

**PROPOSAL**  
**FOR**  
**UNITY VILLAGE**  
*A Temporary Tiny Home Community*



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1.	Purpose .....	1
1.2.	Mission Statement and Background.....	1
1.3.	Statement of Intent .....	2
1.4.	Project Incentive .....	2
<b>2.</b>	<b>PROPOSED PROJECT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1.	Site Location.....	3
2.2.	Project Description.....	3
2.3.	Project Funding.....	4
2.4.	Project Duration .....	4
2.5.	Transportation Plan .....	4
2.5.1.	Site Access.....	4
2.5.2.	Vehicular Trips.....	5
2.5.3.	Public Transit.....	5
2.5.4.	Nearby Amenities .....	5
2.6.	Community Partners .....	6
2.7.	Insurance .....	6
<b>3.</b>	<b>IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1.	Neighborhood Outreach.....	7
3.2.	Safety & Security of Neighborhood.....	7
3.3.	Minimizing Adverse Impacts .....	8
<b>4.</b>	<b>OPERATIONS PLAN</b> .....	<b>9</b>
4.1.	Site Management.....	9
4.1.1.	Site Setup .....	9
4.1.2.	HomesNOW Volunteers.....	9
4.1.3.	Identifying Eligible Residents.....	9
4.1.4.	Application Process .....	10
4.1.5.	New Resident Orientation .....	10
4.1.6.	Resident Assistant.....	10
4.1.7.	Welcome Office, Security, and Donation Positions .....	11
4.1.8.	General Resident Meetings.....	12
4.1.9.	Communication.....	12
4.1.10.	Exit Plan .....	13
4.1.11.	Emergency Plan.....	13
4.1.12.	Bill and Utility Costs.....	14
4.1.13.	Keys .....	14
4.2.	Site Maintenance .....	15
4.2.1.	Solid Waste Disposal.....	15
4.2.2.	Food Preparation and Kitchen Maintenance .....	15
4.2.3.	Sanitary Portable Toilet Maintenance .....	15
4.2.4.	Potable Water Maintenance .....	16
4.2.5.	Portable Shower Maintenance .....	16
4.2.6.	Repairs and Maintenance .....	16
4.3.	Social & Health Services .....	16
<b>5.</b>	<b>MUNICIPAL CODE REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	<b>18</b>

5.1.	Section A: Site Vicinity.....	18
5.2.	Section B: Critical Areas.....	18
5.3.	Section C: Maximum Number of Residents.....	18
5.4.	Section D: Maximum Number of People Housed in Temporary Shelters.....	18
5.5.	Section E: Fence.....	18
5.6.	Section F: Lighting.....	18
5.7.	Section G: Health & Safety.....	18
5.8.	Section H: Tiny Home Indoor Safety.....	19
5.9.	Section I: Compliance with Laws and Regulations.....	20
5.10.	Section J: Displacement of Existing Parking.....	20
5.11.	Section K: Transportation Plan.....	20
5.12.	Section L: Hours of Operation.....	20
5.13.	Section M: Site Boundary.....	20
5.14.	Section N: On-Site Supervision.....	20
5.15.	Section O: Code of Conduct.....	20
5.16.	Section P: Operations Plan.....	20
5.17.	Section Q: Qualifications.....	20
5.18.	Section R: Children.....	21
5.19.	Section S: 24-Hour Contact Person.....	21
5.20.	Section T: Identification.....	21
5.21.	Section U: Sex Offender Checks.....	21
5.22.	Section V: Active Felony Warrants.....	22
5.23.	Section W: Rejection/Ejection from the Site.....	22
5.24.	Section X: Log of Names/Dates.....	22
5.25.	Section Y: Coordination with Other Service Providers.....	22
5.26.	Section Z: Site Photos.....	22
5.27.	Section AA: Site Restoration.....	22
5.28.	Section BB: Liability Insurance.....	22
5.29.	Section CC: Liability Agreement.....	22
6.	<b>ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1.	Meeting the Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.....	23

## APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Handbook & Code of Conduct
- Appendix B: Summary of Qualifications and Resumes
- Appendix C: Site Photographs

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1. Purpose

This is a proposal for Unity Village, a temporary tiny home community for the homeless 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.

**Unity Village will be a drug and alcohol-free community.** Unity Village is intended to provide a safe and stable place for homeless individuals to live while they actively seek permanent housing. Unity Village residents will likely consist of people who are either working or disabled and who have a source of income. Unity Village 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.

In January 2019, HomesNOW began managing Winter Haven, Bellingham's first temporary tent encampment located behind City Hall. Winter Haven lasted for 90-days, ending on April 6, 2019. At that time, HomesNOW began managing our second temporary tent encampment, Safe Haven, located in the What-Comm 911 Call Center parking lot.

Winter Haven and Safe Haven consisted of 19 tents with an average of about 23 residents. As of the date of this submittal, HomesNOW has found housing for 8 residents 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 and Safe Haven have 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 Unity Village tiny home community 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 approximately 8 months ending in April 2020.

### **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.

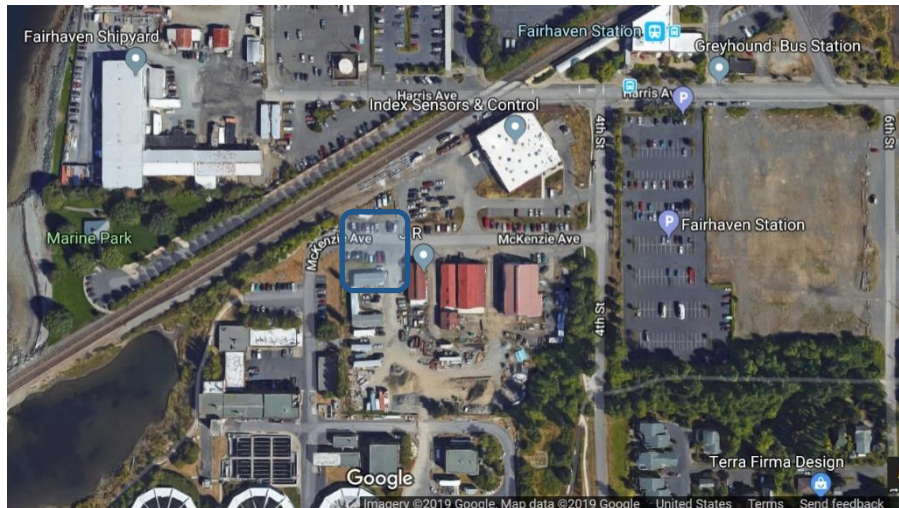
Because many homeless people have to camp illegally, they are often forced to move, resulting in instability and loss of personal belongings. Homeless people also lack access to basic human necessities, including bathrooms, showers, drinking water, cooking facilities, garbage services, etc. Many homeless 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. Unity Village will give access to basic human necessities, such as shelter, bathroom and kitchen facilities, garbage/recycling service, as well as a sense of safety and community. Unity Village 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

Unity Village will be located at 210 McKenzie Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225. The property is owned by the City of Bellingham. The site is accessible from a gated entrance on McKenzie Avenue.



The site is located in the Fairhaven neighborhood and is zoned as Fairhaven Urban Village. The site has convenient access to nearby amenities. The site is located in the northwest corner of a City property used for Wastewater treatment plant operations and maintenance facilities. The site is surrounded by the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant to the west and south, by City of Bellingham property to the east, Port of Bellingham property to the north across McKenzie Avenue (occupied by Index Sensors & Control), Port of Bellingham parking lot across 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The lower Padden Trail is nearby to the east. Condominiums and single-family homes are located to the southeast across 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The nearest residential property is 460 feet from the project boundary.

### 2.2. Project Description

**Unity Village will ultimately consist of 20 tiny homes.** The tiny homes will be either single or double occupancy. Assuming up to 4 of the tiny homes will be double occupancy, there will be an expected maximum of 24 people living on-site. There will be one additional tiny home for the on-site staff member. Unity Village will provide residents with a secure, stable location to live and store their belongings.

The proposed project will be constructed in 3 phases. Initially, the site will have 12 tiny homes and 8 tents. As residents and volunteers build more tiny homes, tents will be removed, and residents will move from tents into tiny homes. *The process of building the tiny homes is integral to creating a sense of community, building relationships and trust between residents and volunteers, and developing a sense of pride in the resident's new home.*



Phase	Schedule	Description
Phase 1	August 24, 2019	12 tiny homes, 8 tents
Phase 2	October 15, 2019	16 tiny homes, 4 tents
Phase 3	December 1, 2019	20 tiny homes, no tents

The site will be surrounded by a 6-foot tall chain link fence, including the existing fence that is in place as well as temporary fence along the southern boundary. A welcome office will be located near the front gate where residents and visitors will sign in and out.

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 a storage container for storing donated supplies, a smoking tent, a welcome tent, dumpsters and recycling bins, a shower truck, portable toilets, and a hand washing station.

### 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 will sign a license agreement for temporary use of the City's property including access to potable water and electricity. The City will install the temporary power service. HomesNOW will pay for the monthly electrical service; however, water will be provided at no charge by the City. 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 approximately 8 months beginning August 24, 2019 and ending April 30, 2020. This duration is well within the maximum duration allowed by the ordinance.

### 2.5. Transportation Plan

#### 2.5.1. Site Access

The site consists of a parking lot that is accessible from a gate entrance on McKenzie Avenue. A 6-foot high chain link fence surrounds the perimeter of the site. An additional temporary fence will be placed along the southern boundary of the project site.

Any gates on the southern boundary will be locked at all times to prevent access to the Post Point operations yard. Locks will be City of Bellingham standard locks. If access through southern gate is required, Post Point operations staff (who are on duty at the site 24/7) will be present to unlock the gate.

A 12-foot wide vehicle gate and a 4-foot wide pedestrian gate are located on the northern end of the site. All vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic will enter and exit the site using the existing gates on the north end of the site. The southern gate will only be used by emergency vehicles (police, fire department, or ambulance) and emergency pedestrian exit. The gates will remain unlocked at all times.

The site has approximately 10 parking spots available outside the fence along the northern project boundary, which is more than adequate to accommodate HomesNOW volunteers, case managers, service providers, visitors, and Unity Village residents. HomesNOW typically uses between 2 to 4 parking spaces at any one time.

### *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 one 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/northbound and westbound/southbound bus stops (serviced by bus line 1) are located on Harris Avenue approximately 950 feet and 750 feet from the site entrance, respectively. The 1 runs from the Fairhaven Transportation Center to Downtown Station. The 1 bus line runs every 15 to 30 minutes Monday through Saturday, and every half hour on Sunday.

- The 1 bus runs from 6:45 am to 10:15 pm on weekdays, 8:00 am to 10:20 pm on Saturday, and 7:50 am to 7:50 pm on Sunday.

The 5 bus is also within walking distance of the site, providing convenient access to the Sehome Village area and Lakeway Fred Meyer.

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.

### *2.5.4. Nearby Amenities*

The site has convenient access to nearby amenities.

- Located within walking distance to many businesses and potential employers in Downtown Fairhaven.











- 8-minute bus ride to the Haggan on 12<sup>th</sup> St., a 30-minute walk/bus ride to the Fred Meyer on Lakeway Ave., or a 22-minute bus ride to the Grocery Outlet on Ellis St.
- 26-minute bus ride/walk to the Bellingham Food Bank.
- 18-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:

- Lowell Elementary School (14-minute bus ride/walk)
- Fairhaven Middle School (15-minute bus ride/walk)
- Sehome High School (28-minute bus ride/walk)

## 2.6. Community Partners

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

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

## 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 Unity Village residents. The goal is to make the residents of Unity Village 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 has a 12-foot wide gate for site access. A welcome office will be located near the front gate where residents and visitors will sign in and out.

**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 tiny homes, 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. An updated list will be provided to the Bellingham Police Department as new residents move in or out.

The City will authorize the installation of an internet access point/radio antenna on the structure directly adjacent to the east boundary of the site. HomesNOW will be responsible for all installation and removal costs and requirements.

### **3.3. Minimizing Adverse Impacts**

The location of Unity Village has been chosen with consideration of minimizing any adverse impacts to the site and the surrounding area. Unity Village will only exist temporarily from August 24, 2019 to April 30, 2020. The project site is surrounded by non-residential uses. The project boundary is 460 feet from the nearest residential property and 2,500 feet from the nearest school. Impacts to any neighbors will be minimized by establishing quiet hours on the site. Unity Village residents will also do a weekly litter pickup in the nearby vicinity.

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 Unity Village 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 tiny homes 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

Homes Now will be given permission via the license agreement to construct tiny homes on the site starting on August 1, 2019, prior to the first day of occupancy, which is expected to be on August 24, 2019. 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 tiny homes, tents, and temporary structures will be brought to the site. Each tiny home will have a designated unit number. 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 7 people approved (who had Bellingham Police Department status checks completed) who are on the wait list for residency at Unity Village. There are also about 150 people who have applied, but who have not yet had a BPD status check completed.

#### 4.1.2. HomesNOW Volunteers

A HomesNOW Board member or approved HomesNOW supervisor will be living on-site to serve as the site manager. During the first week, a Resident Assistant and deputy Resident Assistant will be elected and trained in all duties and responsibilities to assist with managing Unity Village.

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.

**Unity Village will be a drug and alcohol-free community.** Unity Village 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. Unity Village residents will likely consist of people who are either working or disabled and who have a source of income. Unity Village 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 Unity Village 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 Unity Village if a tiny home is available or put on a wait list until a tiny home 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 Unity Village. 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 Unity Village 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 Unity Village 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 Unity Village, 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 positions. A HomesNOW board member will be present at the meeting.

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 tiny home community 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.

HomesNOW intends to find a property to move the tiny home village to once the permit expires in April 2020. In the event that no property is identified, Lummi Nation has agreed to move all 20 tiny homes to their property by April 30, 2020. HomesNOW will remove all tiny homes, structures, tents, platforms, and other items from the site within one calendar week of the end of the permit and restore the site to its original condition. HomesNOW will also work with each resident to identify potential alternative housing options, including working with other social service agencies.

#### *4.1.11. Emergency Plan*

In the event of an emergency, HomesNOW will provide alternative shelter for the Unity Village 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 Unity Village to the alternative shelter.

All tiny homes will have a designated unit number that will be displayed on the front of the tiny home so that emergency personnel can easily locate a particular unit in the event of an emergency.

The Post Point Resource Recovery facility (WWTP) is a heavy industrial facility processing all wastewater generated in the City of Bellingham and the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District. The facility operates 24 hours a day, year-round. The facility has an on-site incinerator, chlorine gas storage and usage, and industrial noise and odors. Placards provided by Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant will be posted on-site.

Access to the Post Point facility is prohibited for all HomesNOW residents and staff (except for septage dumping during normal business hours). Emergency coordination with Post Point duty staff can be initiated by calling the City of Bellingham Public Works 24-hour emergency hotline at 360-778-7700.

Residents and volunteers will be required to complete basic training related to accidental potential chlorine gas release and responding to the audible chlorine alarm. All on site supervisors, leads, and HomesNOW's board members will be required to be trained by Post Point staff. All residents will be required to be trained by Homes Now supervisors or Board members.

HomesNOW will document that all occupants and residents have been trained in response to a chlorine alarm. HomesNOW will maintain an accurate record and count of the number and names of all persons occupying the site and shall make that record available to Post Point staff or Bellingham Fire Department upon request. In the unlikely event of a release of chlorine gas or chlorine alarm, HomesNOW will be responsible for evacuating our staff and residents.

#### *4.1.12. Bill and Utility Costs*

Utility fees at Unity Village are 10% of the resident's income or \$150 per month, whichever is lower. Utility fees are based on the residents' ability to pay. Utility fees must be paid by cash or check. Utility payments are given to the HomesNOW on-site supervisor or mailed to our office. If a resident's income changes during their stay, they must notify HomesNOW as soon as possible (but no later than 1 month after such changes) so that utility fees can be adjusted accordingly.

Utility fees are due on the first day of the month, with a 10-day grace period with proper notification to HomesNOW. If there is anticipated or unexpected delays in payment beyond the grace period, the resident is required and expected to notify HomesNOW of their circumstances to discuss the situation and adjust payment arrangement if necessary. Failure to pay utility fees (where required) in accordance with the payment arrangements may lead to *grounds for termination of stay*.

Utility fee payments offset costs of operating the site and allows the community to be self-sustaining and self-funded through operations and maintenance on a continuous basis without relying solely on donations.

1. Payments are used to pay all bills for site operations and upkeep such as electrical, sewage disposal, garbage, and internet, as well as supplies for the site such as toilet paper, soap, and other household products.
2. This payment model helps residents to transition to regular housing with greater ease by developing a familiarity with expectations of traditional rent and housing requirements.

#### *4.1.13. Keys*

Residents are given one copy of the key to their tiny home. HomesNOW maintains a spare copy of keys locked in a secure location.

## 4.2. Site Maintenance

Residents are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of their own tiny home, tent, 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 the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant or a nearby RV dump station.

### 4.2.3. Sanitary Portable Toilet Maintenance

The site will have six 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 be available only to Unity Village 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 the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant or a commercial RV dump site.

#### *4.2.6. Repairs and Maintenance*

Repairs and maintenance to tiny homes, 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**

Unity Village 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 Unity Village. DSHS may host mobile community services at Unity Village 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 Unity Village 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. The site is surrounded by properties owned by the City of Bellingham and the McKenzie Avenue road right-of-way.

### 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 28 people (12 single occupancy tiny homes and 8 double occupancy tiny homes). However, the expected maximum will be 24 residents (16 single occupancy tiny homes and 4 double occupancy tiny homes). This number is below the maximum allowed of 100 people.

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

The additional 24 to 28 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, north, and east. A section of 6-foot tall chain link temporary fence will be placed along the southern boundary of the project site. The fence will limit access to the site for the safety and security of residents. The 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.

### 5.6. Section F: Lighting

There is currently no existing exterior lighting at the site. HomesNOW will install exterior lighting at the site. Lighting will be attached to structures, fences, or existing poles at the site with approval of the Plants Superintendent, Rob Johnson.

Each tiny home will have a porch light. 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 one in the kitchen, one near the welcome office, one near the designated smoking area, one near the grill, one between units 11 and 12, and one between units 6 and 7.

- 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**

Unity Village will include the following additional indoor safety measures for the tiny homes:

1. A working battery-powered smoke and carbon monoxide alarm;
2. Two openings to allow escape of smoke. Openings will be within 12 inches of the top of the wall and on two opposing walls. Such openings will be a minimum of 12 square inches, with the smallest dimension of one inch. Openings will be screened to keep insects out. Screen openings will be one-eighth inch to one-quarter inch;
3. No fuel gas appliances or equipment;
4. No smoking, lighted candles or other type of flames;
5. The only type of heating devices allowed are portable oil-filled heaters that will be supplied with the unit; and
6. No locks or latches that might inhibit an emergency escape from within the unit. A single cylinder deadbolt lock or lever-handled door latch is permitted, as long as it does not require the use of a tool or key to lock or unlock it from inside the unit.

## **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**

The site is currently used for parking of City vehicles and employee personal vehicles. During operations of Unity Village, parking of these vehicles will be relocated to other locations. At no time will HomesNOW's residents or volunteers use the parking lot in front of the Post Point admin building directly west of the site. Parking outside of the gate is within public ROW and subject to parking regulations in the Bellingham Municipal Code Title 11.

## **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**

Unity Village will be open to residents 24 hours per day.

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

All functions associated with Unity Village 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 Unity Village 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 Unity Village Handbook is provided in Appendix A. The Handbook includes a written code of conduct that provides for the health, safety, and welfare of the Unity Village 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.

In January 2019, HomesNOW began managing Winter Haven, Bellingham's first temporary tent encampment located behind City Hall. Winter Haven lasted for 90-days, ending on April 6, 2019. At that time, HomesNOW began managing our second temporary tent encampment, Safe Haven, located in the What-Comm 911 Call Center parking lot.

Winter Haven and Safe Haven consisted of 19 tents with an average of about 23 residents. As of the date of this submittal, HomesNOW has found housing for 8 residents 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 and Safe Haven have 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**