insulated, and has heat, electricity, and a locking door.

Are the tiny homes built to code?

The tiny homes are built to meet the requirements of Bellingham Municipal Code 20.15.

The village will include the following additional indoor safety measures for the tiny houses:

1. A working battery-powered smoke and carbon monoxide alarm;
2. No fuel gas appliances or equipment;
3. No smoking, lighted candles, or other types of flames;
4. The only type of heating device allowed are portable oil-filled heaters that will be supplied with the unit.
5. No locks or latches that might inhibit an emergency escape from within the unit. A single-cylinder deadbolt lock or lever-handled door latch is permitted, as long as it does not require the use of a tool or key to lock or unlock it from inside the unit.
6. Impervious wall surfaces and floor surfaces will be used.
7. Ceiling cavity ventilation and living space ventilation will be used to decrease the risk of mold or mildew growth.

Will the site be wheelchair accessible?

All community spaces are wheelchair accessible, along with some of the tiny houses. If more wheelchair-accessible tiny houses are needed, they will be brought forth quickly.

Will live-in tents or RVs be allowed?

No.

Who will live in the village?

The village will serve up to 50 people experiencing homelessness including individuals, couples, veterans, seniors, and people with pets, with an emphasis on individuals who are medically fragile and/or ages 55 and older. All residents will be adults age 18 and over. Enrollment will depend on the needs of the population.

How many tiny houses and how many residents will there be?

The village will start with 30 tiny houses and may be expanded to up to 36 tiny houses. The village will serve individuals and couples, and possibly serve families on a limited non-residential short-term basis. We anticipate serving between 30 to 45 people at any given time, with a maximum permitted capacity of 50 people.

How will the referral process work? Will residents of the village be citizens of Bellingham or come from elsewhere? Will people staying at Geri Field encampment be moving into the village? How will residents be chosen?

All residents who reside at Gardenview Village will have completed an assessment through the Opportunity Council/Whatcom Homeless Service Center and primarily be referred through coordinated entry. Additional referral agencies will be utilized to target populations this village aims to serve, those who are elderly and/or medically fragile. Once a client is referred to the village, the Special Projects Manager will complete the intake process and assist them in filling out intake forms. Staff will provide orientation to new participants.

Participants will be referred through local agencies that they are connected with, which indicates they are likely living in Bellingham or Whatcom County. Individuals living at the Geri Field encampment may move into the village if they are referred through one of our local agency partners and are a good fit for the village program (this process applies to all who are referred to the village).

What are the rules of living in the village?

Residents will be required to agree to and sign a Code of Conduct. Residents will be expected to follow behavioral expectations and work with case management. There is zero tolerance towards violence. Individuals who cannot abide by this Code of Conduct will not be admitted into the program, or may be asked to leave the community for a better-suited shelter.

Will alcohol or drugs be allowed onsite? Will marijuana be allowed? Will residents be drug tested? Are sex offenders allowed?

The Code of Conduct for the village prohibits the use or sale of alcohol and illegal drugs, as well as threatening or unsafe behavior. Registered sex offenders or people who are required to register as sex offenders are prohibited from the site.

Where will residents of the village go when asked to leave?

If a resident is violating rules that the Special Projects Manager or Village Organizer can reasonably conclude brings immediate danger to other program participants, they must be required to leave the village. Efforts will be made to find a suitable place for the person to move to if they are exited from the

village and to avoid as much as possible their exiting to unsheltered homelessness, though that is a possibility.

Why was this site chosen? Why this neighborhood?

R2H and LIHI worked with the City of Bellingham to identify an appropriate location for this temporary village to both ensure a quality shelter for residents and to minimize any adverse impacts to the site and the surrounding area. This site is owned by the City of Bellingham and is surrounded by City-owned property including Parks Operations, a community garden, Bayview Cemetery, vacant City-owned land, and a mortuary. There are no residential properties directly adjacent to the project site. The nearest residential property is located 100 feet away and across a major roadway. The nearest school is about ¼ of a mile away.

Will the project impact traffic or parking?

LIHI and R2H will work to ensure there are no or very little negative impacts on traffic and parking in the surrounding area. Parking for LIHI/R2H staff, on-site supervisors, guests, and visitors shall be limited to the designated parking area identified on the site plan. The amount of vehicle traffic in and out of the site will be relatively minimal as most village residents do not own vehicles.

Will neighbors see similar behaviors as those seen outside the Drop-in Center?

Residents in the village will be required to adhere to behavioral standards outlined in the Code of Conduct to ensure harmony in the village and respect the surrounding neighborhood. The staff will perform perimeter checks around the clock and ensure harmony in the village and just outside of it. Staff are available 24/7 and will respond promptly to calls, emails, or visits to the village from neighbors.

Will the tiny home village result in an increase in criminal activities, disruptive behaviors, and loitering in the vicinity? Will the safety of businesses, residents and their families, and passersby be compromised due to the presence of the village? Will my children be safe? What will LIHI/R2H do to make sure the neighborhood remains safe?

The village Code of Conduct that all residents are required to agree to and abide by addresses the health, safety, and welfare of village residents, but also addresses any potential impacts to neighbors and the community. The Code of Conduct strictly prohibits the on-site use of alcohol and illegal drugs, unsafe behavior, and disruption of neighbors, and requires the residents adhere to quiet hours in the evenings and mornings and participate in case management and chores. The code of conduct will be posted on-site and enforced by our staff.

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be formed of local neighborhood and business stakeholders to oversee progress of the village, provide advisory input, receive updates from the village manager and case manager at the village, resident services and outcomes, and to ensure the surrounding neighborhood is being respected. These are public meetings and all are free to attend and participate.

A variety of measures will be in place to ensure the safety and security of both the village residents and the surrounding neighborhood. There will be 24/7 staffing at the village. There will also be a security

camera system, alarmed exit gates, and perimeter patrols that will ensure the village and surrounding area are safe.

Will the value of my home go down?

This is unknown as there are no studies to prove property value is affected due to proximity to a tiny house village.

How much will this project cost, and how is it funded?

The project will be funded by a combination of funds from the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and direct donations to LIHI and/or Road2Home. The project is estimated to cost a little over \$500,000 per year, which is typical for this type of 24/7 staffed village.

How long will the village be in place? What happens when the permit expires?

The duration of this project is limited to two years by Bellingham Municipal Code. It is anticipated the operations will begin in Summer 2021 and end 24 months later once the permit expires. Once it ends the tiny homes and temporary structures will be removed (they are designed for easy removal or relocation) and the property will be restored to its original condition.

How will LIHI and R2H address Covid-19 safety?

LIHI and R2H will abide by all federal, state, county, city, and public health mandates and guidelines regarding Covid-19 and will adjust as the situation changes. Among other protocols, at this time:

- 1) Face masks - All residents and staff will be required to wear face masks at all times on the village premises with the only exception when a resident is inside their tiny house. Masks will be provided to all residents and staff who need them.
- 2) Sanitation - Staff will ensure common areas and bathrooms are sanitized regularly. Sanitizing supplies will be available for use by staff and residents.
- 3) Social distancing - There are a limited number of persons allowed at one time in the kitchen and other indoor community spaces to ensure social distancing.
- 4) Visitors - With occasional and necessary exceptions, no visitors are allowed (non-staff or non-residents). All visitors approved must submit to a temperature check upon arrival and to answer questions about symptoms.
- 5) Volunteer work groups for set up - All volunteer work groups to set up village must adhere to Covid-19 protocols, including face mask wearing, a limited number of persons onsite at one time, keeping physical separation from others not of your household while onsite, etc.
- 6) Posting information - Staff will post appropriate Covid-19 safety guidelines and provide safety information to all residents, staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- 7) Vaccinations, testing and quarantine - Staff will work with residents to ensure appropriate self-isolation, quarantine, and testing protocols are followed. Case management staff will work with residents to assist with scheduling and transportation to Covid-19 testing and vaccination sites.
- 8) Quality of shelter - A tiny house village is non-congregate shelter that greatly reduces exposure to Covid-19 as each tiny house is an enclosed space in which resident and resident households do not share air or space with other residents or resident households. This village will also reduce potential community spread of Covid-19.

Who do I call if I have a question or concern?

Once the village opens, LIHI will have a staff person on-site 24/7 with phone and email contact. The contact information to the village will be available soon on LIHI's website (www.lihi.org). In the meantime, you can contact Josh Castle, Community Engagement Director with LIHI, at josh.castle@lihi.org or (206) 334-0508, or contact R2H at info@road2home.org .

What happens if there is a problem?

We are committed to being good neighbors. LIHI village staff will be available 24/7 and will respond promptly to questions, concerns, or feedback from both villagers and community members. The staff will perform perimeter checks, organize litter patrols, and respond quickly to the community's inquiries, requests, and concerns.

How can I help?

Community generosity and volunteerism play a significant role in the success of villages, both in the setup of a village and the support of residents through donations of meals and services. There will be multiple volunteer work parties to set up the site, which will include painting, construction, and beautification. If you are interested in volunteering or donating, please email info@road2home.org.

How do I give input?

For questions, concerns, or feedback, contact Josh Castle, LIHI Community Engagement Director, at josh.castle@lihi.org or (206) 334-0508, or R2H at info@road2home.org .

How do I apply to become a member of the Community Advisory Committee or to be informed about the meetings?

Contact Josh Castle, LIHI Community Engagement Director, at josh.castle@lihi.org or (206) 334-0508.