

Regional Housing Council

Agenda: Wednesday September 27th, 2023 (4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) (via Zoom)

Carolyn Cox: Chair, Carolina Mejia: Vice-Chair

#	TIME	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD	ACTION
1	4:00 – 4:05	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in • Review Agenda/Meeting Purpose 	Carolyn	
2	4:05 – 4:07	Approval of August 23 rd minutes	Carolyn	Action
3	4:07-4:15	Public Comment	Carolyn	
4	4:15-4:30	Long-Term Funding Strategy for Quince St.	Darian	Information
5	4:30 – 4:50	Recommendation of Allocation Plan for CHG Inflationary Funds	KayVin	Information & Action
6	4:50-5:05	Draft Communications Plan	Elisa	Information & Discussion
7	5:05 – 5:15	Right of Way NOFA	Keylee & Darian	Discussion
8	5:15 – 5:30	PRO Housing NOFO	Darian	Information
9	5:30 – 5:50	Legislative Agenda	Tom	Discussion
10	5:50 – 5:55	HOME ARP Allocation Plan Update	Tom	Information
11	5:55 – 6:00	Good of the Order	Carolyn	Information
11	6:00	Upcoming Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next RHC Meeting Wednesday October 25th, 2023, 4pm Location: Hybrid – Zoom & Atrium Board Rm 110 		

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday, August 23rd, 2023 – Meeting Minutes

PANELISTS:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Jennifer Adams

Tumwater: Joan Cathey, Brad Medrud

Olympia: Dani Madrone, Darian Lightfoot, Jacinda Steltjes, Clark Gilman, Rich Hoey

Yelm: Gary Cooper

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Ramiro Chavez, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Elisa Sparkman, Leah Tangeman

Affordable Housing Advisory Board: Talauna Reed

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda approved, motion, and second.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes from June 28th meeting, motion and second, approved.

Agenda Item 3: Public Comment – No Public Comment

Agenda Item 4: Quince Street Village Funding Presentation

Darian gave a presentation on the Quince Street Village Tiny Home site. The presentation described the history of the Tiny Home Village, the specifics of the site, the criteria used to determine who can reside at the Village, the unit size comparison to other tiny home villages, and a breakdown of the operating budget. The Village is operated by Catholic Community Services 24 hours a day, beginning in 2019. The Village has 100 Tiny Homes, 6 bathrooms, 6 showers, washers, dryers and 2 full time Case Managers. The operation cost of the Village is approximately 1.3 million dollars and includes services such as 24/7 Village Operations (including safety and security), Case Management, site/facility maintenance and repair, community engagement, and administration. The city expanded the site in 2022 and was able to move individuals occupied on Ensign Road to Quince Street Village.

Rich Hoey, Assistant City Manager for Olympia, said that he is attending the RHC meeting this month to bring the City of Olympia's funding request to the RHC. Rich highlighted that Quince Street Village is an important emergency shelter for unhoused individuals in Thurston County and is one of the largest shelter facilities within the county. He detailed the historical context of Ensign Road at a high level. Rich said there was recognition that this was a regional challenge and not one for Olympia to address alone. The city anticipated 1.2 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to support the operation of the Tiny Home Village. Rich asked on behalf of the City of Olympia for a recommendation from the RHC to the Thurston County Commissioners to allocate \$600,000 ARPA funds to operate Quince Street Village.

County Manager Ramiro Chavez responded by stating that there was not a supplemental agreement that addressed that the ARPA set aside funds for Franz Anderson would be moved to Quince Street. Further, he said he was not a part of conversations around the move to Quince Street and

recommended that the City of Olympia bring this conversation to the RHC to discuss sustainability options for operating the site. He does not believe it's appropriate for the RHC to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) how to allocate its APRA funds.

Dani Madrone responded that although the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) was initially intended to be for Franz Anderson, the intent is clear that Ensign Road was a regional problem and that the city and county were going to work together to create a solution and share costs.

Carolina stated there are up to \$600,000 of ARPA funds that the County may be able to allocate to Quince Street and that County Commissioners have had discussions around the use of these funds. Before the County would move forward with making a funding decision, she asked that a long-term funding plan be put into place.

The RHC requested that the RHC Tech Team add to the RHC Annual Workplan the task of developing a long-term funding plan for the Quince Street tiny home village.

Agenda Item 5: Affordable Housing Advisory Board Recommendations

The Chair of the Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board (TAHAB), Talauna Reed, presented the funding recommendations from the TAHAB. Talauna began by thanking the RHC in engaging the community in this process and emphasized that the TAHAB is one of the most diverse boards that she has served. She shared about the process of selecting applicants for the 2023 Capital Affordable Housing Projects. On May 24th, 2023, the RHC approved issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for 5.5 million dollars in funding from multiple funding sources. The RFP was issued on June 9th, 2023, and applications were due July 20th, 2023. There were 17 total applications requesting approximately 14.6 million dollars. Staff determined that 2 applications were ineligible resulting in 15 applications that were reviewed and scored. Talauna stated that the advisory board did not take this task lightly and took two weeks to individually review and score the applications through a lens of equity. They met on August 17th to make recommendations. Four of the members on the board were associated with organizations that submitted applications so to ensure there were no conflicts of interests, those members scored applications other than their own and did not participate in the August 17th meeting. The list of recommendations from the TAHAB, including details of the projects, was included in the agenda packet.

Dani made a motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners the funding recommendations that were made by the Affordable Housing Advisory Board, Joan seconded, unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 6: Homeless Services Advisory Board Recommendations

Keylee presented the funding recommendations from the Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB). The HSAB has two recommendations. The first recommendation is regarding the Lived Experience Housing Steering Committee (LEHSC). Within the 2023 Consolidated RFP the RHC included a set aside of \$50,000 for an agency to apply to become the new facilitators of this group ongoing, taking over from the current consultants who stood up the HSAB. Two applications were submitted – Partners in Prevention Education (PiPE) and Interfaith Works. The two organizations were very close in score. PiPE scored 83 and Interfaith Works scored 87. The HSAB recommended that Interfaith Works receive the contract and the RHC approved the recommendation. However, Interfaith Works ultimately determined they do not have the capacity to move forward with the contract. The HSAB met with PiPE to determine if they had

the capacity to facilitate the LEHSC before making a recommendation. The board unanimously approved the recommendation for PiPE to move forward with the contract.

Carolyn made a motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to award the new contract to Partners in Prevention Education, Dani seconded, unanimously approved.

The second recommendation is regarding the Housing Basic Needs (HBN) funds. The HSAB recommended that SideWalk receive \$40,000 in HBN to provide diversion services to single adults experiencing homelessness or on the verge of experiencing homelessness within Thurston County. On August 2nd, the Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention (OHHP) received an informal notice that SideWalk would no longer be in operation. After formal notice, the HSAB deliberated on how to distribute the HBN funding. The HSAB passed a motion to award the \$40,000 to Family Support Center with the stipulation that they distribute the funds in the spirit of the scope that it was written for SideWalk, which is single adults.

Dani made a motion to approve the recommendation to award Family Support Center with \$40,000 of the 2163 funds for diversion activities to honor the scope of the original award for SideWalk, Joan seconded, unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 7: RHC Annual Workplan

Tom presented the final draft of the RHC Annual Workplan. The draft RHC Annual Workplan was presented in June and the RHC Technical Team has modified the plan according to the feedback that was given during the June RHC meeting. Tom mentioned adding a Quince Street Long Term Funding Strategy to the workplan, but substantially, there are no new activities that have been added from what was discussed in June. The board gave positive feedback and approval of the final draft of the workplan.

Agenda Item 8: Communications Update

Elisa Sparkman gave a brief communications update. Elisa stated that in the past, an announcement was made once funding requests were approved by the BoCC. Recently, there have been request within the jurisdictions to provide more information during each process. Since the TAHAB funding recommendations were accepted and will be moving forward, there will be an announcement made from the RHC that explains what Talauna presented, including the lists of recommendations for funding, and announces that it will be recommended to the BoCC on September 12th, 2023. This announcement will be sent out to an email list and posted on the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services website and social media platforms. Next week, there will be a news release for the opening of Franz Anderson Tiny Home Village. She is working with Darian Lightfoot and expects it to be released on Wednesday, August 30th, 2023.

Agenda Item 9: Good of the Order

Olympia: Dani updated that last week, the Olympia City Council had a study session on a Rental Housing Registry, which is something that is going to be coming forward as a business item sometime in November for the Olympia City Council. It looks at registering rental homes in our community and incorporates an inspection component to make sure that they are preserving the housing stock that they have.

Tumwater: Joan updated that they are excited about a new project with the Housing Authority of Thurston County for seniors on Capitol Boulevard. Brad thanked the RHC for the funding

recommendations for two projects in Tumwater – the Habitat for Humanity Project and the Sequoia North Project.

Thurston County: No Update

Yelm: Gary announced they are excited about a Habitat for Humanity project set to be presented to the City Hearings Examiner on September 20th, 2023, for a residential development townhome community designed for the 30-50% AMI community.

Lacey: Carolyn announced that the Lacey City Council approved a \$50,000 mediation contract with Dispute Resolution Center which will be available for renters and landlords.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:52 pm

Next Meeting: September 27th, 2023, 4:00 pm via Zoom



Staff Report

Topic: CHG Inflationary Funds Recommendation: Survey of Service Providers

Date	9.21.2023
Request	Approve recommendation to distribute \$749,709 Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) Inflationary Funds to agencies within the Homeless Crisis Response System (HCRS) that offer homeless services programs based on the total number Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) each agency has that provide frontline or direct services to homeless clients, and who make equal or less than \$28 per hour, or salaried equivalent.
Background	<p>In May of 2023, the Housing Assistance Unit (HAU) announced four funding buckets intended to fill gaps left by a reduction in Document Recording Fee (DRF) revenues and the sunseting of COVID-19 specific funds: Emergency Solutions Grant – Covid (ESG-CV) and Shelter Program Grant (SPG). The HAU identified four funding sources (Emergency Housing Fund, Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG)/Eviction Prevention Rent Assistance (EPRA)/Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Budget request, Document Recording Fee Support, and CHG Inflationary Funds) to ensure that Homeless Crisis Response Systems across the state would be able to maintain current operational levels ensuring no interruption to services.</p> <p>Below is an except from a memo from the HAU on how the Inflationary Funds can be spent:</p> <p>"The Legislature appropriated \$45.6 million for Commerce "to increase existing grantee contracts providing rental or housing subsidy and services for eligible tenants in housing and homeless programs. The department must distribute funding in a manner that will prioritize maintaining current levels of homeless subsidies and services and stabilizing the homeless service provider workforce." (ESSB 5187, Sec 129. (33))</p> <p>Allowable uses for these funds are for any allowable Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG)/System Demonstration Grant (SDG) activity <i>AND Commerce expects grantees to prioritize salary increases or retention stipends for their homeless service provider workforce, and to the extent possible offset other inflation costs."</i></p>

	<p>The HSAB has recommended that agencies within the HCRS that provide homeless services respond to a survey developed by OHHP staff to determine how many frontline-direct service that make equal to or less-than \$28 per hour.</p> <p>Other eligible activities that can be funded with the CHG Inflationary Funds are vacant staff positions that would meet the given definition of frontline/direct homeless services staff and increasing a frontline/direct services staff position's FTE (from .5 FTE to 1.0 FTE, for example). <i>Operation costs will not be eligible for CHG Inflationary Funds.</i></p> <p>For the purposes of this survey, we ask that you enumerate the number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) frontline/direct service employees* based on a 40 hour work week. That means, when calculating the total number of FTEs, you would roll up any part-time staff to equal 1.0 FTE.</p> <p>Annually, the Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB) will review how the funds were distributed. Reporting to the HSAB will be facilitated by staff liaisons through semi-annual reports.</p> <p><i>*frontline/direct services staff definition: A frontline or direct service staff eligible to receive CHG Inflationary Funds is a homeless services staff member that makes less-than or equal to \$28 per hour and works directly with participants experiencing homelessness.</i></p> <p>Once survey responses have been provided by homeless service providers, OHHP staff will develop an allocation chart for CHG Inflationary Fund distribution. These allocation recommendations will be presented to the HSAB in their October Board meeting. The HSAB will then make a recommendation to the RHC for CHG Inflationary Funds allocations based on established criteria.</p>
Proposed Solution	<p>Approve the recommendation that homeless service agencies within the HCRS that provide homeless services respond to a survey developed by OHHP staff to determine how many frontline-direct service that make equal to or less-than \$28 per hour in order to distribute \$749,709 of CHG Inflationary Funds.</p>
Financial Implications	<p>The \$749,709 are CHG Inflationary funds that were distributed to Washington State counties based on a formula established by Dept of Commerce with the purpose of stabilizing the homeless services work force due to inflation.</p>

Recommendation	Approve the recommendation that homeless service agencies within the HCRS that provide homeless services respond to a survey developed by OHHP staff to determine how many frontline-direct service that make equal to or less-than \$28 per hour in order to distribute \$749,709 of CHG Inflationary Funds.
-----------------------	---

DRAFT: 2024 Communications Plan

Regional Housing Council

Regional Housing Council Background

On January 28, 2021, Thurston County, along with the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm finalized an agreement enabling local leaders to work together as the [Thurston Regional Housing Council](#) (RHC) on providing solutions to the regional housing crisis. The RHC consists of one voting member and one alternate member from each of the jurisdictions comprising more than 5% of the county population (Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater) and one jurisdiction representing South County (Yelm).

The purpose of the RHC is to leverage resources and partnerships through policies and projects promoting equitable access to safe and affordable housing. It considers issues specifically related to funding a regional response to homelessness and affordable housing, and how to better coordinate existing funding programs. Work through the RHC will include assisting in monitoring and implementing the county's [five-year Homeless Crisis Response Plan \(HCRP\)](#), by setting priorities and making funding recommendations to regional elected and appointed leaders. The RHC may also provide a forum for consideration of policy options related to homelessness and to encourage development of regional approaches to planning for, responding to, and funding homeless services and facilities and expand affordable housing.

Purpose of 2024 Communications Plan

The 2024 Communications Plan lays a foundation of consistent, reliable communication to government partners and stakeholders to further establish the Regional Housing Council in the community. This plan is a starting point that is meant to be assessed at the end of 2024 and expanded upon in the following years.

The RHC Communications Specialist position was established and filled in 2023. This position is responsible for leading the implementation of the Communications Plan.

2024 Communications Plan Goal

The goal of the 2024 Communications Plan is for the RHC to be the community's source of information and leadership for affordable housing and homeless response by government partners and other stakeholders, such as general public and non-profit organizations.

Responsibilities and Projects

Ongoing communication responsibilities: These tasks are completed regularly and as needed by the Communications Specialist.

Task	Description
RHC website	The RHC website is the primary home for RHC information. It is regularly updated with meeting information, news releases and announcements and any necessary changes.
Communications updates to the RHC	The Communication Specialist is scheduled to give an update at each RHC meeting. Updates include information on communication projects, communication highlights and upcoming news or announcements.
News releases and announcements	Write and distribute news releases and announcements according to distribution procedures. Partner with jurisdictions to ensure collaboration and coordination of content.
RHC informational materials	Develop and distribute informational and promotional materials (fact sheets, flyers, infographics, etc.) according to distribution procedures. Partner with jurisdictions to ensure collaboration and coordination of content.
Social media	Create social media posts as part of distribution procedures. Partner with jurisdictions to post and share RHC social media materials on their accounts.
Media requests	Respond to media requests, by connecting requestor with best representatives for questions asked.

2024 Communications Projects

Project 1: Establish branding of the Regional Housing Council (RHC).

1. Develop branded templates for news releases, announcements, informational materials and social media.
2. LOGO COLOR: #96D1D4

Deliverables: Three to five branded templates

Due: January 2024

Project 2: Develop and implement email newsletter.

1. Outline newsletter objectives and schedule with RHC member input.
2. Design newsletter template.
3. Develop and implement submission process.

4. Develop and implement editing, review and approval process.
5. Promote newsletter and recruit readers to sign up.
6. Distribute according to schedule.
7. Present newsletter statistics and share feedback to RHC regularly as part of communications updates.
8. Assess feedback and make updates/changes as needed.

Deliverables: Quarterly newsletters, newsletter statistics reports

Goal date for first newsletter: March 2024

Project 3: Social Media Review

1. Assess need for RHC social media accounts, rather than using social media through jurisdiction accounts.

Deliverables: Recommendation to RHC members

Due: Summer 2024

Project 4: Expand RHC Website

1. Coordinate with RHC Technical Team and jurisdictions to develop new pages to the RHC website. For example, resource pages on affordable housing incentives that each jurisdiction offers to developers.

Deliverables: new pages on website

Due: Dependent on RHC Technical Team's work plan

Project 5: Develop RHC Communications Manual

1. Website maintenance duties
2. RHC meeting duties
3. Distribution procedures for news releases, announcements and other RHC materials
4. Media response procedures

Deliverable: RHC Communications Manual

Due: By end of 2024

Project 6: Update Communications Plan for 2025

1. Draft due October 2024 RHC meeting

Deliverable: 2025 Communications Plan

Due: finalized by December 2024

Communications Plan Implementation

The RHC Communications Specialist is responsible for leading the implementation of the Communications Plan. The person in this position will carry out each objective with support from the RHC Technical Team (Tech Team). Support from the Tech Team can include drafting base content, reviewing/editing content and consulting on communications topics.

Content/materials development and review process:

Step 1	Write & Review	Step 2	Review	Step 3	Approval
Draft 1	Communications Specialist or Content expert	Draft 2	Technical Team representatives or additional content experts	Final Draft	RHC Chair or Vice Chair

Government Partners and Stakeholders

Lived Experience Housing Steering Committee	Other Government Entities –Intercity Transit, Port of Olympia
Homeless Population	Jurisdictions
Homeless Services Providers	Thurston Regional Planning Council
Local Tribes (Chehalis, Nisqually, Squaxin)	Funders (Commerce; Federal Government – HUD)
Public/Taxpayers	RHC Members and Advisory Board Members
Business Community	Olympia Master Builders
Media	Affordable Housing Developers
Homeless Advocates	Board of Realtors
Faith Based Organizations	Olympia Downtown Alliance

Resources and Support

RHC Communications Specialist:

Elisa Sparkman, (360) 490-7648, Elisa.Sparkman@co.thurston.wa.us

RHC Technical Team Lead and Thurston County Office of Housing & Homeless Prevention Manager:

Tom Webster, 360-867-2531, Thomas.Webster@co.thurston.wa.us



Pathways to Removing Obstacles (PRO) Housing Grant

Objective: to
remove
barriers to
housing
construction
and
preservation

- HUD funding fashioned after CDBG
- Offered as a grant
- Awards between \$1 million and \$10 million
- Funds spent **between 2024 and 2029**
- Application due Oct. 30, 2023

Remove Barriers to Homeownership

Our work to remove the barrier to homeownership for low-income, first-time homebuyers will include four approaches:

1. Launch a down-payment assistance program
2. Increase access to homebuyer counseling services
3. Provide capacity building support and administrative funds to our local land trust organization
4. Provide capital funding to help non-profits create new homeownership housing and preserve existing owner-occupied housing

Down Payment Assistance Program

- \$3 million to assist 50 homebuyers over five years
- Partner with Washington State Housing Finance Commission to leverage their DPA programs (up to \$15,000, deferred loan with interest rates between 1-4%)
- DPA program offering up to \$65,000 to City of Olympia homebuyers
- City funds provided as a grant, repayable per federal guidelines in the first 15 years only if the homebuyer sells or the home is no longer their primary residence.
- Anticipate that Habitat and Thurston Housing Land Trust will utilize these funds.
- Anticipate that the funding sources for the homebuyer will still need to include other resources, such as a silent second or third mortgage offered by Habitat.

Homebuyer Counseling

- Up to \$1 million over five years
- Need for more counseling services
- Most of existing services are provided by mortgage lenders
 - Can be biased toward their product
 - Can be intimidating to first-time buyers
 - Not always understanding or accepting of cultural norms
- Partner with local non-profits who regularly serve and interact with Latinx and BIPOC populations

Capacity Building Support to Thurston Housing Land Trust

- \$1.5 million to Thurston Housing Land Trust
 - Hire staff, including Executive Director
 - Community outreach
 - Strategic planning
 - Staffing and operational costs
 - Other costs related to increasing the capacity of Thurston Housing Land Trust

Capital Funding

- \$3 million
- Support out of cycle City of Olympia projects or RHC supported projects
- Imagine funds issued via a RFP with rolling due date
- Funds for acquisition, preservation or construction of units
- Examples:
 - Properties that become available at a time that doesn't coincide with the RHC's annual February RFP
 - Funds to help residents of manufactured home parks purchase the park
 - For critical home repairs to homeowner occupied homes
 - To assist renters to purchase the home they rent when landlord decides to sell it, avoid displacement

Olympia Administrative Funding

- Up to \$1 million
 - Assist WSHFC operate DPA program
 - Environmental reviews
 - Underwriting
 - Managing contracts
 - Tracking outputs/outcomes
 - Reporting to HUD

Application Process

- Now-10/11: City staff are drafting the application including letters of support
- 10/12-10/26: Public Comment Period
- 10/24: Public Hearing, Olympia City Council
- 10/30: Application is due