

EVERETT COMMUNITY STREETS INITIATIVE TASK FORCE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2014

3:00 – 6:00 P.M.

WEYERHAEUSER ROOM, EVERETT STATION, 3201 SMITH AVENUE

MEETING 2

Task Force Members Attending:					
Chris Adams	X	Sylvia Anderson		Jonathan Apuan	
Glen Bachman	X	Sophia Beltran	X	Flora Diaz	X
Bob Dobler		Alan Dorway	X	Megan Dunn	
Cassie Franklin	X	Linda Grant	X	GeorgaDee MacLeod	X
Mark Mantei	X	Mark Nysether	X	Ed Petersen	X
Renee Quistorf	X	Robert Reese	X	Marilyn Rosenberg	X
Matthew Savage	X	Tom Sebastian	X	Craig Skotdal	X
Joyce Stewart	X	Julie Zarn	X		
Task Force Member Alternates Attending:					
John Hull	x	Nora Beggs	x		
Suzanne Duff	x	Teena Ellison	x		
City/County Staff & Support Team Attending:					
Ty Trenary	X	David Hall	X	Lanie McMullin	x
Dan Templeman	X	Ken Stark	X	Karen Reed, Facilitator	x

Welcome and Introductions. Karen Reed welcomed the group. She noted that there will not be public comment at the meeting but those in the audience are encouraged to complete a comment form or provide comments on line. She noted that the Task Force is planning to hold a public hearing at a later date. Karen noted several Task Force member alternates have been identified and several are attending today. The Task Force Members and alternates present introduced themselves.

Review of Agenda and Materials. Karen reviewed the agenda and materials. There were no questions or comments.

Co-Chairs Remarks. Chris Adams asked the Task Force to please read the public comments. They are an important part of the process to review and include in discussion. Chris thanked the staff for their hard work. Chris said that after revisiting the request to add a homeless person to the Task Force, the CO-Chairs and staff have determined not to do so for a couple of reasons; first, the Task Force is about more than homelessness, and second, it would be difficult to expect a single individual to represent the perspective of all homeless individuals. Chris said the co-chairs and staff felt it would be best to have a public meeting where the homeless and others in the community to directly voice their comments and concerns; in addition, the Union Gospel mission has offered to host a focus group of homeless individuals. John Hull reported for Sylvia Anderson that yes, Everett Gospel Mission will host a focus group of homeless, collect their ideas to report back to the group.

Approval of Meeting 1 Meeting Summary. Karen reminded the Task Force that the meeting summaries are not intended to be verbatim, but to note the major issues and questions raised. She asked for a motion to approve the meeting summary.

Cassie Franklin proposed to amend page 2 to read Youth can stay 21 days instead of 20 days. There were no other questions or corrections. As corrected, the meeting summary was unanimously approved. Karen noted that the meeting summary minutes will be posted online.

Re-cap of Meeting 1, Follow up on Information Requests. Karen spoke to the mission of the Task Force, which is to make recommendations to address street level social issues in Everett’s commercial core areas. She noted that we heard about the homeless population in Snohomish County last week, but the Task Force is being asked to focus on less than the entire homeless population. We are focused on how homelessness impacts the commercial core areas in Everett. We are also looking at other street level social issues in downtown, specifically criminal activity. It’s important that we not assume all criminal behavior being conducted in the commercial areas is being committed by homeless people. Some may be crime victims. Other non-homeless actors are involved. We need to keep listening with an open mind. And we need to be able to talk about crime.

Q: Are you saying we should infer all crime is committed by the homeless?

A: No, the opposite: we must not assume all crime is committed by the homeless.

Review and Approval of Task Force Charter. Karen reported the only changes in the charter from the draft reviewed at the last meeting were (1) adding language in section one to address impacts citywide and in neighborhoods, and (2) allow for the appointment of alternates. There were no questions or comments. The Charter was unanimously approved.

Task Force “Homework” on Issues of Concern and Underlying Causes. Karen presented a PowerPoint summarizing the responses from Task Force Members and the staff support team. From her review of the responses, she identified 5 major areas of concern: increasing homeless/mentally ill/addicted/other/ street population; public safety concerns and crime; inadequate services to help the homeless/street population; inadequate shelter/housing for the homeless; larger community issues—knowledge, coordination. There were 6 major areas of underlying causes identified: population challenges (mental health, addiction, no family connections, etc.; lack of affordable housing and shelter; lack of services (mental health, addiction, training, crisis intervention; lack of public understanding; lack of pro-active coordination, communication between the city and providers; and policing resources and jail issues. There were no questions or comments.

Presentation and Discussion: Everett’s Commercial Core Areas: Vision and Challenges. Dave Koenig, Manager, Long Range Planning and Community Development, City of Everett, gave a presentation outlining the City’s Comprehensive Plan vision for the future of the City’s commercial areas. The plan is currently being updated. The City is studying a growth of up to 42,000 more people living in Everett by 2035, and estimates 15,000 additional jobs in the City. He noted the City has little staffing to deal with human service needs—one full time equivalent employee at present. The City enacted a property tax

exemption a few years ago in order to promote the development of housing in the downtown; several hundred housing units have been built or are pending in the downtown core.

Questions for Dave Koenig:

Q: how much is increasing the amount of lower cost housing going to reduce the homeless population?

A: Many private nonprofits are working to get homeless into housing as quickly as possible. The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation when studying the Sound Families Program found that the difference between being homeless or not for many families is \$1,800.00.

Q: Please explain the comprehensive plan timeframe and how the comprehensive plan will relate to the work we are doing here?

A: The plan will be finished June 2015 and will have to be adopted by City Council. The plan will address housing issues. The City has not focused on homelessness in previous Comprehensive plans. The City participated in the development and did adopt Snohomish County's 10 year plan to end homelessness. The 2035 Comprehensive Plan update will create the framework for planning and implementation for the next 20 years and will be reviewed and updated in 8 years

Chief Dan Templeman, Everett Police, spoke to some City crime statistics. He noted first that he does not view crime as a homeless issue. Homeless people are often victims of crimes and there are many others committing crimes. The top 3 crime-related contacts by the police in the central business district are traffic accidents, serving outstanding warrants, and other traffic offenses. He shared recent crime trends and projections for misdemeanors, mental health related offenses, loitering related offenses, and drug and alcohol related offenses.

Questions for Dan Templeman:

Q: What do you mean by mental health issues related calls?

A: When it becomes apparent to Police that they are dealing with a mentally ill person. They may not have to take someone to triage.

Q: Are there other statistics helpful to situation? Everett clinic has their own security they issue 20-25 no trespassing citations a month.

A: There are a lot of different enterprises taking a proactive approach by posting no trespassing signs and issuing citations. It would be helpful for the police to take action if they had a list of businesses and entities who have engaged in that type of cooperation.

Q: Is there more emphasis on bike patrols and is that pushing people to other areas?

A: Displacement does happen. Police move resources where needed and that leads to displacement.

After a break, the Task Force reconvened.

Craig Skotland, Task Force Member and president of the Downtown Everett Association spoke to the challenges in downtown from a business perspective. He noted that Everett has a lot of potential but we haven't achieved it. Why? As a community, we're missing opportunities. For example, a regional insurance firm declined to take space downtown because it didn't feel safe for their employees. In Seattle, they have Amazon and Google. They can afford to miss some opportunities; but in Everett, we have to take advantage of every opportunity. Economic development isn't just about large projects such as the waterfront or riverfront redevelopments, it's also about the daily interactions on the street and the choices people make: where they live, where they shop, where they go for entertainment. For example, some parents are not taking their kids to the library due to behaviors of people outside. This is a missed opportunity. For example, some residents have chosen not to live downtown. That's another missed opportunity. Business owners are struggling even though they are working hard. There is high retail and restaurant turnover. Street issues add to their burdens. To reach our potential, we not only need to do what we can to help break the cycle of homelessness, but we must also to do what we can to break the cycle of what's happening on our streets. He noted one recent success: at Library Place, HomeStreet Bank recently moved in, donated \$5,000 to Cocoon House, and established a program for contributing \$50 to the organization for each new bank account opened. He noted that Everett needs more success stories like that.

Sean Straub, Director of Experience Everett spoke to the issues of promoting tourism in Everett. He noted a personal connection to these issues. There are many exciting things in Everett. The challenge is curb appeal. First impressions matter. The Gateway Project is one example. When the gateways to the City look bad, it is hard to attract new business. We want visitors to have a great first impression of our town so they return. We have free parking and our hotels are less expensive. We need to look at how competing cities like Bellevue and others are attracting business. Our challenges include safety concerns. Small disruptions can have a big impact. Things that could help include creating an alcohol impact area in the downtown core and adding bicycle officers.

Lanie McMullin, Economic Development Director for the City noted that street issues are one of the top three issues she faces trying to recruit business to the City. Homelessness in Everett is probably less severe than in other downtown cores, but what hurts is when we don't have a lot of great retail and restaurants. Retailers are savvy. If they can't count on the foot traffic being here, they won't locate here. We have a low density downtown, and a lower median household income concentrated in the downtown core, including a lot of subsidized housing and some non-subsidized substandard housing.

Presentation & Discussion: Existing Services related to street-level social issues (homelessness, mental illness, addiction, jail re-entry, etc.). Ken Stark, Director, Human Services Dept., Snohomish County. He referenced materials in the meeting packets outlining the range of services and funding provided by the County Human Services Department. He noted that the housing affordability challenge is increasing: that is the biggest unmet need in the County. Adequate health care access, lack of living wage jobs and training for those jobs, and accessible transportation are other major unmet needs. These needs are applicable to any major city.

He noted the Federal Government is shifting towards support for more permanent housing and rapid rehousing, as opposed to shelters. The County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness was adopted in 2006; it set a goal of 2,500 additional units. They've created 1,100 to date. He will provide more data.

In response to the question of whether Everett is a magnet for homeless people, Ken noted that we will always have homeless people in Everett, but we can minimize it. What is not sustainable in his view is spending \$250,000 - \$350,000 per unit on new affordable housing. We need to find cheaper solutions, especially for single adults. He is exploring the feasibility of cargo compartments/shipping containers as housing; they can be outfitted for \$35,000 a unit.

He observed that there is an interesting relationship between density and whether people feel safe downtown. He enjoys visiting downtown Seattle even if he may be less safe there than he is in Everett.

We at this table need to talk together about strategies for addressing street level social issues. Success will require more cross-silo coordination. Our 16-bed detox facility is full all the time; Evergreen Manor is looking to add a second facility in South County. The business community and service providers need to be part of the solutions together with the governments and education systems.

Low income housing in downtown Seattle is hugely expensive and subsidized. We should act now while land is cheap to build the low income housing we need.

The most important things to understand about the challenges are: we are all responsible; finger pointing solves nothing; we can't arrest our way of this—it's a social issue, not a legal issue; we must be willing to think out of the box; we must work together.

Questions and comments:

Comment: Business owners are not considering homeless as customers. Regardless of economic status when someone walks in the door they might be a customer.

Comment: Cocoon house is partnering with law enforcement. The problem is no one is funding collaboration and coordination. We need to find resources to support it.

Comment: All these committees we have to look at these challenges should be sync'd up, and be more short term in nature.

Q: Is there a place in the world that has experienced this and come out on the other side? Who has solved this problem can we copy them and solve this?

A: I don't know of any city or county in the U.S. that is totally fixed the collaboration issue. Some have done well with homeless; some with jail diversion, some with alcohol and drug issues. No city has been successful in bringing together right players and solving all the problems.

Karen: we are reaching out to communities in Washington who claim to be getting a handle on it. We will be bringing them to future meetings.

Q: do you know the amount of affordable housing required in the next 20 years?

A: 22,000 units county wide will be needed by 2035. We can meet that if we are creative.

Q: How many units have been created in last 10 years?

A: Around 1,100.

Karen asked the Task Force Members and Staff to comment on something they heard today that was interesting to them, or raised question for them.

- Collaboration across silos is important
- Vastness of what the County does is amazing
- Interested in looking further at shipping container housing—we need to look at new ideas
- The problem is vast. Our children and grandchildren will be dealing with this.
- Innovation is key. My frustration is that the City's money doesn't go to adult and alcohol treatment—I hope they will open up their funding to support these things.
- Can we get assistance to people sooner? The City could be helping people find what they're eligible to receive.
- What makes people feel safe? The idea of how density relates to the feeling of safety is interesting.
- Different types of housing solutions are interesting
- Think outside the box – shipping container housing intriguing
- Collaboration is key. We can do better
- A lot of money is being spent. How much impact is it having? Given all the emergency room visits and jail cycling, is there a misallocation of resources?
- The problem is vast and complex. I'm encouraged to see commitment of agencies and people here. We can take steps. It is urgent to act.
- Each speaker helps us understand the complexity of the issues. When we talk solutions, we need to consider unintended consequences. Think 10 years out.
- Jail intervention should be examined.
- Encouraged that we're reaching out to other communities. Our median income number is key. Affordable housing not subsidized housing will require a paradigm shift.
- Good to hear business perspective.
- Excited and hopeful that we can find solutions as a group. Good to reach out to other communities for what they have learned.
- First impressions of Everett is a big idea for me.
- Thank you to the business community for being here. Let's continue that collaboration. Look at the National Mayor's Veterans Initiative.
- We as service providers should be good communicators and partners. The housing authority is working to solve homelessness. The four keys are education, prevention, intervention and suppression.
- Education is important. I wish the DARE program was still being funded. Also, we need help to folks getting out of detox.
- Local business support many of our local service providers. I would like to see the problems we're talking about resolved.
- Collaboration, innovation are needed. Population density is an interesting concept relative to safety.
- Collaboration is key. We need to be action-oriented and thinking long-term, considering best practices.

- How can we grow as a city is exciting to consider. We need to build affordable housing to enrich our community.
- The issue is really complex. Change is downtown focus but the issues are countywide. It's difficult to find solutions just for downtown. We need a system. We need to look at models from other parts of the County. We should look at the shelter system in Columbus Ohio, the "Rebuilding Lives" project.
- As you do your research, Task Force members, email your "finds" so we can all benefit from them

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15.