

# Meeting 3 Notes

September 14, 2017

## I. Attendees:

Mayor Kelli Linville	Ann Beck, CDAB Representative, Ward 3
Council Member April Barker	Marissa McGrath, Downtown Bellingham Partnership (alternate for Alice Clark)
Council Member Dan Hammill	Hill Cummings, Advocate & Public Housing Resident
Tara Sundin, Community & Economic Development Division Manager	Tony Casale, Bellingham Housing Authority (alternate for Kate Donnelly)
Samya Lutz, Housing & Services Program Manager	Emily O'Conner, Lydia Place
Kate Bartholomew, Development Specialist	Anne Deacon, Whatcom County Health Department
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation	
Greg Winter, Opportunity Council	

## II. Discussion of gaps, barriers, and strategies to housing for low-income households:

The following list of strategies were provided to the Workgroup during the meeting. A staff presentation reviewed all gaps, barriers, and strategies suggested by the group to date. The group then discussed and added additional Barriers and Strategies to the list below.

### STRATEGIES

1. Work to line up more social impact investors and philanthropists for new projects
2. Utilize innovative new funding models which are already being implemented elsewhere
3. Acquire, preserve, and improve existing affordable apartment blocks in the city
4. Tweak the City's incentives for affordable housing development to be more flexible and attract more developers
5. Create a new staff position with levy funds to leverage resources, including funding and development deals, more strategically and proactively
6. Maximize the City's investment of Bellingham Home Fund, HUD HOME, and CDBG grants to build the capacity of local community housing organizations
7. Hire a specialist consultant to help put together a complex funding mix of tax credits and other financing mechanisms for multi-use projects
8. Leverage low-income tax credits for the acquisition of a larger building by a non-profit
9. Create an insurance/damage mitigation fund to minimize the risks to landlords of renting to a tenant with no rental history, etc.
10. Create a rental rehab program that makes funding available to landlords willing to rent to low-income tenants to make required upgrades in order to pass BHA or Section 8 inspection
11. Provide additional vouchers/long-term subsidy options
12. Initiate a program to help pay off rental debt
13. Provide money for rental application fees for low-income families, or limit the fees that can be charged
14. Public education and engagement: work to better inform the public about the housing system and how it works

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15. Landlord education: bring property owners and management companies to the table to inform about what they can do to help reduce the housing crisis in their community
16. Tenant education: more support through trained Peer Advocates, as well as from case managers or landlord liaisons, with skills training as to how to be a successful tenant
17. Increase programs that enable and empower tenants who receive subsidized housing to eventually transition out and become integrated within the community
18. Provide more funding for case managers and/or landlord liaisons
19. Develop dedicated recovery housing for drug court participants to increase the efficacy of the Drug Court program
20. Agencies need to continue to equip their staff with evidence-based training better serve people with high needs and facilitate transitions along the continuum
21. Create a "big book of services" or directory of all the entities and organizations, what they do, and who is eligible to access them
22. A shared data system that would help us manage high-utilizers of EMS, ED, and BH crisis services, built on the Intensive Case Management (ICM) system at WAHA
23. Agencies at all levels of the continuum need to capture information for our system to better facilitate care transitions
24. Regular check-ins between local funders and service providers to adapt to changing needs and trends
25. Provide a forum where comprehensive solutions can be vetted and funders and service providers can propose how they could best contribute
26. Full transparency between housing providers and support agencies so that tenants are empowered and held accountable
27. Engage, encourage, and enable clients to participate in the decision-making process
28. Encourage funders to move away from outcomes based on serving a high number of people, and find more appropriate outcomes based on indicators of clients' stability

### ADDITIONAL BARRIERS DISCUSSED

- Transportation to and from medical appointments, housing appointments, and groceries.
- Storage of belongings for homeless
- Not enough diversity of housing products available – change regulations
- Cultural barrier: each neighborhood needs diversity of income and housing products
- Gentrification (risk losing inventory as affordability comes to an end)
- Identification is a barrier for those seeking jobs
- Loss of rural multi-family rental housing returning to market rates

### ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES DISCUSSED

- Mobile medical clinic
- Light-touch community health worker/liaisons: a paid program to supplement case management
  - Peer support
  - Housing navigator, “911” for housing/tenants

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- Purchase properties now in gentrifying areas (*this was later combined with #3 from list above*)
- Farmhouse Gang (Council of Governments – 5 county council): city to participate
- GRACE program (*this was later combined with #22 from the list above*)

### III. Prioritization exercise:

After adding additional strategies to the list, the Workgroup participated in a prioritization exercise. Each member was asked to select two urgent/short-term priorities, and two longer-term priorities. Results of this exercise will be shared with the Workgroup prior to the next meeting.

### IV. White board photos

