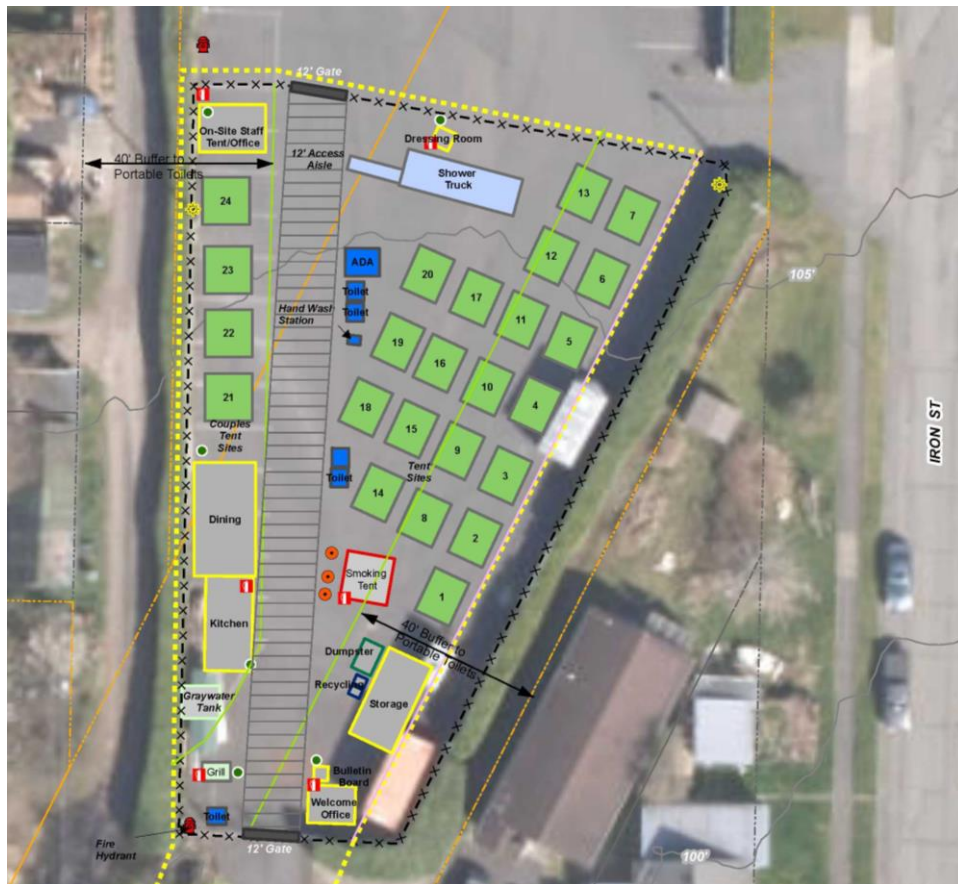


# PROPOSAL FOR SAFE HAVEN

*A Temporary Safe Camping Community*



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# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1. Purpose

This is a proposal for Safe Haven, a temporary safe camping site for the homeless community in Bellingham and Whatcom County. This proposal provides background information about HomesNOW, the purpose of this project, a detailed project description, and operations plan, and addresses the requirements of the Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 20.15.020. HomesNOW will be the managing agency for this project. The City of Bellingham will be the sponsor.

**Safe Haven will be a drug and alcohol-free community.** Safe Haven is intended to provide a safe and stable place for homeless individuals to live while they actively seek permanent housing. Safe Haven residents will likely consist of people who are either working or disabled and who have a source of income. Safe Haven residents will also be selected based on their ability to succeed in a community living setting.

## 1.2. Mission Statement and Background

HomesNOW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization made entirely of volunteers working together to offer affordable housing options for the homeless in Bellingham and Whatcom County. HomesNOW supports the Housing First model to house homeless people immediately. The goal is for each person to have a sense of home and community.

Starting in January 2019, HomesNOW began managing Winter Haven, Bellingham's first temporary tent encampment located behind City Hall. Winter Haven will last for 90-days, ending on April 2, 2019. Winter Haven consists of 19 tents with an average of about 23 residents. As of the date of this submittal, HomesNOW has found housing for 1 resident and helped place 1 resident in a detox facility. HomesNOW has also worked with the Opportunity Council to place a family with children into more appropriate housing. Thus far, Winter Haven has been successful at helping people find stability and connecting them to needed services.

In February 2019, during extreme winter weather conditions, HomesNOW coordinated with a local church to manage an emergency shelter providing for up to 40 people.

HomesNOW previously worked with Lummi Nation to build two tiny homes in June and July 2017. Since that time, the two tiny homes have temporarily housed 8 people transitioning to permanent housing. On average, occupancy is 2 to 3 months before moving into permanent housing.

In 2017, HomesNOW assisted 25 people into housing by eliminating barriers. HomesNOW provided: telephone access, avenues for reconnecting family members, assistance with rental applications for those having difficulty reading and/or writing, direction for people entering detox programs, and the stability of an organized permitted camp site at City Hall for 18 days.

### **1.3. Statement of Intent**

HomesNOW intends to build and manage the Safe Haven tent encampment in accordance with Ordinance No. 2018-10-019, Bellingham Municipal Code, permit requirements, Washington State laws and regulations, and Whatcom County Health Department regulations. The project duration will be for 90 days (from approximately April 2019 through July 2019) with a possible 30-day extension.

### **1.4. Project Incentive**

As of 2018, there are over 800 homeless people in Whatcom County. Approximately half of the homeless people in Whatcom County are unsheltered on a given night. Many homeless people are forced to illegally camp on public or private property or sleep in their cars.

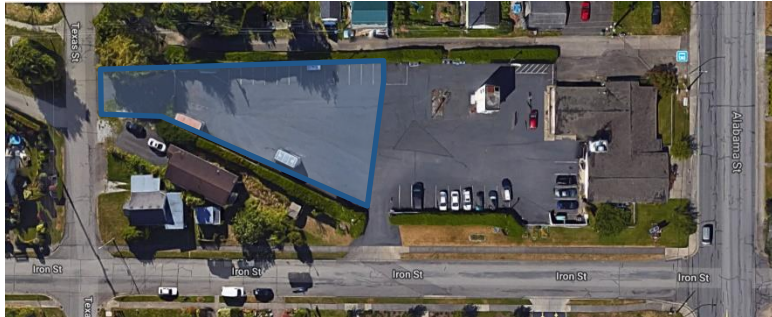
Because many homeless people have to camp illegally, they are often forced to move, resulting in instability and loss of personal belongings. Homeless people also lack access to basic human necessities, including bathrooms, showers, drinking water, cooking facilities, garbage services, etc. Many homeless people are forced to carry all of their belongings with them at all times, which often prevents them from being able to seek employment.

The proposed project provides a safe legal place for our homeless neighbors to live. Safe Haven will give access to basic human necessities, such as bathroom and kitchen facilities, garbage/recycling service, as well as a sense of safety and community. Safe Haven will also serve as a central location for service providers to meet with residents to determine their individual needs.

## 2. PROPOSED PROJECT

### 2.1. Site Location

Safe Haven will be located in the What-Comm Law Enforcement Dispatch Center parking lot located at 620 Alabama Street, Bellingham, WA 98225. The property is owned by the City of Bellingham. The property consists of a parking lot that is currently used to store two trailers that will be relocated for this project. The site is accessible from gate entrances on Iron Street and Texas Street.



The site is surrounded by single-family residential properties to the north, multi-family residential properties to the west and south, and both multi-family residential and commercial properties to the east. The site is located in the Sunnyland neighborhood and has convenient access to nearby amenities.

### 2.2. Project Description

**Safe Haven will consist of 24 tent sites.** The tents will be either single or double occupancy. Assuming 4 to 8 of the tents will be double occupancy, there will be an expected maximum of 28 to 32 people living in tents. Safe Haven will provide residents with a secure, stable location to live and store their belongings.

The designated camping area will be approximately 14,100 square feet (0.32-acres) and will occupy the southern half of the parking lot. The site will be surrounded by a 6-foot tall chain link fence consisting of the existing fence and a temporary fence along the northern boundary.

A community kitchen and dining tent will be located on-site and will be used by the residents for food storage, food preparation, and dining, as well as a place to gather and socialize. Other facilities will include an on-site staff tent/office, a welcome office tent, a storage container for storing donated supplies, dumpsters and recycling bins, portable toilets, and a hand washing station.



Site Layout

### 2.3. Project Funding

HomesNOW is 100% funded by donations and operated by volunteers. HomesNOW has community partners who have agreed to donate some of the needed items, labor, and/or services.

*HomesNOW is not requesting any taxpayer funds from the City of Bellingham.* HomesNOW would sign a license agreement for temporary use of the City's property including access to potable water and electricity. This project will potentially relieve pressure from existing City services and reduce the amount the City spends to address homelessness.

### 2.4. Project Duration

The duration of the project will be for 90 days with a potential for a 30-day extension (in accordance with the ordinance) from approximately April 2019 to July or August 2019.

### 2.5. Transportation Plan

#### 2.5.1. Site Access

The site consists of a parking lot that is accessible from gate entrances on Iron Street and Texas Street. A 6-foot high chain link fence will surround the perimeter of the site.

A 12-foot wide gate is located on the southern end of the site and a 10-foot wide gate will be located on the northern boundary of the site. All vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic will enter and exit the site using the existing gate on the south end of the site. The northern gate will only be used by emergency vehicles (police, fire department, or ambulance), emergency pedestrian exit, LJ Portables to service the portable toilets, and the shower truck. The gates will remain unlocked at all times.

#### 2.5.2. Vehicular Trips

We anticipate that the shower truck will travel off-site and on-site once per week. LJ Portables will bring a vacuum truck to the site to empty portable toilets approximately once per week. SSC will bring a garbage truck to empty the dumpster/recycling once per week. An estimated 3-5

volunteers will visit the site each day (either by car, public transit, or walking). We anticipate up to 1 service provider (such as a case manager, social worker, etc.) will go to the site each day. We anticipate that the police will make once visit per day to check in on the project. A total of approximately 6 to 8 vehicle trips will be made per day, with 1 out of 8 being trucks (12.5%).

### *2.5.3. Public Transit*

The eastbound and westbound bus stops (serviced by bus line 331) are located on Alabama Street approximately 700 feet and 1,000 feet from the site entrance, respectively. The 331 runs from Downtown Station to Cordata Station passing through Barkley Village and Sunset Square. The 331 bus line runs every 15 minutes Monday through Saturday, and every half hour on Sunday.

- For the eastbound bus stop, the 331 bus runs from 6:45 am to 10:15 pm on weekdays, 8:00 am to 10:15 pm on Saturday, and 8:15 am to 7:45 pm on Sunday.
- For the westbound bus stop, the 331 bus runs from 6:30 am to 10:00 pm on weekdays, 8:30 am to 10:00 pm on Saturday, and 9:00 am to 8:00 pm on Sunday.

Free bus passes will be made available to residents. Street maps and bus schedules will be kept onsite for use by residents. Each resident is allowed to keep one bicycle on the site.

The southern portion of the lot near the gate entrance may be used for parking by HomesNOW on-site staff.

### *2.5.4. Nearby Amenities*

The site has convenient access to nearby amenities.

- Located within walking distance to many businesses and potential employers on James Street.
- Located across the street from the Social Security Administration office.
- Walking distance to the nearest grocery store (Trader Joe's), a 9-minute bus ride to the Haggen on Woburn Street, or a 16-minute bus ride to the Safeway at Sunset Square.
- 16-minute bus ride and short walk to the Goodwill.
- 11-minute walk to Grocery Outlet.
- 11-minute bus ride to the Bellingham Food Bank.
- 12-minute bus ride to the Downtown Station and a variety of social services.









The site is located in the following school districts. The schools are accessible by public transportation or are in walking distance:

- Sunnyland Elementary School (19-minute bus ride or walk)
- Whatcom Middle School (11-minute bus ride/walk)
- Bellingham High School (8-minute bus ride)



## 2.6. Community Partners

HomesNOW is partnering with a number of businesses, government agencies, and non-profits who are providing services or donations for Safe Haven.

Community Partner	Description
 <p>Dept. of Social and Health Services (DSHS)</p>	<p>DSHS has agreed to bring their mobile community services office to Safe Haven once per month to assist residents with determining eligibility for cash and food assistance programs, child care benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid.</p>
<p>Sikh Community</p>	<p>The Sikh Community has agreed to provide a free meal once per week at Safe Haven.</p>
 <p>WeSNiP</p>	<p>WeSNiP has agreed to provide services to spay or neuter pets at Safe Haven.</p>
 <p>Greene's Corner</p>	<p>Greene's Corner is providing financial donations.</p>
 <p>Tidal Vision</p>	<p>Tidal Vision is donating water tanks and providing financial donations.</p>
 <p>The G.R. Plume Company</p>	<p>G.R. Plume donated two 8-foot picnic tables for the kitchen/dining area and is providing financial donations.</p>
 <p>KZAX Radio</p>	<p>KZAX Radio is providing fundraising services.</p>
 <p>Parberry</p>	<p>Parberry is donating a storage container.</p>
 <p>Ideal Rent-All</p>	<p>Ideal Rent-All donated 6 fire extinguishers.</p>

## 2.7. Insurance

General commercial liability insurance with a limit of \$1 million will be provided by Farmers Insurance.

### 3. IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD

#### 3.1. Neighborhood Outreach

HomesNOW will identify nearby residents, businesses, and any other affected neighbors. HomesNOW will hold a neighborhood meeting to solicit input from the nearby residents. The City will be notified of the meeting date and time. All questions and concerns will be addressed during the meeting. HomesNOW will provide contact information to all nearby residents, so they can continue to discuss any ongoing concerns and provide feedback.

The City will also publish a notice of application for the project once the application is submitted, which will be followed by a 14-day comment period.

Once the site begins operations, neighbors will be invited to take a tour of the site and meet the Safe Haven residents. The goal is to make the residents of Safe Haven feel welcome as part of the community and to reduce any remaining uncertainties or doubts that the neighbors may have.

#### 3.2. Safety & Security of Neighborhood

**The site will be surrounded by a 6-foot tall chain link fence for the security of the residents.** The fence will have a 12-foot wide gate for site access and a 10-foot wide gate for emergency vehicle access. A welcome office will be located near the front gate and will be staffed 24-hours per day, 7 days per week by either a site resident or HomesNOW volunteer.

**The site will be monitored by 24/7 video surveillance.** 720P HD security cameras will be placed around the perimeter of the property to monitor all activity occurring on and surrounding the perimeter of the site.

- Camera use on the site is necessary to protect rights of all residents as well as neighbors in the area from any potential problems or unlawful activity.
- Site location will be monitored remotely by HomesNOW through an application on the phone and/or PC to ensure stability of the site.
- Security cameras will **not** be installed inside tents or bathrooms; this measure is to preserve the privacy and rights of the site residents.

The Bellingham Police Department will be provided with a complete list of residents, including full name and date of birth.

#### 3.3. Minimizing Adverse Impacts

The location of Safe Haven has been chosen with consideration of minimizing any adverse impacts to the site and the surrounding area. Safe Haven will only exist temporarily during from April until July or August 2019. The site is located in a multi-family residential area. Impacts to the neighbors will be minimized by establishing quiet hours on the site. Shrubs on neighboring

properties partially obscure the neighbors' views of the site. Safe Haven residents will also do a weekly litter pickup in the nearby vicinity. The site is at least 1,700-feet from the nearest school.

Signs will be posted around the perimeter of the site to limit any camping or loitering outside of the site. Any person camping on the property adjacent to Safe Haven will be asked to vacate by HomesNOW. HomesNOW will attempt to connect the individual with social services. If the person refuses to leave, HomesNOW will contact the Bellingham Police Department.

The proposed use involves tents and temporary structures that will be easily removed at the end of the project. The proposed use will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity of the site. The property will be restored to its original condition at the end of the project.

## 4. OPERATIONS PLAN

This Operations Plan addresses site management, site maintenance, and provision of human and social services.

### 4.1. Site Management

#### 4.1.1. Site Setup

Upon issuance of the permit, HomesNOW will immediately begin to setup the site. HomesNOW will post signs at the site provided by the City regarding the project per BMC 21.10.200.E to notify the public of the upcoming construction activities. HomesNOW will begin by installing the perimeter fence and security cameras. The temporary structures and tents will be brought to the site. A commercial service will be contacted to provide the portable toilets, hand wash stations, and dumpster and recycling bins.

HomesNOW has a pool of 160 volunteers to fill necessary roles. Currently, there are about 15 people approved who are on the wait list for residency at Safe Haven. There are also about 40 people who have applied, but who have not yet had background checks completed.

#### 4.1.2. HomesNOW Volunteers

At a minimum, for the first two weeks of occupancy, a HomesNOW Board member (Jim Peterson or Doug Gustafson) will be living on-site to serve as the initial site manager. During that time, a Resident Assistant and deputy Resident Assistant will be elected and trained in all duties and responsibilities.

After the first two weeks of occupancy, the City will determine whether a HomesNOW representative must remain on site at all times. It is likely that the City will require that a HomesNOW representative remain on site at all times beyond the initial two weeks. In the event that this requirement is waived, a HomesNOW representative will check in at the site at least once per day.

In addition to the on-site HomesNOW representative, Resident Assistants will assist with managing Safe Haven.

The Police Department has provided HomesNOW volunteers with de-escalation training. HomesNOW will provide all volunteers with a site orientation and copy of the Handbook.

The HomesNOW Board will meet at least once every week to discuss any feedback from the Resident Assistant, troubleshoot any problems, and identify any necessary changes to site operations. During these meetings, the Board will determine the site schedule.

There will be at least one Board member or HomesNOW representative available on-call 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to answer questions and solve problems should they arise.

#### *4.1.3. Identifying Eligible Residents*

Initial residents will be chosen by HomesNOW based on direct knowledge of individuals who are suitable for community living. HomesNOW is coordinating with the Opportunity Council and the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) to get recommendations on suitable applicants.

**Safe Haven will be a drug and alcohol-free community.** Residents are not allowed to possess or consume alcohol or illegal drugs on the site. Furthermore, residents are not allowed to be present on site while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, prescription medications including cannabis with the presence of medical marijuana card is permitted. All smoking must be done in the smoking tent.

Safe Haven is intended for homeless individuals who are actively working to improve their situation and need a safe temporary place to live while seeking permanent housing. Safe Haven residents will likely consist of people who are either working or disabled and who have a source of income. Safe Haven residents will also be selected based on their ability to succeed in a community living setting. Individuals with a known history of violence or unsafe behavior are not eligible.

If residents move out or find other accommodations, future residents will be chosen from our wait list. A copy of the resident application form is included in the Handbook.

#### *4.1.4. Application Process*

Individuals who would like to apply to be a resident of Safe Haven must apply on the HomesNOW website (<https://homesnow.org/are-you-homeless/>). If the individual does not have access to the internet, they can obtain a paper copy of the application from our office or at our monthly events.

Once an application is submitted, HomesNOW will interview the prospective resident off-site (at our office or at the library). No prospective residents will be brought to the site. Government issued valid photo ID is required and is scanned and kept on file. If no ID is available at the time of the interview, when the applicant becomes a resident, they will be signed-up for an ID.

If the applicant is approved, HomesNOW will submit the applicant's name and date of birth to the Bellingham Police Department to run an active warrant check and sex offender status check. If the applicant passes those checks, they will be accepted into Safe Haven if a tent space is available or put on a wait list until a tent space becomes available.

#### *4.1.5. New Resident Orientation*

All new residents receive a New Resident Orientation by HomesNOW. Orientation includes a detailed review of the policies and code of conduct of Safe Haven. New residents complete all

required paperwork and intake procedures, which will be managed by HomesNOW. Detailed information about the new resident intake procedures and required paperwork is provided in the Handbook.

#### *4.1.6. Resident Assistant*

One resident of Safe Haven will be elected by popular vote biweekly to be the Resident Assistant (RA). A second resident will be elected by popular vote biweekly to be the deputy RA and will take on the duties of the RA when the RA is not present on the site or if the RA is no longer a site resident. The RA and deputy RA are expected to work out a schedule so that one of them is available on-site at all times. If neither the RA or deputy RA can be present on the site, the RA will notify HomesNOW so that a volunteer can be on-site during the gap. Only individuals who intend to be on-site for a majority of the day will be eligible to be an RA or deputy RA.

The RA will be a liaison between the residents and HomesNOW. The RA will assist in managing the community and work to develop a sense of pride amongst the residents in their community.

The RA will answer resident's questions, listen and record resident's suggestions, and advise HomesNOW of site activity. The RA will notify HomesNOW of any incidents within 24 hours. The RA is available as a contact person for residents to report any general or immediate concerns.

Residents will be responsible for notifying the RA of any inventory needs, such as food, clothing, hygiene products, and gear. The RA will notify HomesNOW of any inventory needs.

#### *4.1.7. Welcome Office, Security, and Donation Positions*

Residents of Safe Haven will be required to do regular shifts as the welcome desk lead, security lead, and/or donations lead. The length of shifts will vary depending on the current number of residents as well as the number of shifts done by volunteers. The security lead positions will be staffed 24-hours per day. The donation lead position will be staffed during hours when donations are dropped off (between 9:00 am to 6:00 pm).

A schedule will be determined for the week during the weekly meetings. If a resident cannot cover their scheduled shift due to emergency, illness, or if they move out of Safe Haven, the resident should notify the RA who will notify HomesNOW. HomesNOW will identify a volunteer or other resident to cover the shift. The welcome desk, security lead, and donation lead will each have a walkie talkie for communication and will be required to wear a safety vest identifying those individuals as on duty.

#### **Welcome Office Position**

Residents will be provided with training on how to manage the welcome desk and the daily sign-in sheet. The welcome desk lead is required to stay at the welcome office at all times. If the

welcome office lead needs to leave for any reason (including bathroom break), they must communicate with the security lead to take their place.

Every person who enters or leaves the site will be checked in or out on the sign-in sheet. This includes residents, volunteers, case managers, service providers, visitors, and any other person who enters or leaves the site. If there is an emergency, emergency personnel (police, fire, EMT, etc.) are not required to sign-in before entering the site.

### **Security Lead Position**

The security lead is a resident who oversees the security system. The security lead reviews cameras and notifies the RA of any safety or security concerns. The security lead assists the RA in recordkeeping of any incident reports. The security lead communicates with the welcome office lead to handle any issues that occur at the welcome office. The security lead is required to walk through the site at least once per hour. The security lead will also walk through the kitchen to ensure all residents are keeping the shared kitchen space clean.

### **Donation Lead Position**

The donation lead is a resident who is responsible for the receipt of donations such as food, clothing, hygiene products, and gear. When donations are brought to the site, the donation lead will record the donation on the Donation Receipt Form. The donation lead also maintains an inventory of supplies and notifies the RA when additional supplies are needed.

### **Other Lead Positions**

Residents will also be elected biweekly to oversee the kitchen, grounds/garbage, and shower truck.

#### *4.1.8. General Resident Meetings*

**The RA will host a weekly meeting.** *All residents are required to attend the weekly meeting.* The date and time will be posted on the community bulletin giving residents ample time to work the meeting into their personal schedule. General meetings occur to review site expectations, discuss experiences, disclose any needs, provide suggestions, and conduct voting sessions for RA positions.

RAs will meet HomesNOW following the weekly meeting to discuss any proposed changes to policies or guidelines. The HomesNOW Board of Directors will finalize any changes to policies or guidelines to be implemented or revised. Any changes will be posted publicly at the site and discussed at subsequent General Resident Meetings.

#### *4.1.9. Communication*

Residents are encouraged to communicate with the RAs during weekly meetings. Residents may also contact HomesNOW directly if an issue is not being addressed by the RA and/or if there is a need to communicate to HomesNOW anonymously. Any comments or concerns communicated to HomesNOW are addressed anonymously and made available as a topic for

discussion at the next General Resident Meeting, unless the resident requests otherwise. This provision is available to residents who may find that communication or disclosure of their needs is too difficult to reveal publicly within the group.

HomesNOW's goal is to ensure that all residents feel safe and have a way to communicate their needs. Residents can contact HomesNOW by email at [admin@homesnow.org](mailto:admin@homesnow.org) or by mail:

HomesNOW  
432 W. Bakerview Rd. Suite 201  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Residents can also contact HomesNOW by phone at any time.

#### *4.1.10. Exit Plan*

HomesNOW will continually work with service providers to help residents find permanent housing as well as job training or assistance (if needed). HomesNOW will also work to identify any programs that residents are eligible for as a first step toward financial stability (such as cash and food assistance programs, child care benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid, rental assistance, and utility subsidies).

Residents will be made aware of the temporary nature of the tent encampment and will be reminded again one month before the permit expires. During the last month, every effort will be made to find alternative living arrangements for the residents. If no alternative arrangements can be made, the resident will be required to vacate the premises at least 48-hours before the permit expires so that site restoration activities can be completed. No new residents will be admitted during the last 3 weeks of operations.

#### *4.1.11. Emergency Plan*

In the event of severe weather or other emergency event, HomesNOW will provide alternative shelter for the Safe Haven residents (if deemed necessary by the Board). Alternative shelter may include motel rooms or other existing shelters. HomesNOW will provide the residents with transportation from Safe Haven to the alternative shelter.

### **4.2. Site Maintenance**

Residents are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their own tent site, common areas, and surrounding areas.

#### *4.2.1. Solid Waste Disposal*

Dumpsters and recycling bins will be located near the entrance to the site and will be serviced by SSC Inc. Trash cans will be provided throughout the site. Trash bags will be provided to residents. Each resident will be responsible for collecting their own trash and recycling and placing it into the appropriate bins.



Community trash cans are located throughout the site, including in the community kitchen tent and the welcome office. Cigarette butt disposal bins will be located in the designated smoking area. Community trash bins will be maintained by residents on a daily rotation schedule that will be posted on-site. Those residents will also be responsible for a daily trash patrol in the immediate vicinity of the site. *Residents with relevant physical disabilities will be accommodated or excused from this duty.*

#### *4.2.2. Food Preparation and Kitchen Maintenance*

The site will include a community tent for the kitchen/food preparation area and dining area. The kitchen will include food preparation counters and dishwashing basins. The kitchen will include refrigerators, freezers, and a microwave. A barbeque grill will be located outside in a designated space near the food preparation area.

Residents will prepare their own food and will be responsible for properly storing and disposing of their food, and maintaining a clean kitchen and dining area. Many residents will likely be recipients of food stamps and will purchase their own food.



HomesNOW may coordinate with the Bellingham Food Bank to provide any additional food needed by the residents. The Sikh community may provide a meal once per week to site residents.

If other volunteers or businesses would like to provide food donations, all public health regulations on food handling and storage will be followed. Any volunteer that prepares food will be required to have a WA State Food Workers card.

Dishwashing gray water will be collected in an on-site tank. Gray water will be sent off-site for disposal at a nearby RV dump station.

#### *4.2.3. Sanitary Portable Toilet Maintenance*

The site will have seven portable toilets (including 1 ADA accessible toilet) provided by LJ Portables and will be available on-site at all times. The wastewater from the portable toilets and handwash stations will be sent off-site for disposal by the same commercial provider.

#### *4.2.4. Potable Water Maintenance*

Potable drinking water will be provided by the City's potable water supply and will be available on-site at all times.

Potable water for the handwashing station will be provided by LJ Portables. and will be available on-site at all times.

#### *4.2.5. Portable Shower Maintenance*

The mobile shower truck built by HomesNOW will provide residents with access to showers and will be on-site in a designated location. The shower truck will be located within the fenced in area and will only be available to Safe Haven residents while it remains on-site. Potable water for the 300-gallon potable water tank on the mobile shower truck will be provided by the City water supply. HomesNOW will ensure the water tank is full each day.

Shower gray water will be collected in the tanks mounted on the shower truck. When the tanks are full, the water supply will be turned off at the shut off valve in the utility closet. The gray water will be properly disposed of at a commercial RV dump site.

#### *4.2.6. Repairs and Maintenance*

Repairs and maintenance to tents, structures, and appliances will be handled by HomesNOW. Residents must notify either RAs or HomesNOW of any needed repairs or maintenance promptly. If an emergency repair is required, residents must contact HomesNOW as soon as possible.

### **4.3. Social & Health Services**

Safe Haven will serve as a central location for service providers to meet with residents to determine their individual needs. HomesNOW will coordinate with other service providers and providers of shelters for homeless persons within the County and will inquire about the availability of existing resources with these providers.

It is recommended that any chronic health and/or mental health conditions be assessed as a prerequisite for residency. Case worker(s) will identify which support services are needed (if any) based on a preliminary evaluation. Examples of support services may include:

- Eligibility for residency
- Job training accessibility
- Mental health assessment
- Counselling for drug/alcohol recovery
- DSHS follow-ups and reviews

If an individual currently has a case manager, they will notify HomesNOW and will continue to work with that case manager. If an individual does not have a case manager, HomesNOW will work with the Opportunity Council and/or HOT team to identify an appropriate case manager or any other required services. Volunteer case managers may help conduct the initial screenings of residents. Volunteer case managers must have a degree in social work or related field and relevant experience and will be screened by HomesNOW.

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) may provide additional services to the residents of Safe Haven. DSHS may host mobile community services at Safe

Haven once per month. DSHS may assist residents with determining eligibility for cash and food assistance programs, child care benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid. Applications for aid are available at the on-site office.

Any mild health conditions that progress negatively must be addressed immediately. Residency at the site is subject to re-evaluation. Sobriety and moderate mental health are mandatory for communal living at Safe Haven to provide the best atmosphere for all residents.

## 5. MUNICIPAL CODE REQUIREMENTS

The following sections address the requirements established in the Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) Chapter 20.15.020.

### 5.1. Section A: Site Vicinity

The site is located a minimum of 20 feet from the property line of abutting properties.

### 5.2. Section B: Critical Areas

The site is not located within a wetland area or its buffer as defined by BMC 16.55. No known threatened or endangered species are present on the site. No aquifer recharge areas are located on or near the site. The site is not located within the 100-year flood plain.

### 5.3. Section C: Maximum Number of Residents

The maximum number of residents at the site will be 35 people (15 single occupancy tents and 10 double occupancy tents). However, the expected maximum will be 30 residents (20 single occupancy tents and 5 double occupancy tents). This number is below the maximum allowed of 100 people.

### 5.4. Section D: Maximum Number of People Housed in Temporary Shelters

The additional 30 to 35 people sheltered at the site will not result in more than 300 people housed at one time in temporary shelters Citywide.

### 5.5. Section E: Fence

An existing 6-foot tall chain link fence with barbed wire surrounds the parcel to the west, south, and east. A section of 6-foot tall chain link temporary fence will be placed along the northern boundary of the project site. The fence will limit access to the site for the safety and security of residents. A temporary fence will be placed in an interior portion of the lot, so it will not be site obstructing and will not create any obstructions at the street.

Technically, the project boundary is located 10-feet inside of the existing fence line on the east side of the site. HomesNOW requests that the Director waive the requirement for fence “installed on the perimeter” along the eastern boundary since there is an existing fence 10 feet outside of the project boundary that will serve that purpose.

### 5.6. Section F: Lighting

Existing exterior lighting is present on the northwest and northeast corners of the site. Additional LED lights will be installed near the kitchen and bathrooms. Any exterior lighting will be directed downward and glare will be contained within the site.

### 5.7. Section G: Health & Safety

HomesNOW will assure all applicable public health regulations are met.

- 1) Fire extinguishers (2A-10BC) will be placed within 75 feet from any point on the site. A total of 6 fire extinguishers will be on the site, including 1 in the kitchen, 1 near the welcome office, 1 near the designated smoking area, and one near the grill.
- 2) A designated smoking area will be located on the east side of the parking lot. Cigarette butt disposal bins will be located in the designated smoking area and near the dumpsters.

- 3) The kitchen tent will be made of flame-retardant materials. Any tents over 300 square feet and canopies over 400 square feet will also be made of flame-retardant materials.
- 4) Open flames will be prohibited at the site. Cooking will be done at a grill provided for resident use. Patio heaters will be provided at designated locations throughout the site for warmth.
- 5) A first aid kit large enough to serve up to 40 people will be located at the welcome office on site.
- 6) The central aisle of the parking lot will be obstruction-free to allow for emergency access at all times.
- 7) Power protection devices will be used at any location where power is provided.
- 8) Nine trash bins will be located throughout the site, including near the kitchen and bathrooms. Regular trash patrols will be conducted on site and in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 9) Dumpsters and recycling bins will be located near the site entrance. Dumpsters and recycling bins will be regularly serviced by SSC Inc. Residents will be responsible for regular removal of trash from community trash bins.
- 10) Portable toilets will be set back at least 40 feet from all property lines. Toilets will be maintained by LJ Portables. *A description of sewage disposal is provided in Section 4.2.3 of this document.*
- 11) A handwashing station will be located by the toilets. The kitchen will have a sink with running water.
- 12) Potable water will be available at all times on the site and will be provided by the City's water source. *A description of potable water supply is provided in Section 4.2.4 of this document.*
- 13) Copies of health and safety information provided by the City, County, or any other public agency will be posted at the site and distributed to site residents.
- 14) The site will be in compliance with all Whatcom County Health Department food donation requirements.
- 15) Cooking facilities will consist of an outdoor grill. A sink with running potable water will be located nearby in the kitchen. A food preparation counter that is non-absorbent and easy to clean will be located inside the kitchen tent. A refrigerator and freezer to keep perishable food cold will be located inside the kitchen tent. Cleaning supplies will be provided to maintain clean conditions in the kitchen tent. *A description of food preparation methods is provided in Section 4.2.2 of this document.*

### **5.8. Section H: Tiny Home Indoor Safety (Not Applicable)**

This section is not applicable.

### **5.9. Section I: Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

HomesNOW will ensure compliance with Washington State laws and regulations, the Bellingham Municipal Code, and the Whatcom County Health Department's regulations concerning, but not limited to, drinking water connections, solid waste disposal, and human waste. HomesNOW will permit inspections by local agencies and/or departments to ensure such compliance and will implement all directives within the specified time period.

### **5.10. Section J: Displacement of Existing Parking**

No on-site parking will be displaced as part of this project. The parking lot is not currently used for parking.

### **5.11. Section K: Transportation Plan**

A transportation plan, including provisions for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle ingress and egress from the site to services and schools, is included in Section 2.5 of this document.

### **5.12. Section L: Hours of Operation**

Safe Haven will be open to residents 24 hours per day.

### **5.13. Section M: Site Boundary**

All functions associated with Safe Haven will take place on the proposed site (see site plan).

### **5.14. Section N: On-Site Supervision**

A HomesNOW board member or volunteer (who is not a Safe Haven resident) will provide on-site supervision at all times. Any volunteer providing supervision will receive de-escalation training.

### **5.15. Section O: Code of Conduct**

A copy of the Safe Haven Handbook is provided in Appendix A. The Handbook includes a written code of conduct that provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the Safe Haven residents. The code of conduct also mitigates impacts to neighbors and the wider community. Among other requirements, the code of conduct includes a prohibition on illegal drug and alcohol use and threatening and unsafe behavior. HomesNOW will ensure that items deemed as weapons are stored in a safe location. Firearms are not allowed onsite for any reason. The Handbook will be posted on-site and enforced by HomesNOW and the residents.

### **5.16. Section P: Operations Plan**

The Operations Plan addresses site management, site maintenance, and provision of human and social services and is included in Section 4 of this document.

### **5.17. Section Q: Qualifications**

HomesNOW has a demonstrated experience providing similar services to the homeless.

Starting in January 2019, HomesNOW began managing Winter Haven, Bellingham's first temporary tent encampment located behind City Hall (scheduled to end on April 3, 2019). Winter Haven consists of 19 tents with an average of about 23 residents. As of the date of this submittal, HomesNOW has found housing for 1 resident and helped place 1 resident in a detox facility. HomesNOW has also worked with the Opportunity Council to place a family with children into more appropriate housing. Thus far, Winter Haven has been successful at helping people find stability and connecting them to needed services.

In February 2019, during extreme winter weather conditions, HomesNOW coordinated with a local church to manage an emergency shelter providing for up to 40 people.

HomesNOW previously worked with Lummi Nation to build two tiny homes in June and July 2017. Since that time, the two tiny homes have temporarily housed 8 people transitioning to permanent housing. On average, occupancy is 2 to 3 months before moving into permanent housing.

In 2017, HomesNOW assisted 25 people into housing by eliminating barriers. HomesNOW provided: telephone access, avenues for reconnecting family members, assistance with rental applications for those having difficulty reading and/or writing, direction for people entering detox programs, and the stability of an organized permitted camp site at City Hall for 18 days.

For the past year and a half, HomesNOW has held monthly events to provide necessities to the homeless population, including clothing, gear, hygiene products, and access to showers.

A summary of relevant experience and resumes is provided in Appendix B.

### **5.18. Section R: Children**

No children under the age of 18 are allowed to stay overnight at the site, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. If a child under the age of 18 without a parent or guardian present attempts to

stay at the site, HomesNOW will immediately contact Child Protective Services and will actively seek alternative shelter for the child.

#### **5.19. Section S: 24-Hour Contact Person**

HomesNOW will designate points of contact and provide contact information (24-hour accessible phone contact) to the Patrol Operations Commander for the Bellingham Police Department. At least one designated point of contact will be on duty at all times. The names of the on-duty points of contact will be posted on-site daily, and their contact information will be provided to the Bellingham Police Department.

#### **5.20. Section T: Identification**

HomesNOW will take all reasonable and legal steps to obtain verifiable identification information, including full name and date of birth, from current and prospective site residents.

Examples of verifiable identification include a State issued driver's license or ID card (valid or less than 1 year expired), U.S. passport, or a combination of other identification, such as a birth certificate, marriage license, Medicare card, Social Security card, veteran ID, or similar documentation. If a prospective resident does not have verifiable ID, HomesNOW will assist them in obtaining ID prior to move-in. HomesNOW may coordinate with LAW Advocates to navigate this process.

#### **5.21. Section U: Sex Offender Checks**

People who are required to register as a sex offender are prohibited from the site. If HomesNOW becomes aware of a current or prospective resident who is an unregistered sex offender, the Bellingham Police Department will be contacted immediately. HomesNOW will provide notice to prospective guests that HomesNOW will report any current or prospective residents required to register as a sex offender to the Bellingham Police Department.

#### **5.22. Section V: Active Felony Warrants**

If HomesNOW becomes aware of a current or prospective resident who has an active felony warrant, the Bellingham Police Department will be contacted in accordance with a set protocol to address those warrants. HomesNOW will provide notice to prospective residents that HomesNOW will report any current or prospective residents known to have an active felony warrant to the Bellingham Police Department.

#### **5.23. Section W: Rejection/Ejection from the Site**

HomesNOW will immediately contact the Bellingham Police Department if someone is rejected or ejected from the site when the reason for rejection or ejection is an active warrant or a match on an unregistered sex offender check, or if, in the opinion of the on-duty point of contact or on-duty security staff, the rejected/ejected person is a potential threat to the community.

#### **5.24. Section X: Log of Names/Dates**

HomesNOW will keep a log of names and dates of all people who stay overnight at the site and this current log will be made available upon demand by any municipal or county law enforcement officer. Status checks of current guests may be routinely performed by the warrant officers of the Bellingham Police Department through the current log provided by HomesNOW. HomesNOW will provide notice to prospective guests that all people staying overnight at the site are subject to status checks by the warrant officers of the Bellingham Police Department.

### **5.25. Section Y: Coordination with Other Service Providers**

HomesNOW and site residents will cooperate with the coordinated entry system managed by the Homeless Service Center and other providers of shelters and services for the homeless, and will make inquiry with these providers regarding the availability of services, unless HomesNOW can provide these services.

### **5.26. Section Z: Site Photos**

Before-encampment photos of the host site are included in Appendix C.

### **5.27. Section AA: Site Restoration**

Upon vacation of the site, all temporary structures and debris will be removed from the site and the site will be restored, as near as possible, to its original condition within one calendar week. Vegetation is not likely to be impacted by the project. However, where deemed necessary by the Planning Director, HomesNOW will re-plant areas in which vegetation had been removed or destroyed.

### **5.28. Section BB: Liability Insurance**

HomesNOW has and will maintain in full force and effect, at its own expense, liability insurance naming the City as an additional insured in the amount of \$1 million.

### **5.29. Section CC: Liability Agreement**

HomesNOW will, on a form approved by the city, agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Bellingham, its officials, officers, employees, and agents as described in BMC 20.15.020 Section CC.

## **6. ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following sections address additional requirements listed in the Temporary Shelter Application Packet that were not otherwise addressed in this proposal.

### **6.1. Meeting the Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan**

The proposed use is consistent with the goals and policies of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the project will support the following goals and policies:

- Goal H-4: Support housing options for special needs populations.
- Policy H-49: Support implementation of the Whatcom County Plan to End Homelessness.
- Policy H-50: Continue to encourage and support the development of emergency transitional and permanent supportive housing with appropriate on-site services for people with special needs and the homeless throughout the City and county. Moving people into permanent housing as quickly as possible should be a priority.
- Policy H-51: Maintain an inventory and expand the city's supply of interim housing for target populations.
- Policy H-52: Foster and support partnerships that have proven to be successful in reducing homelessness, preventing homelessness, and assisting the chronically homeless with needed care.

This project will provide a temporary, safe location for homeless individuals to live. Site residents will have access to on-site services, which will include basic necessities (bathrooms, hand wash stations, kitchen, shower, potable water, etc.). The site will provide a stable location for case



managers to meet with the residents. DSHS will also provide services once per month at the site. This project will support the City's policy of expanding interim housing for the homeless.

HomesNOW will be partnering with many organizations (including the City, police, DSHS, HOT team, Opportunity Council, Sikh Community, etc.) to successfully carry out this project, which will ultimately move homeless people into permanent housing.

**Appendix A**  
**Handbook & Code of Conduct**

**Appendix B**  
**Summary of Qualifications and Resumes**

**Appendix C**  
**Site Photographs**