

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**  
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

<b>AGENDA TITLE:</b>	Discussion of Recommendations Related to Council Goal 5, Action Step 9—Engage in an Analysis with Service Providers to Identify What Services and Processes Exist to Connect those Experiencing Homelessness and/or Opioid Addiction with Supportive Services and Identify Gaps that May Exist
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Community Services
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	Colleen Kelly, Community Services Manager
<b>ACTION:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing

**PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:**

The City Council is committed to ensuring that Shoreline is “a safe place to live, work, and play” for every Shoreline resident, including those experiencing homelessness and/or opioid addiction. To this end, the City Council has expressed a commitment to explore ways to lend its own energy and resources to addressing these challenges. In 2018, the Council adopted Council Goal 5, Action Step 9 in their 2018-2020 City Council Goals and Work Plan. This Action Step directed staff to: *Engage in an analysis with service providers to identify what services and processes exist to connect those experiencing homelessness and/or opioid addiction with supportive services and identify gaps that may exist.*

Last February, staff presented a report summarizing the challenges, gaps and opportunities related to these topics. Following that discussion, Council requested that staff take the next step and return with specific recommendations regarding the highest priorities and greatest opportunities to enhance services for those in our community experiencing homelessness and/or opioid addiction. Tonight’s discussion will provide staff’s recommendations.

**RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

This is a discussion item only and has no direct financial impact.

**RECOMMENDATION**

No action is required at this time. Staff recommends that Council consider the recommended priorities in this report and provide staff feedback on these priorities and proposed next steps.

Approved By:            City Manager **DT**    City Attorney **MK**

## **BACKGROUND**

In February 2019, staff presented a lengthy report summarizing current conditions and current City investments related to homelessness and opioid addiction. The report included data describing the scale of these issues in Shoreline and the region, a summary of the funding Shoreline provides to help address these issues, some discussion of the regional response and finally a high-level gap analysis. That staff report, including attachments, is available at the following link:  
<http://cosweb.ci.shoreline.wa.us/uploads/attachments/cck/council/staffreports/2019/staffreport022519-8b.pdf>.

Tonight's discussion will refer directly to the gap analysis presented last year. It includes nine areas for potential action which will be reviewed and discussed later in this report. However, it is important to first summarize some critical updates to the overall homelessness response landscape since this time last year.

### **Creation of a Regional Homelessness Authority and Pending Regional Action Plan**

Though discussions about consolidated governance related to homelessness were underway one year ago, there were a variety of proposals presented, discussed and revised before final approval. On December 18, 2019, King County Executive Constantine and Seattle Mayor Durkan signed legislation to create a new Regional Homelessness Authority for King County that will be overseen by a Governing Committee of mostly elected officials and guided by an Implementation Board of subject matter experts. The work of the Authority is meant to be broadly guided by a pending Regional Action Plan and specifically guided by a not-yet-developed strategic plan. This makes it challenging to know whether and how Shoreline's priorities related to addressing homelessness may or may not be in alignment with the goals and strategies of the new Authority. Staff is continuing to monitor the development of the new Authority, along with the development of the Regional Action Plan and strategic plan.

### **Shoreline Severe Weather Shelter**

At this time last year, Shoreline and the region were grappling with a very significant and long-lasting snow event. There was strong consensus afterward that Shoreline needed to be able to ensure access to overnight shelter during severe weather events. To that end, the City partnered with the North Urban Human Services Alliance (NUHSA) to develop the Shoreline Severe Weather Shelter which became operational in December 2019. As of this writing, the shelter has been activated for five nights this winter with the number of guests per night ranging from four to ten.

### **Potential for New State dollars Related to Homelessness Services**

Governor Inslee has proposed spending more than \$300 million from Washington's emergency budget reserve over the next three years to add 2,100 shelter beds and provide other help to combat homelessness across the state. It is too soon to know what will actually be adopted through the State budget process, but there could be significant opportunity to leverage state resources not previously available.

### **Substitute House Bill (SHB) 1406 - Local Sales Tax**

Late last year, the Shoreline City Council voted to take advantage of a local sales tax authority the state made available to cities. The taxes are to be dedicated to the acquisition or construction of affordable housing or to rental assistance for households at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. Shoreline expects to capture approximately \$86,000 per year, and staff are exploring options for allocating those funds. This is discussed further in response to the gap analysis later in this report.

### **Department of Commerce Grant to Develop a Shoreline Housing Action Plan**

In late 2019, the state also made funds available for jurisdictions interested in developing Housing Action Plans. This was seen as a valuable opportunity to access resources for needed analysis and strategy development, and staff submitted an application. Staff learned in December that Shoreline's proposal was selected for funding, and staff are currently in the process of interviewing consultants to work with the City to develop an action plan.

### **Collaboration Opportunities Related to Affordable Housing**

Locally, the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force completed its work in 2019. One of the recommendations in the final report encouraged local jurisdictions to explore opportunities for collaboration and leverage related to affordable housing. To that end, County Councilmember Dembowski made funds available to support this exploration in North King County and the Snoqualmie Valley. Shoreline is currently joining with other North King County cities, the Housing Development Consortium (HDC), NUHSA, and A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) to propose an approach for assessing potential collaboration opportunities related to affordable housing in North King County.

## **DISCUSSION**

With the developments summarized above as additional background, here again is the list of key gap areas identified by staff last year (text taken directly from last year's staff report):

### **Gaps in Shoreline Services Related to Homelessness and/or Opioid Addiction**

Overall, the needs within Shoreline mirror the needs within the larger region. However, several gaps applicable (but not unique) to Shoreline were readily identified through the discussions with providers:

1. ***Permanent Housing.*** As both the local and regional information shows, the greatest gap is the availability of housing. A solution to that problem is, at a minimum, regional in nature and far beyond the City of Shoreline's own available resources. Still, that has not stopped the City from taking steps in this direction, particularly with its decision to add density around Shoreline's two future light rail stations and contribution of property for the development of affordable housing at 198<sup>th</sup> and Aurora.

2. **Homelessness Prevention Funds.** Hopelink reports that the funding for homelessness prevention is fully allocated by the end of first week of any given month. They estimate that they have a minimum of 10 and as many as 50 clients per month they cannot serve. These clients are put on a wait list for the month and are queued up for assistance in the future. They are also referred to St. Vincent, Shoreline Community Care, the Salvation Army, or the North Helpline. Increasingly, Hopelink is seeing people who are on fixed incomes, like Social Security, who are stuck in a situation and always running short of funds.
3. **Emergency Shelter Beds.** This remains an ongoing need as well. Some providers have advocated for increased use of vacant properties, particularly those awaiting development, as temporary shelter sites.
4. **A Daytime Gathering Place for Homeless Individuals.** With no place to go or to be during the days, persons living homeless are mobile, within a limited range. While these individuals tend not to go very far afield, they are also difficult to find on a consistent basis, making it harder to provide assistance. Additionally, these individuals often need basic hygiene services, and in the absence of alternatives, public spaces are one of the few safe places for homeless individuals to go. A day services facility in Shoreline could provide a safe environment and basic services and also increase the chances for successful engagement and connection to the larger system of services.
5. **Transportation.** For homeless individuals in particular, many of the needed services are beyond walking distance, and Metro bus passes are a limited resource. In addition, available nighttime shelter, available through the Operation Nightwatch system, is located far and wide around King County, and is difficult for a homeless individual in Shoreline to get to.
6. **Opioid Treatment Services.** There is a gap that relates to the availability of affordable drug treatment services for those who might be considered the “working poor”, with too much income to qualify for Medicaid/Apple Care. In a related vein, access to Narcan (Naloxone), an anti-overdose medicine, along with training to use it, needs to be broadened.
7. **Opioid Use Prevention and Education.** There is a lack of information and education about ways to avoid and/or reduce substance use to replace efforts in the 1980’s through the early 2000’s that focused on substance use abstinence, which were found to have minimal impact.
8. **Partnership Building Through Community Engagement.** There is a belief that the more that the larger community understands the dynamics of homelessness (and can dispel misconceptions), the more able they are to come together to share information and generate new partners and resources. Agencies’ shared positive experiences can bring together business, philanthropy, government, non-profit providers and the community to foster these discussions and to generate commitment to address these issues.

9. ***Youth Shelter and Services In or Close to Shoreline.*** Youth under 18 do have housing resources available to them, though they are not in Shoreline. Programs such as Safe Place, operated by Friends of Youth and Youth Care, will meet a youth who is facing homelessness in the community and provide transportation to housing located on the Eastside, north in Snohomish County, Seattle, and South King County. There are no resources in Shoreline that address the specific needs of youth. Additionally, individuals between 18 and 24 are dubbed Youth/Young Adults. While these individuals are adults in a legal sense of the word, their housing needs are not well met by the same system that provides overnight and temporary shelter for adults. Through All Home and a new effort dubbed “A Way Home Washington”, regional resources are being aligned to make a push to address youth/young adults’ specific needs. This work is just now getting off the ground and specific action steps are still in development.

### **Priority Recommendations**

Since being hired last May, the Community Services Manager has been meeting with service providers and community groups to learn more about these issues and their impact in Shoreline. The recommendations included in this report reflect those meetings and general learning over the last several months as well as many years of related experience in other communities.

### ***Most Critical Need and Highest Priority: Year-Round Shelter/Navigation Center (Gap #3, 4, 5 and 8)***

In keeping with the gap analysis above, staff believes that the greatest need and highest priority for Shoreline is to support the siting and development of a year-round shelter for single adults in North King County. Ideally, the shelter would serve as a North County Navigation Center which means it would be staffed around the clock, which is identified as a current best practice. This allows individuals to have a place to leave and access personal belongings as well as accommodating those who may need to sleep during the day due to work or health conditions.

A Navigation Center would also serve as a day center and should be staffed with case managers/housing specialists to develop individualized housing stability plans for those accessing the services. Such programs are typically eligible to apply for very low-cost bus tickets through Metro’s targeted human services allocation program, providing some support related to transportation challenges. In addition, many year-round shelters have the ability to add capacity during severe weather, potentially eliminating the need for a separate severe weather shelter depending on the location and access to transportation.

Please also note this statement from the McKinsey & Company released analysis of King County’s affordable housing gap and the gap’s role as the primary driver of our region’s homelessness crisis:

*“Building alone will not fix the problem. Creating more affordable housing will take time, even if fully funded now. Immediate priorities must include taking action to relieve the stress on society; this could include increasing shelter capacity, mental-health services, and other related programs. The greater Seattle region must start to build a coalition that can drive long-term change and ensure that all homelessness-related programs are efficient and effective. There are clear roles for the public sector, service providers, citizens, and the business community.”*

**Rationale:** While the City provides funding support to the Lake City Partners rotating winter shelter, there are currently no shelter beds for single adults in North King County during the months of April through October. This is tremendously challenging for individuals striving to regain some stability. While it would be ideal to have Housing First options available to everyone in need, that is simply not realistic at this time.

The single greatest challenge to creating shelter beds is finding or developing a permanent site. Should a site be located, it makes sense to maximize the payoff of having accomplished that by leveraging that location to serve as a day center and to provide at least some additional capacity for severe weather sheltering. As envisioned, this recommendation addresses items number 3, 4, 5 and 8 from the list above.

**Challenges/Opportunities:** As noted, siting a shelter/navigation center is always the greatest challenge. Therefore, staff recommends a strong focus on outreach to and collaboration with other North King County municipalities and homelessness service providers. This collaboration should occur at both the staff and elected official levels. All of these potential partners need to work together as a sub-region to identify potential locations, commit to funding operations and to advocate with both the county and the state for needed capital and additional operational funds.

As noted above, there is a newly created Regional Homelessness Authority in King County. The chartering documents address the need for and make a commitment to support sub-regional planning related to homelessness. The ability to speak with a single North King County voice regarding the need for a year-round shelter/navigation center as a top priority would provide a compelling and persuasive argument during future funding deliberations.

***Greatest Enhancement Opportunity: Comprehensive Outreach Approach***

Shoreline currently provides funding to support a part-time Homeless Outreach Specialist through a contract with Lake City Partners. The Outreach Specialist has become a valuable resource for the City’s Customer Response Team (CRT) and Police Department when they learn about people sleeping in tents or in their cars. While this has been a welcome addition, it is a fairly limited response.

Last fall staff invited the Homeless Outreach Specialist from the City of Redmond to come to a meeting to share the approach to outreach that has been developed in Redmond. Attendees included Shoreline Police command staff, staff from CRT, and our partners from Lake City Partners. The Redmond Outreach Specialist talked about his strong partnership with the Police Department and with local service providers. He discussed the City's desire to lead with offering services, while also supporting enforcement if necessary. Following the meeting, Shoreline Police Chief Ledford indicated that a similar approach in Shoreline would be most welcome.

A recent article in the Seattle Times highlighted the Outreach Specialist's work in Redmond:

<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/a-light-in-the-darkness-of-the-homelessness-crisis/>. In addition, the Council of State Governments Justice Center recently released a report highlighting the value of this approach:

[https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Law-Enforcement-and-Homelessness-Service-Partnership-2019.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Law-Enforcement-and-Homelessness-Service-Partnership-2019.pdf). Staff believes that developing this approach in Shoreline would be the greatest enhancement to existing services.

**Rationale:** The most critical element of success for Redmond's program is that their Outreach Specialist was hired on as a city employee. This allowed for his role to be fully integrated and for the City to direct and adapt his work as needed. The security of government employment attracted a very well qualified candidate who has remained in the position long enough to establish critical relationships and to allow for important program development over time. The City of Bellevue has since hired an in-house outreach specialist, and the City of Kirkland is considering doing so too.

**Challenges/Opportunities:** The City is currently contributing \$15,000 per year in support of our current Outreach Program in partnership with Lake City Partners. Hiring an in-house position would cost significantly more. This is another area where regional collaboration might be valuable. It is possible that a full time Outreach Specialist could be shared by more than one jurisdiction which would in turn suggest that costs would be shared as well. Depending on what happens with the Regional Homelessness Authority sub-regional planning work, perhaps there could be county funding available for this purpose at some point in the future.

### **Additional Comments on Some Gap Analysis Items**

Though the issues below were not identified as the highest priorities, each is still important. This section identifies work that is or could be occurring to help address each of the other identified gap areas. Staff wanted Council to be aware of some activities and where noted, staff recommends that Council also consider proposed actions.

***Permanent Housing (Gap #1)***

While overall housing supply is important, when it comes to addressing homelessness specifically, the critical emphasis needs to be ensuring access to housing affordable at all income levels, and especially to households at or below 30% of Area Median Income. Staff expects the pending Housing Action Plan to provide significant analysis of needs and gaps related to all housing types in Shoreline, and we expect the collaboration project with HDC to provide further clarity regarding potential opportunities for greater collaboration and leverage.

***Homelessness Prevention Funds (Gap #2)***

Based on the Council's discussion when the SHB 1406 sales tax was approved, staff has begun working with Hopelink to explore the possibility of utilizing the City's current SHB 1406 funding to provide additional support for homelessness prevention activities through rental assistance. Should that prove workable, staff recommends allocating Shoreline's 2020 1406 dollars to the Hopelink Financial Assistance Program to provide additional rental assistance dollars for Shoreline households. The City currently provides \$25,000 per year for this purpose, so adding \$86,000 would represent a substantial increase in support for rental assistance.

***Opioid Addiction (Gap #6 and 7)***

Public Health of Seattle-King County is the lead agency for issues related to opioid use. In 2017, the Heroin and Opiate Addiction Task Force issued eight recommendations focused on prevention, increasing access to treatment on demand, and reducing the number of fatal overdoses. For the last two years, King County has been moving forward on all eight recommendations.

One key advancement since this time last year occurred in August, 2019 when Kathy Lofy, the state's health officer, signed a "standing order" for Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan. The order is statewide and allows any person or organization to obtain the medication from a pharmacy without a prescription. The standing order does not make the medication free to all, but it does greatly increase access.

Here in Shoreline, Chief Ledford confirms that his officers have ready access to Naloxone and are using it on a regular basis. He gave out three awards in one month to officers who saved lives by administering Naloxone. The Chief shared that the police continue to make arrests for opioid use, and that access to treatment remains the greatest need. Another key effort in Shoreline is the Medication Assisted Treatment Program offered by Therapeutic Health Services. This program also aligns directly with one of the key recommendations of the Heroin and Opiate Addiction Task Force.

Staff recommends that Shoreline lend its advocacy support at the state level for resources needed to ensure improved access to treatment and services. There are currently two bills being proposed that could make a significant difference. House Bill (HB) 2642 strives to remove health coverage barriers to accessing substance use disorder treatment services and HB 2734 would create pathways to recovery from addiction by closing a tax loophole related to warehousing of opioids and other drugs.



Washington State has been near the bottom in rankings of state investments in substance abuse disorder treatment and support. This is beginning to be addressed, and the City should lend its support to legislation that would bring additional resources to bear. Public Health is also the appropriate entity to develop needed educational materials and campaigns, and they need to work with the schools to develop effective methods for sharing the information with students and families. Shoreline can easily support these efforts by sharing developed messaging through our various communications channels.

***Partnership Building Through Community Engagement (Gap #8)***

This is an area of tremendous opportunity overall. Beyond general community education and engagement, though, is proactive sub-regional collaboration and partnership. Given the complex challenges and tremendous resources required to address needs related to housing, homelessness and opioid addiction, there could be great value in developing a stronger, more unified voice as the sub-region of North King County. The North Urban Human Services Alliance (NUHSA) provides a strong starting point, but there is much room for this work to deepen and grow. Direct involvement by elected officials could serve to advance these efforts.

***Youth Shelter and Services in or Close to Shoreline (Gap #9)***

According to staff at King County Department of Community and Human Services, there are two key planning documents pending in the next two months that will provide additional analysis regarding youth homelessness. The first is a Housing Gap Analysis that is expected to be released within the next month, and the second is the Regional Action Plan which is now being targeted for release in March. These documents should provide useful information as we consider whether and how to prioritize services focused on youth and young adults.

**COUNCIL GOAL(S) ADDRESSED**

This staff report specifically addresses Council Goal 5, Action Step 9—Engage in an Analysis with Service Providers to Identify What Services and Processes Exist to Connect those Experiencing Homelessness and/or Opioid Addiction with Supportive Services and Identify Gaps that May Exist.

**RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPACT**

This is a discussion item only and has no direct financial impact.

**SUMMARY**

It is the opinion of staff that the greatest resource gap in Shoreline related to being able to work effectively with individuals experiencing homelessness is the lack of year-round shelter. Staff recommends that the City prioritize working in partnership with others to develop or identify a site for shelter in North King County and to prioritize funding support for the development and operations to include 24-hour staffing with case management services.

Further, staff believes that there is tremendous opportunity in providing a more comprehensive, robust approach to outreach that leverages partnerships with Police, Fire, Community Court and service providers. Ideally, this would start with an in-house homelessness outreach specialist.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

No action is required at this time. Staff recommends that Council consider the recommended priorities in this report and provide staff feedback on these priorities and proposed next steps.