

EVERETT COMMUNITY STREETS INITIATIVE TASK FORCE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2014

3:00 – 6:00 P.M.

WEYERHAEUSER ROOM, EVERETT STATION, 3201 SMITH AVENUE

MEETING 4

Draft Meeting Summary

Task Force Members Attending:					
Chris Adams		Sylvia Anderson	X	Jonathan Apuan	X
Glen Bachman	X	Sophia Beltran	X	Flora Diaz	X
Bob Dobler	X	Alan Dorway	X	Megan Dunn	
Cassie Franklin	X	Linda Grant	X	GeorgaDee MacLeod	X
Mark Mantei		Mark Nysether	X	Ed Petersen	
Renee Quistorf	X	Robert Reese	X	Marilyn Rosenberg	X
Matthew Savage	X	Tom Sebastian		Craig Skotdal	X
Joyce Stewart	X	Julie Zarn	X		
Task Force Member Alternates Attending:					
Karen Matson	X	Teena Ellison	X	Murray Gordon	X
Chris Knapp	X				
City/County/Housing Authority Staff & Support Team Attending:					
Ty Trenary	X	David Hall	X	Lanie McMullin	
Dan Templeman	X	Mary Jane Brell-Vujovic	X	Bob Downey	
Deborah Wright		Ashley Lommers-Johnson	X	Karen Reed, Facilitator	X

Welcome: Karen Reed welcomed the group and noted that this is the fourth Community Streets Initiative meeting; the Task Force has almost reached a halfway point. Karen reminded the public that there are comment forms at the back of room for those who have questions or suggestions. In addition, a public hearing will be held at the Weyerhaeuser Room next Tuesday at 7 p.m. and the hearing will be an opportunity to offer suggestions and make recorded comments.

Introductions: Ashley Lommers-Johnson from Everett Housing Authority introduced himself to the group and noted he has been Executive Director for 21 months and during that time the organization has been undergoing a lot of change. Ashley appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Community Streets Initiative. Murray Gordon introduced himself as Everett Fire Chief of 14 years, with a total of 38 years in Everett Fire. He grew up in Everett and is pleased to participate and contribute to this initiative.

Information Request Responses: Items in progress; none to report today.

Community Tours: Karen encouraged members to sign up for the 4 remaining available tours and noted that September 10 is the new date for the Snohomish County Jail tour. Everett Gospel Mission has two spaces left for the Men’s Shelter tour and Craig and Renee are willing to give another City Tour if there is enough interest. Compass Health had to cancel their tour due to vandalism, but they will be rescheduling towards end of the month.

Overview of agenda: Karen reviewed the agenda, noting it features 2 major panels: the first on temporary/emergency housing and services; the second on permanent housing/supportive services. The panels will review the way things are done currently and offer ideas about gaps and improvements. Working groups will be assembled to consider these ideas in greater depth.

At the last meeting, 2 subcommittees were created: criminal justice solutions/alternatives and a subcommittee on outreach and temporary crisis responses. The subcommittees will meet once or twice between now and Oct. 2nd. The recommendation is that the outreach group be merged with a group on temporary/emergency housing and services. The two subcommittees would report back to the task force with recommendations to consider.

Karen would also like to ask today's permanent housing and supportive services panelists to forward their recommendations for the Task Force for consideration at the October 2 meeting.

Karen reminded the groups that the focus is homelessness and criminal behavior downtown and while there is overlap those two are not synonymous. She also asked the group to be mindful of where there are gaps in data.

Co-chair remarks: Sylvia Anderson stated that the group is gathering information in today's meeting but will be in the recommendation phase at the next meeting. The people who are presenting today are well-versed from a social service perspective in street level social issues. Sylvia noted the criminal justice subcommittee met today and there were great suggestions made. She encouraged the group to participate in a subcommittee as they will get a chance to dig deeper to find solutions.

Draft Summary Minutes: Karen asked the group to review the meeting minutes for any changes. Pastor Dorway asked for a correction on page 7 – the showers are located in the alley behind the first Presbyterian Church. *As corrected, the meeting summary was unanimously approved.*

Sheriff Ty Trenary Presentation on Snohomish County Jail Issues: The traditional method of solving a community problem has been to arrest our way out of it. When the second unit of Snohomish County Jail - dubbed "Oakes Street" -- was opened, the approach did not change. Sheriff Trenary related the story of a young man who was booked into aggravated segregation (AGSEC) – which involves 23 hours of solitary confinement a day -- after his sixteenth criminal trespass. This individual, a homeless young man with a mental illness and an opiate habit, is not going to be a better member of society at the end of his sentence.

Ty spoke about the recent history of the jail: The jail has a maximum bed capacity of 1,227. A few years ago, in 2008-09, in response to a budget crisis, the Jail entered into contracts with cities outside Snohomish County to house their offenders. The goal of these contracts was to make money. It did not work. The contracts have all been cancelled. And budget problems still exist. We cannot solve homelessness – particularly as it is connected to mental health issues and opiate addiction – by criminalizing these behaviors. The Jail has increased fees with its remaining partner cities, and implemented booking restrictions. Because an addict cannot be placed in general population, the jail must have a booking threshold for housing misdemeanants with drug problems: that threshold is 100. This threshold exists so the jail still has room to book violent felons. The jail is overused by misdemeanants.

The federal government has audited the jail twice in recent years; we are complying with their findings in order to avoid a consent decree. The jail should be the fifth or sixth option for addressing mental health issues, but as it is now, the Jail is the County's largest mental health hospital.

What the Jail now needs is a program that diverts the mentally ill/homeless misdemeanants away from jail to a program that helps them reenter society. A Jail Transition Facility is also something we are working on. Programs like Housing Hope that provide long-term supportive housing will keep the jail from continuing to be the largest mental health hospital in Snohomish County.

Panel Presentations: Temporary & Emergency Responses: Emergency housing, day centers and feeding programs.

Nancy Cole, Compass Health: Compass Health serves 18,000 people a year in five counties, including adults and families with children. Recently, Compass applied for motel voucher funding and secured private grants for temporary housing up to two months. Compass Health operates the Peer Center which serves 120 people a day and is located in the Bailey Building on Broadway. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., serves breakfast and lunch, and offers services for men and women in wellness recovery, job preparation, sexual identity and classes in gardening and crafts.

Cassie Franklin, Cocoon House: Cocoon House offers the only 8 emergency shelter beds available for unaccompanied homeless teens ages 12-17, with a limit of 21-day stays or less. At the Cocoon House emergency shelter, teens receive mental health counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, life skills counseling, help re-engaging in school and assistance in figuring out where to go next. There is a major lack of emergency shelter for kids in the 18-24 age range – currently, the Everett Gospel Mission is the only shelter available. Because homeless young adults have been through trauma, they are not ready to be housed with the adult population. Cocoon House also operates the only 13 long-term transitional housing beds for unaccompanied teens in the 12-17 age range in Everett, 7 of which are for foster care youth. Teens living in long-term transitional housing can stay for 21 months or until their 18th birthday. The 18-24 age range is served by the Friends of Youth transitional housing program, but with only 12 long-term housing beds, it is always full. Cocoon House also runs the only day center in Everett for teens ages 12-17; it is open daily from 2 p.m. – 7 p.m. The day centers offers hot meals 3 times a week (with the possibility of a 4th on the weekend), access to showers and laundry facilities, drug and alcohol counseling, health care and other services. The day center sees between 20 and 35 kids a day. Cassie noted that a lot of these kids are not eligible for housing through Cocoon House due to having criminal records. To summarize, there are only 28 beds in Everett for kids under 18. More resources are needed to address the young and growing homeless population.

John Hull, Everett Gospel Mission: The Men's Shelter provides lunch and dinner every day and breakfast to those who stayed the night before. The Mission has a food pantry and clothing is available for shelter residents and members of the public. There are a total of 157 beds, 81 of which are emergency shelter beds available for 90 day stays. After the 90 day stay, residents must spend 90 days out. 57 transitional beds are for the Passport Program, where residents can stay for up to 2 years if they have an action plan. 9 beds are set aside for medical rest. The Mission has a program for residents called Genesis, a 12-18 month program for drug and alcohol recovery. There are many challenges in working with this population: developing trust, coordinated support of outreach solutions especially for single men, and a lack of understanding of poverty, chemical dependency and mental illness. It would be beneficial to have a team of individuals that have expertise in addressing all these challenges. The Women/Men's Recovery and Prevention Services Program (WRAPS) is a successful program that currently assists homeless families with mental health and addiction issues and moves them into permanent housing. Something similar is needed for single men, as many of them know how to live on the streets but don't know how to access services. Right now the Mission currently has two case managers to help provide transitional

clients with access to community resources. About 2 years ago the Mission instituted a “good neighbor policy” that asks shelter residents not to engage in criminal activities within a certain area around the Mission or they will be refused services for a short time. There are also volunteers from the Mission that pick up trash around the facility.

Alan Dorway, First Presbyterian Church: First Presbyterian hosts a feeding program in the basement of the church and partners with various community groups such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). They will hold an open house on October 8. The core identity of many churches, synagogues and other places of worship is to serve the community. They think of their facilities as placed to provide help. First Presbyterian’s Dinner at the Bell feeding program has been in existence for over 12 years and is run by a dedicated group of volunteers, 50 or more weeks a year. One night they served nearly 135 people. On two Wednesdays a month, toiletries are given out. The church works hard to keep their building clean and is concerned with vandalism, litter and public intoxication. To help mitigate those problems they have distributed trash bins and removed decorative walls and shrubs on their grounds. No carry-out of food is allowed. A couple brings in a trailer on Wednesdays to provide showers and clean undergarments for the homeless; this couple has provided this service for last 6 years.

Alan noted that the Church’s volunteers are on the front line of addressing hunger and homelessness. These issues affect the church itself: they are concerned about crime and garbage in the area. If our programs were forced to move from downtown, the problems would get worse. Alan stated he is open to partnerships, although it is hard to step back and take a larger view. His Church is open to solutions for a single designated area with wrap around services, but only if participating churches could pursue their faith missions within such a location. He is not open to the idea of moving significantly out of the downtown.

Matthew Savage, Journey Church: The Journey Church moved to downtown Everett from Mill Creek on purpose, to be part of forging the culture here, to reach people. In addition to Sunday services Journey Church offers a community meal on Saturdays, which serves 70-150 people and is staffed by about 10 volunteers. During that time they also share the gospel, pray and provide clothing. During the cooler months the church provides sleeping bags and hygiene products in partnership with other churches. One Saturday a month, the church provides diapers for parents in the community, and once a year, a community baby shower. Over 90 families participated this year and the church donated thousands of dollars in baby items. Pastor Savage estimates approximately 70% of those who attend the feeding program are homeless; another 20% are elderly or disabled, with the other 10% being families with children. This group needs help connecting to services, access to healthier food, haircuts, laundry facilities and job services.

Pastor Savage stated that he believes his congregation is addressing a symptom of homelessness as well as a cause, because God changes lives. He finds it shocking to be called part of the problem. We are here to help and serve the community and we want to be good neighbors.

Gaps he observes include better connecting clients with social workers on sight. They need job skills and they need mail boxes. They need better quality food, more volunteers. Also, they need more communication with business owners and with the City.

Journey Church has strategized to reduce impacts on local businesses: devotional time occurs before the Saturday meal to keep people from congregating early, attendees are allowed to bring their bikes and belongings inside, and volunteers collect and dispose of trash. Matthew provided a list of meals served throughout Everett and noted that it is only one page, while Seattle’s is 15 pages.

Discussion/Questions:

Q: Concerning the folks who are denied service at the Mission, and for those who can't live by the rules, what do we do with them?

A: For some at the Mission, the communal living environment is not within their capacity. Unfortunately, if we can't help them, we don't know where they go. We long for a better answer and a more compassionate response. Day center is the place they can go now. Many need more intensive services.

A: Cocoon House does not house kids with criminal records but does case manage about 300 kids a year with criminal backgrounds. Cocoon House brings them into their day center and works with them, but the resources are very limited for this group.

Q: How long have First Presbyterian Church and Journey Church been providing meals?

A: 12 Years, and 1 year, respectively.

Comment: Renee had not met Pastor Savage until this task force brought them together. She is happy to hear that both pastors want to have a designated area to work together and pointed out that it has been difficult to conduct business with having to call police. She values the Churches' point of view and wants to work together. She would like more communication between them.

Q: What are wrap around services?

A: Wrap around services in this community refers to the non-housing services that are needed, such as treatment for drug/alcohol services, counseling, etc. Wrap around services for the Mission means trying to address the multiplicity of issues a person is facing in their life and coordinated effort to care for the individual. It often includes outside agencies and individuals going to the person needing help. Housing is a part of the solution, but only part.

Q: In 2006 the City of Everett came up with a plan for how downtown Everett would look 20-30 years from now. Part of that plan designated Colby and Hewitt Avenues as retail streets. The retail streets have restrictions on usage related to service agencies, food banks and churches – Journey Church is unique in that it was grandfathered in. Only recently did Journey start doing a feeding program on a retail street - did you take into consideration the community's plan and vision on zoning before implementing that service? It is a conflict for retail.

A: The Church did not know about this before they moved in, but thinks the impact of the feeding program is overblown. The feeding program meets a community need and serves only one meal a week for one hour on a Saturday evening. This meal has actually been in the community for several years and only moved 3 blocks: it was previously located in the parking lot at California and Rockefeller. The meal originated in 2002 and has been running a long time.

Q: Should the idea of colocation for the feeding programs be pursued, could the churches say more about why serving food in downtown is important?

A: First Presbyterian Church has been located at the corner of Rockefeller and Wall since 1910. Part of its identity is bound to the success and care of downtown; the church hosts AA meetings, NAMI meetings,

ECAP held a training this morning. The church is a resource to downtown Everett. Moving Journey's feeding program could present an access problem for attendees who usually don't have transportation and could cause it to become secularized. Pastor Savage is not "married" to the Colby and Hewitt location but does want the program to stay in the downtown Everett area.

Comment: if we focus just on what we see, we are just putting band-aids on the situation.

Comment: Churches are the most underused buildings – they support the community and should feel supported as well.

Q: What is the percent of adult homeless who were chronically homeless as youth?

A: Statistics on homelessness are very difficult to obtain. 50% of foster kids who are aged out of system become homeless and have also have a 50% chance to becoming incarcerated. The outcomes of kids in Cocoon House's long-term housing programs are 100% aligned with foster kids.

Q: Do we know how many homeless individuals 18-24 are housed at the Mission?

A: Those numbers are not immediately available.

Comment: Mark Nysether has been a neighbor to the Mission for 30 years and has been witness to a lot of crime and emergency response services. Unfortunately what he sees during the day has increased since the City put a new sidewalk in on Smith Avenue. Having said that, Mark realized that the Mission's residents are not the ones you see during the day that are roaming the streets. Those individuals are actually a small minority and possibly not even related to the Gospel Mission at all. Mark also commented that the neighborhood looks better now due to the cleanup taking place by some of the Mission's residents. On the other hand, there are still people that are out of place - last week he observed a man riding a bicycle who was carrying a chainsaw riding around the Mission.

Comment: The man who cleans up around the Mission actually sleeps on Ebey Island and the job gives him a purpose and significance. The individual with the chainsaw highlights the need for further outreach to bring people into the Mission.

Panel Presentations: Permanent Housing & Wrap-Around/Supportive Services

Mary Jane Brell-Vujovic, Snohomish County Human Services Dept.: We have fewer and fewer dollars to address the trifecta of challenges: homelessness, chemical dependency and mental health. The systems we are using are higher cost than they should be, particularly when we use the criminal justice system to address these problems. Wrap around services is an approach that treats people with dignity based on their needs and aspirations. Rapid rehousing helps. "Housing First" means many things, but basically you can't fix people if they don't have housing. People have unique needs. Every person has a different answer based on their needs at that point in time. We have too much fragmentation in our responses. People don't know how to find the services they need. It's difficult to figure things out just by word of mouth if you're on the streets.

On services: Approach should be client-centered. Build on their strengths, based on the individual. This is the challenge. The problems we have are not unique to Everett. But community is small enough that we can connect and talk together. As a group, we need to decide how to combine resources and decide which way to go. We need more dollars and we need the dollars we have to be more flexible in their

use. We need advocacy. We should all be upset about the amount of time money and energy it takes to prove we have correctly spent the money we have. We can't just look to state and federal government to provide the money. Their help is declining and their response is fragmented. We cannot do this without local money. We need to collectively act to help people more forward.

Karen Matson, Hopeworks: The Commerce Building is permanent supportive housing on Hewitt and Rockefeller and consists of 48 units. 29 of them are SRO's. The other 19 units are studios for people with 30-50% average median income. There are 3 commercial spaces in the building. The building was rehabilitated in 1995 and paid for by a complex mix of funding. This building is on the national register of historic places. The Commerce Building is subsidized by the Everett Housing Authority, as well as the City of Everett and, Snohomish County. It is one of few projects like it in state. They have a half-time resource coordinator to help resident's assess how they are doing. The population served indicates what happens to at-risk youth 20-30 years down road. 98% of residents have a life impairing condition. Many are aging with their primary source of income being either SSI or SSDI; they don't make enough money for housing in the community. One of challenges for residents is the facility is being in a part of town with many nearby bars and taverns. There are three commercial spaces in the building, and tenants need to be good neighbors to their commercial neighbors. Very few of the residents have social or family support systems. This means there is a need for services on site to help residents retain their housing. People wait 2-4 years for and SRO unit. People typically stay for 5 years or more. They love living there. They are happy to share a kitchen and bathroom. People want a place to go that is safe, warm and dry with neighbors for support. The majority of residents are positive and contributing citizens of our community.

Ashley Lommers –Johnson, Everett Housing Authority (EHA): EHA has federal and local resources to help distribute 2,539 housing vouchers locally. 200 of these vouchers are specific to non-elderly persons with disabilities.

EHA has 1,065 units in the City in 5 public housing developments in city and 44 houses scattered through the city. There a growing number of households with mental health conditions. EHA's programs focus on self-sufficiency. They partner with YWCA, Housing Hope, Sunrise Services, Mercy, Catholic Community Services, Compass Health and Washington Housing of your own.

They will be rehabilitating 315 units over the next 1 ½ years to the tune of 20 million dollars. EHA wants to preserve what they have and grow resources to assure long term viability of properties. EHA wants to create mixed income projects to become less dependent on federal subsidies. They will need to define their role of meeting 20 year projections of affordable housing needs in the City, which are estimated to be over 7,000 units. This is a tall order and we won't be able to rely on federal and state resources. Everett Housing Authority will have to pursue other ways to fund this.

Lisa Hunt, Catholic Community Services (CCS): All housing through CCS is supportive housing. They offer short term mid-range and permanent supported housing; they have 135 units. All programs are modeled on "Housing First" -- they take clients and house them no matter what issues they have. They have found that this approach decreases use of drugs and alcohol. It starts trust so they can move forward. Nothing is required of them to access the housing. CCSA has a harm reduction model. They can't do this without close relationships with landlords. All their housing is through private landlords. CCS advocates for both landlord and client. They will work to relocate client if they don't follow rules.

They help clients solve their own issues. Their chronically homeless population has a 96% housing stability rate using the Housing First model.

The longer a person is on the street the more traumas they go through. The chronically homeless are on the street an average of 7 years. It sometimes takes a year of outreach to get someone in the program. They help a lot of homeless realize how much of their budget they spend on drugs and alcohol. Many have to learn how to acclimate to indoor living and are not used to having neighbors. They serve 1,300 people a year with 16 case managers, 5 navigators, 3 outreach managers. They do ride-alongs to encampments for outreach. The biggest challenges: Money and Detox beds.

Nancy Cole, Compass Health: Compass Health is the largest provider of mental health services in Snohomish County. Compass Health turned away 700 people last year. They have 500 people on their waiting list with a 2-3 year wait. Jails are a cruel system for the mentally ill and needs to be changed.

Compass Health offers triage, 24 hours service programs, a large facility for the very ill with wrap around service and 14 permanent housing units. Compass Health gets lots of support from the Everett Housing Authority.

Gaps: not enough housing for money. Container housing or mini-units should be pursued. We should have a housing levy; advocate for an increase in the state housing trust fund; reach out to churches to help create more housing units. She also supports moving to a coordinated entry system to address the waiting list for housing.

Discussion/Questions:

Q: what is the wait list for CCS?

There is a wait list of 300. Resources are limited.

Q: What effort is Everett Housing Authority putting into preservation of housing, is re-development and loss of affordable units an issue here?

A: We are aware of housing that may be lost and we are pursuing acquiring those units in Everett and Snohomish County. We will be acquiring up to 200 affordable housing units.

Q: What is the cost of jail services for the mentally ill? Is housing cheaper than jail?

A: Mary Jane will share an article about Los Angeles "Project 50" where the City identified 50 people and did a cost analysis of jailing them and found it was much less expensive than jail. It's time to think about a total system approach. Jails and hospitals do not have the resources to send people back who are delivered by emergency vehicles.

Comment: Ambulances aren't paid unless they go to a hospital. This creates a break in system.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05.