

AGENDA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

February 5, 2025

Hybrid Meeting In-person and via Zoom



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82217420027?pwd=M0BD0aVCwhMe2Wtne7EUkF4NnBG8Ew.1>

Meeting ID: 822 1742 0027

Passcode: 705917

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**CITY OF ELLENSBURG
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION AGENDA
Council Chambers
501 North Anderson Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
And remotely via Zoom
Wednesday, February 5, 2025
4:30 PM - Regular Meeting**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members**
- 2. Approval of Agenda** (No Public Comment)
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.A January 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes
- 4. New Business**
 - 4.A Annual review 2024
 - 4.B Housing services application process
 - 4.C Update on County five-year homelessness plan development
- 5. Unfinished Business**
- 6. Citizen Comment**
- 7. Staff Update/Discussion Items**
 - 7.A Draft schedule through June 2025
 - 7.B Ongoing housing project updates
- 8. Commission Representative Update**
 - 8.A Council housing action update
- 9. Adjournment**



For more information on the Affordable Housing Commission, contact the Community Development office at
509-962-7653

The Contents of this agenda have been photocopied on recycled paper.



CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Minutes of Affordable Housing Commission, Regular Meeting

Date of Meeting

January 8, 2025

Time of Meeting

4:30 PM

Place of Meeting

**Council Chambers
501 North Anderson Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
And remotely via Zoom**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members

Commissioner Bedsaul called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Courtney Garzone, Kim Funston, Delano Palmer, Sarah Bedsaul, John Perrie, Dan Witkowski

Absent: Peter Stone

Others present: Dan Carlson - Community Development Director, Lily Frey - Housing & Grants Administrator, Kathy Boots - Planning Permit Technician, Heidi Behrends Cerniwey

2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Garzone motioned to approve the agenda. Motion passed 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.A December 4, 2024 regular meeting minutes

Commissioner Palmer motioned to approve the December 4, 2024, regular meeting minutes. Motion passed 6-0.

4. New Business

4.A Election of chair & vice-chair

Commissioner Palmer nominated Sarah Bedsaul as chair and Courtney Garzone as vice chair. Motion passed 6-0.

4.B 2025 work planning discussion

Staff member Frey recapped 2024 activities and ongoing and planned activities and previously discussed topics. Commissioners suggested additional ideas for 2025 planning. Each commissioner was able to select three of the identified options as their priorities.

The top responses receiving five votes each were: (1) communications / outreach and (2) existing building conversions. Receiving two votes each were: (3) accessory dwelling units (ADUs) & related communications and (4) community land trusts (possibly with city land). Receiving one vote each were: (5) city property contribution and (6) outreach to developers. Other suggestions included (7) grant opportunities - rental assistance, (8) coordinating with state

budget priorities, and (9) research and tools targeting the cost of infrastructure connections.

Commissioners discussed communication ideas and opportunities, including outreach to employers and video opportunities. They also requested updates on the timeline for the 1st and Pine project.

5. Unfinished Business

None.

6. Citizen Comment

None.

7. Staff Update/Discussion Items

7.A Council housing action updates

Frey reported that on January 6th, Council conducted the first reading of Ordinance 4953, which contains provisions to ease development of middle housing, adds affordable housing density bonus opportunities and reduces parking requirements for studio and one-bedroom multifamily units.

8. Commission Representative Update

Commissioner Palmer reported visiting the Cold Weather Shelter. When he visited, approximately 14 people and two service animals were using the shelter.

9. Adjournment

The next meeting will be February 5, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

4A. Annual Review 2024

Affordable Housing Commission

February 5, 2025

Affordable Housing Commission duties and responsibilities

- C. At the end of each fiscal year, conduct a review of the revenue allocation framework as originally developed by the ad hoc affordable housing advisory committee.
- F. At the end of each fiscal year, conduct a review of affordable housing needs.
- G. At the end of each fiscal year, provide an annual report on the affordable housing revenue collection and activities undertaken with affordable housing funds.

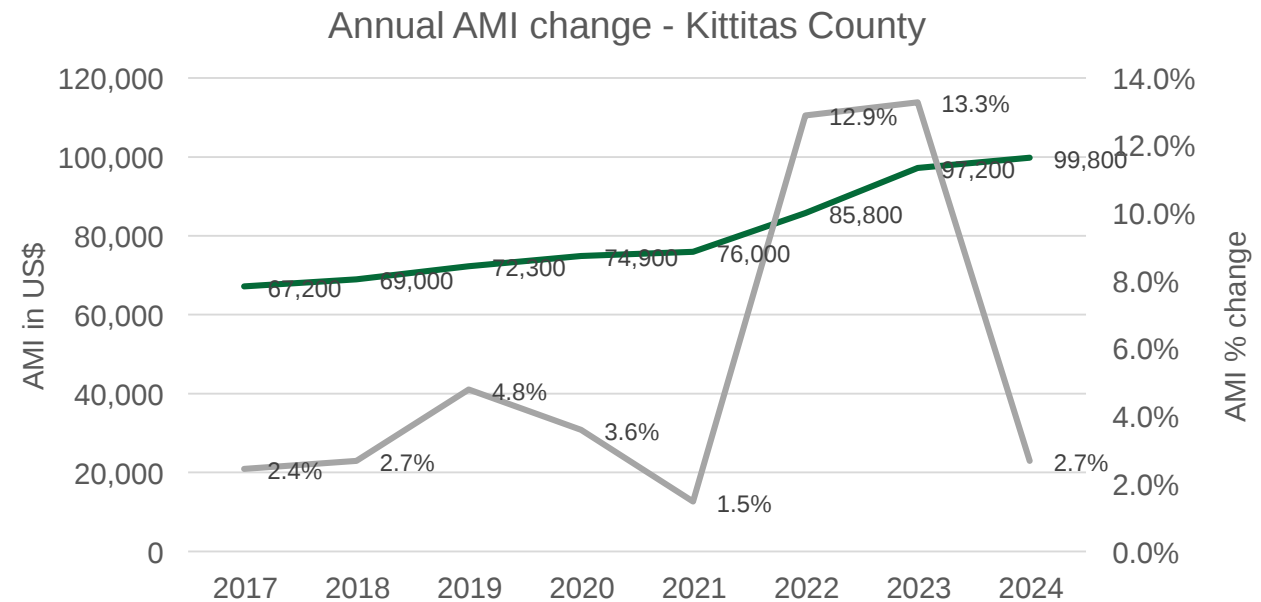
C. Updated Revenue Allocation Framework

- 60+% for constructing or acquiring affordable housing and/or operations and maintenance costs
- Up to 30% for the operation, delivery or evaluation of housing-related services
- 5% kept in reserve, and
- 5% administrative costs



F. Affordable Housing Needs

- Lower than anticipated population growth
 - WA Office of Financial Management (OFM) Ellensburg population estimate 2024 = 20,970
 - 2020 Census = 20,797



Source: HUD

Zillow Rental Market Snapshot – Jan 2025

Ellensburg, WA Rental Market

Choose another area

All beds ▾

All home types ▾

Last updated January 13, 2025

Market Summary

The median rent for all bedrooms and all property types in Ellensburg, WA is **\$1,500**.

Median Rent

\$1,500

Month-Over-Month Change

\$0

Year-Over-Year Change

+\$5

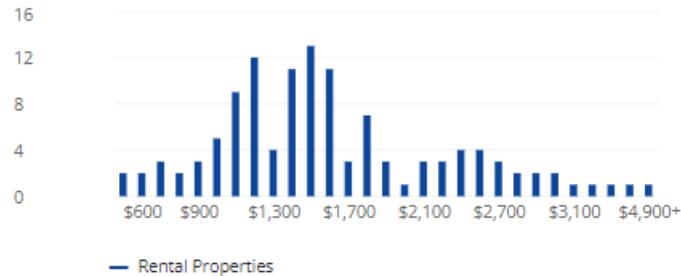
Available Rentals

85

Source: Zillow Rentals Data

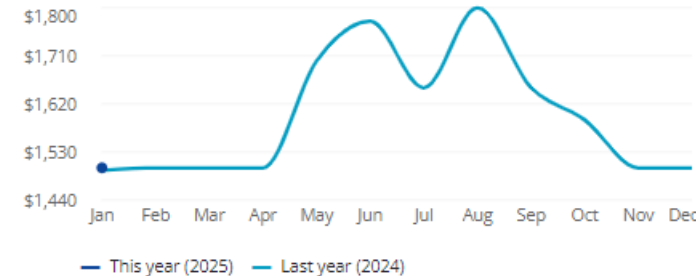
Price Range

The price range for all bedrooms and all property types is **\$599 to \$4,900**.



Median Rental Price over Time

In the last year, rent has increased by **\$5** compared to the previous year.



\$100 increase or
~7% compared
to our review in
Jan 2024

Source: Zillow

Zoom in: 1 Bedrooms

Market Summary

The median rent for 1 bedroom properties in Ellensburg, WA is \$1,250.

Median Rent

\$1,250

Month-Over-Month Change

+\$38

Year-Over-Year Change

+\$142

Available Rentals

19

Source: Zillow Rentals Data

Price Range

The price range for 1 bedroom properties is \$599 to \$1,950.



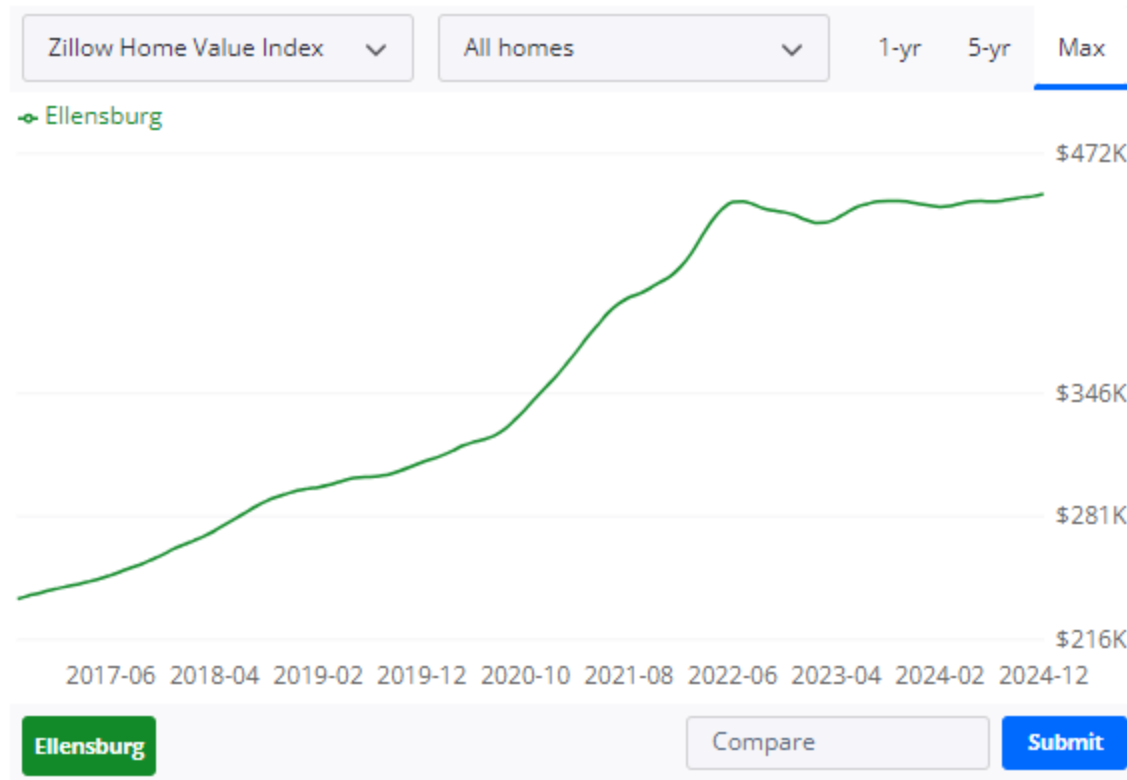
Median Rental Price over Time

In the last year, rent has increased by \$142 compared to the previous year.



~13% increase

Ellensburg Home Values – Jan 2025

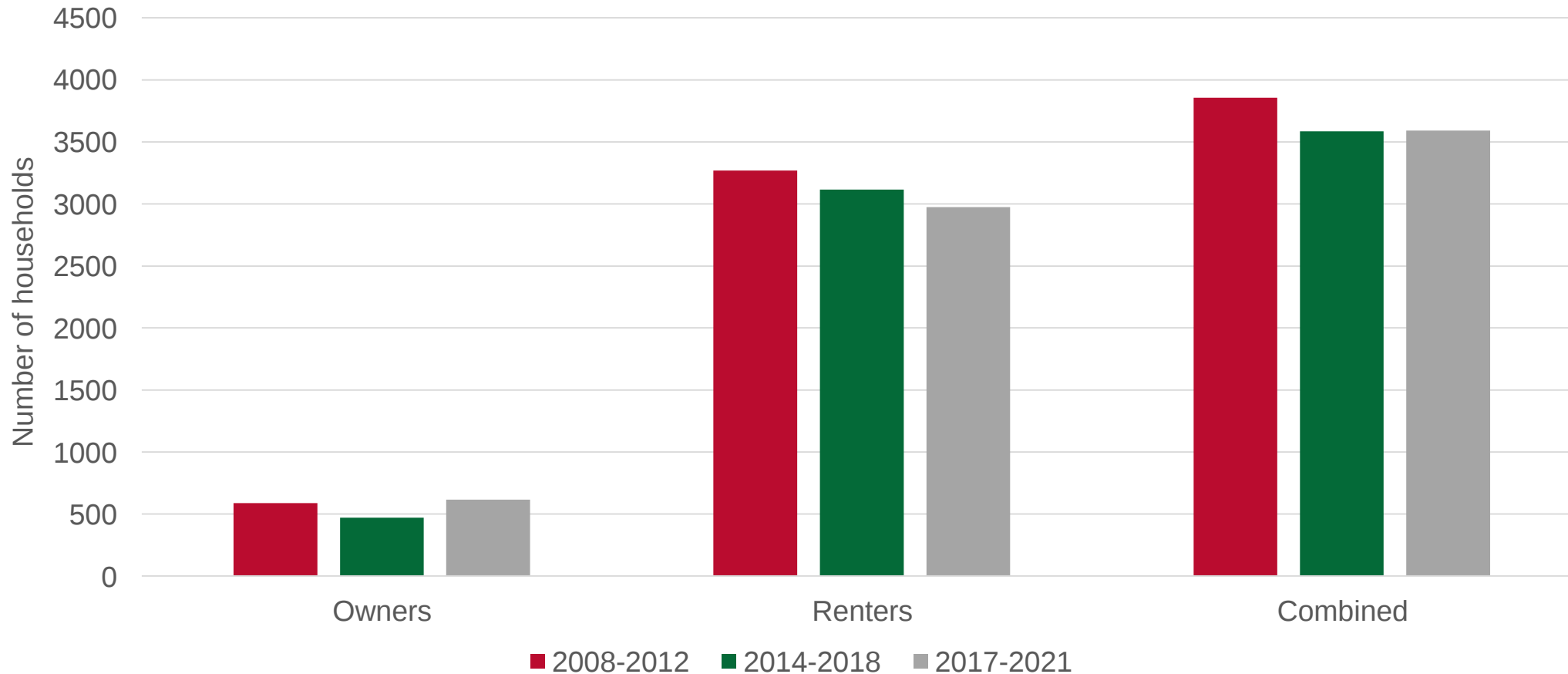


- Median home value = \$451,500
- 0.3% increase since Dec 2023

Median Kittitas **County** one year home price increase of 3.6% (Washington Center for Real Estate Research)

Source: Zillow

Cost-burdened households,



Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) based on American Community Survey (ACS) data

Recent & Ongoing Affordable Housing Development

Name	Developer / Owner	Units	Occupied / Planned
Spurling Court	HopeSource	49	2021
Pine Place	HopeSource	19	2023
Stuart Meadows	Habitat	18	2024 (6); Future (12)
Nites Inn / Pathways	HopeSource	16 (original) – 78 (revised)	Future
1 st & Pine	Inversion Design Build	36	2026-2027

G. Affordable Housing Revenues and Activities

Item	Revenue	Expenditures	Allocations	Total
Balance from 2023				\$2,412,282
Revenues (both taxes, interest, grants)	\$2,068,081			
Grant payments (Stuart Meadows, CHIP)		\$766,775		
Professional services (Catherine property & other)		\$64,974		
Cold Weather Shelter lease		\$74,400		
Admin		\$150,272		
Stuart Meadows remaining allocation			\$124,726	
Sleep Center / homeless remaining allocation			\$275,600	
Total available				\$3,023,616



2024 Highlights

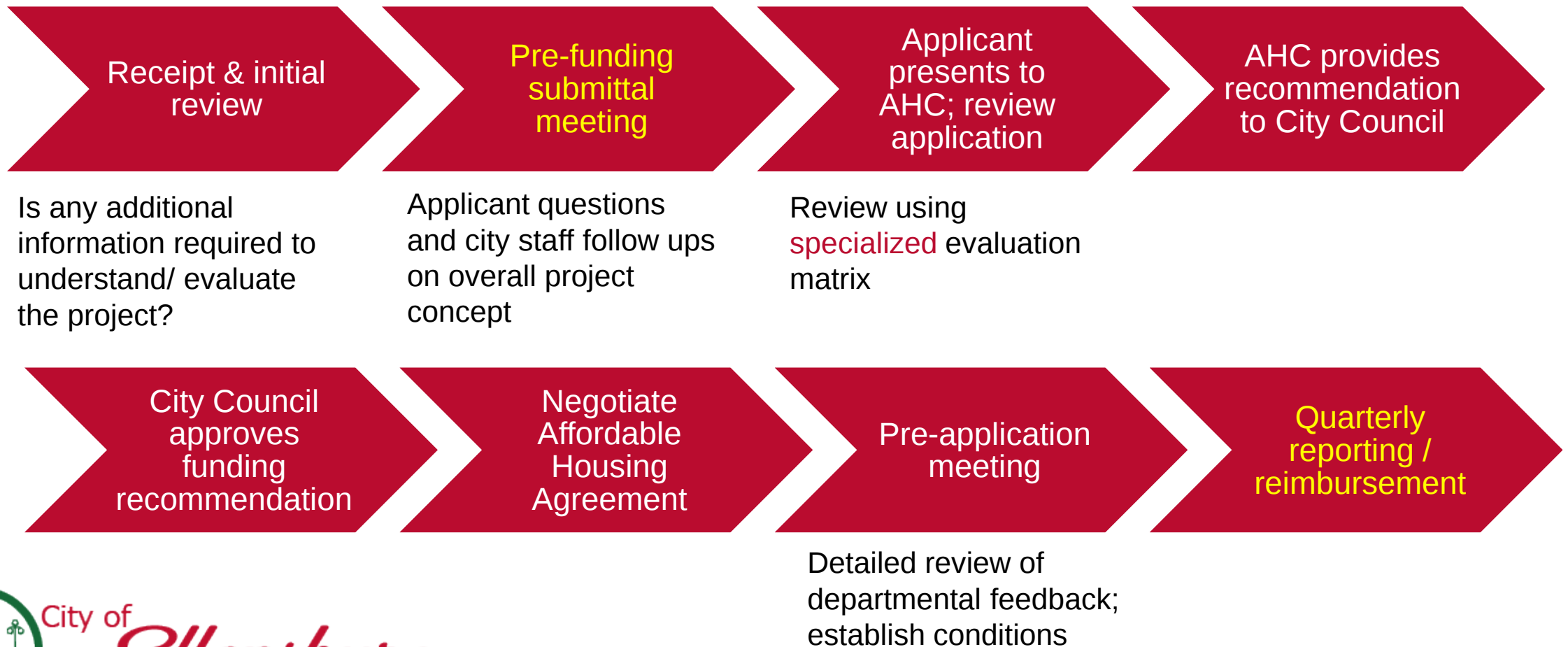
- Ran 1st and Pine RFP & recommended project.
- Completion of first six homes at Habitat for Humanity's Stuart Meadows
- Completed site improvement work on Catherine Property to allow determination of wetland characteristics and buildable area.
- Recommended code changes to enable development of middle housing and more affordable housing units.
- Reviewed and recommended updates to the City's affordable housing revenue allocation framework.
- Two applications for infrastructure funding through CHIP grant program – one successful.
- Recommended connection charge waiver ordinance to Council to support CHIP applications and broaden potential use of affordable housing sales tax funds.
- Funded Cold Weather Shelter site lease.

Looking ahead - 2025

- Comprehensive plan housing element update (due June 2026)
- Communications and outreach
- Catherine property next steps
- Focus on ADUs
- Homeless plan finalization (by end 2025)
- And more!

4B. Housing Services Application Process

Sales Tax Funding Allocation Process – housing services



Application Choices

- Notice of funds available annually / summary of application requirements
- Retain open application process
- Consolidated with existing capital projects and property contribution application or separate form? Addendum?
- Potential additional information – measurable results, sustainability, other?

Housing Services Review Criteria

- Identified housing needs and investment priorities
- Retention of affordability → Sustainability?
- Leverage and collaboration / financial assessment
- Staff evaluation – feasibility → remove?
- Community impact
- Property management and development capacity → Implementation capacity
- Other / different criteria to meet housing goals?

What is missing?

- Reporting expectations - timeline
- Links to overall housing goals?
- Other ideas?



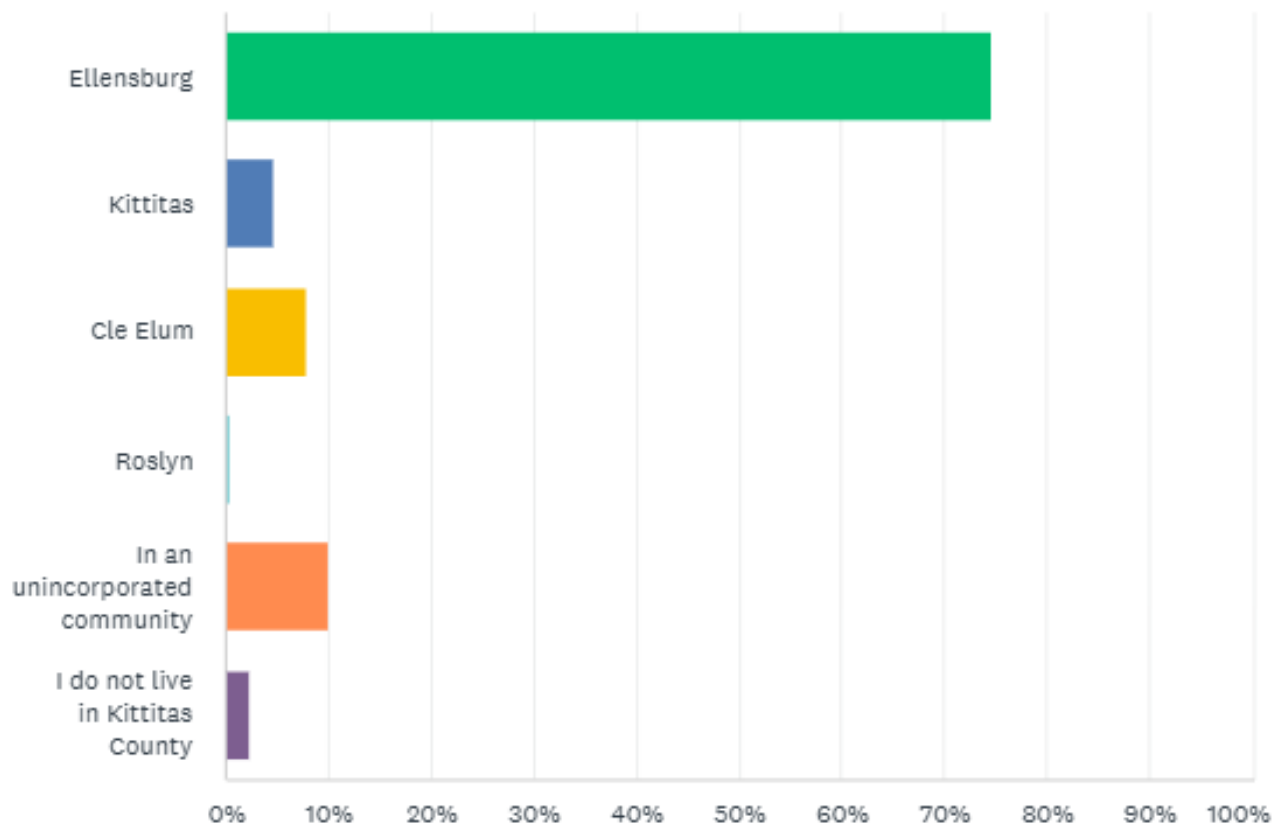
5 Year Plan Data Collection

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Community Based Survey

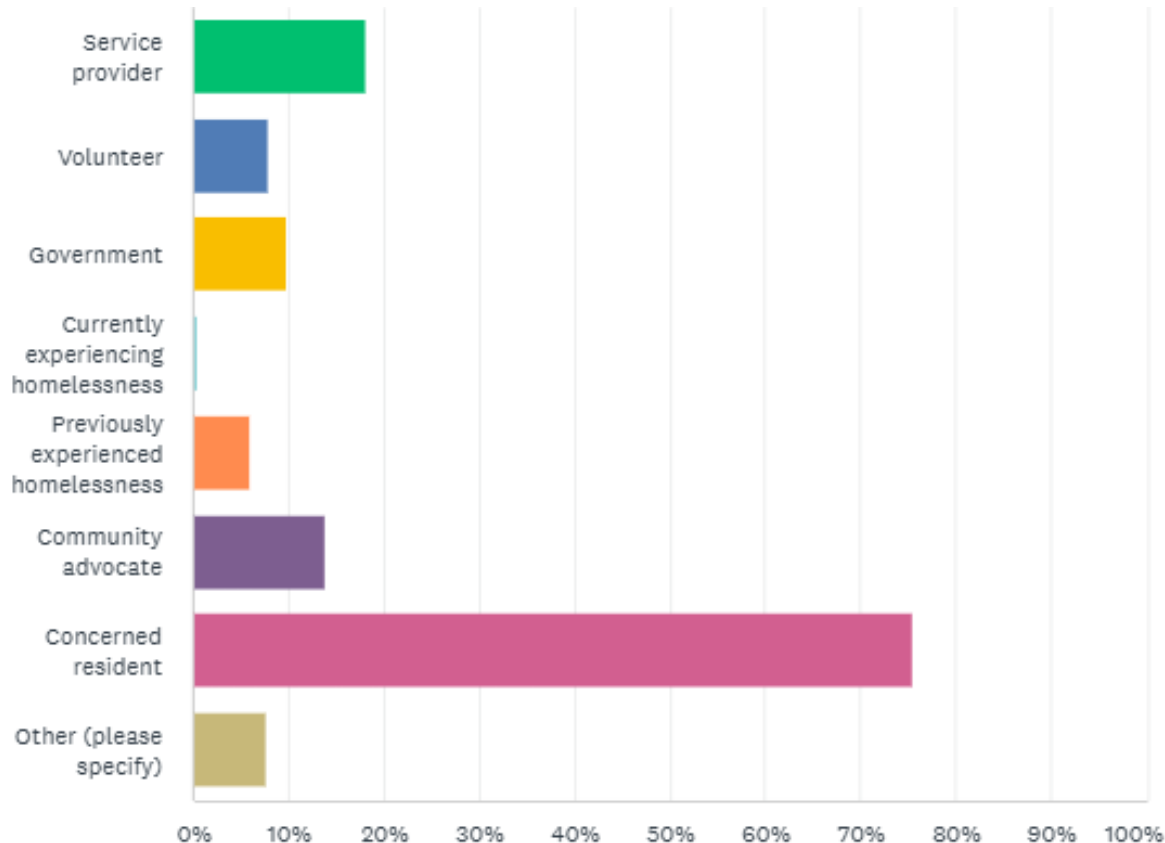
- ▶ **Objective:** Gather input from the community to inform the development of a 5year homelessness plan.
- ▶ **Participants:** service providers, volunteers, and community members, including those with lived experience of homelessness.
- ▶ **Focus Areas:**
 - ▶ Identifying critical housing needs
 - ▶ Highlighting barriers to accessing services
 - ▶ Recognizing successful programs and strategies
- ▶ **421 Responses**

Q1: In which city do you live?



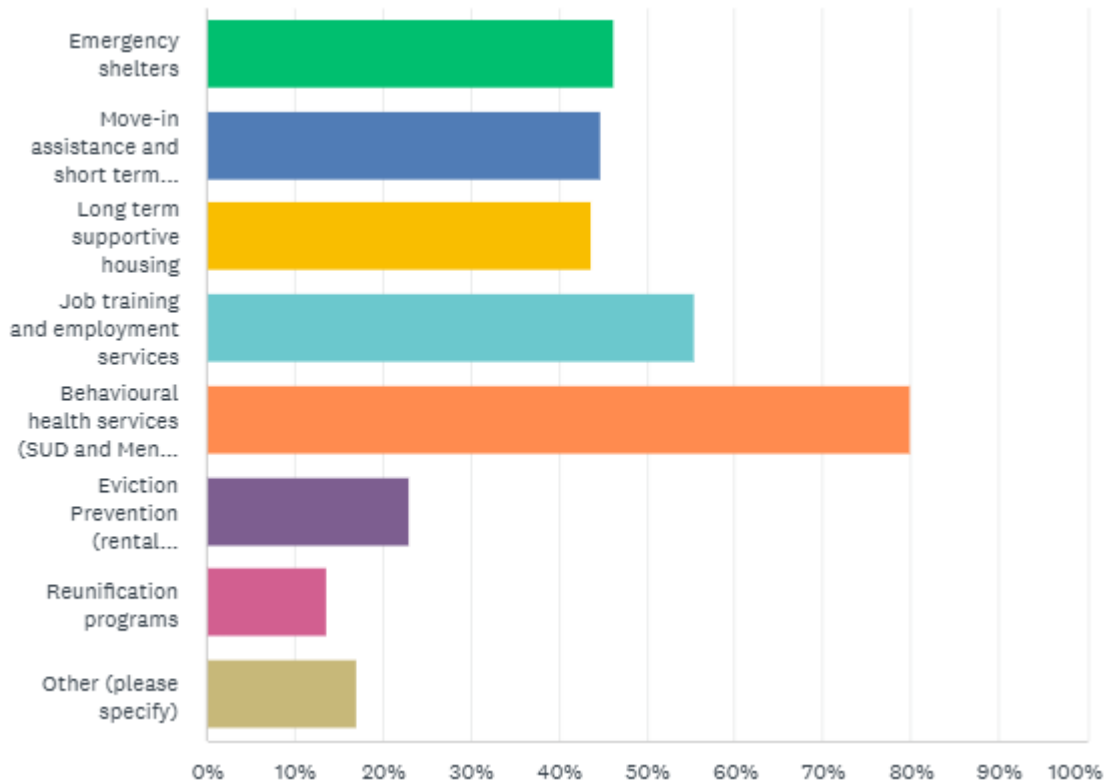
- ▶ Respondents represented:
 - ▶ Ellensburg (75%)
 - ▶ Unincorporated Kittitas County (10%)
 - ▶ Cle Elum (8%)
 - ▶ Kittitas (5%)
- ▶ Indicating interest in the topic from residents across the County.

Q2: What is your relationship to the homeless community?



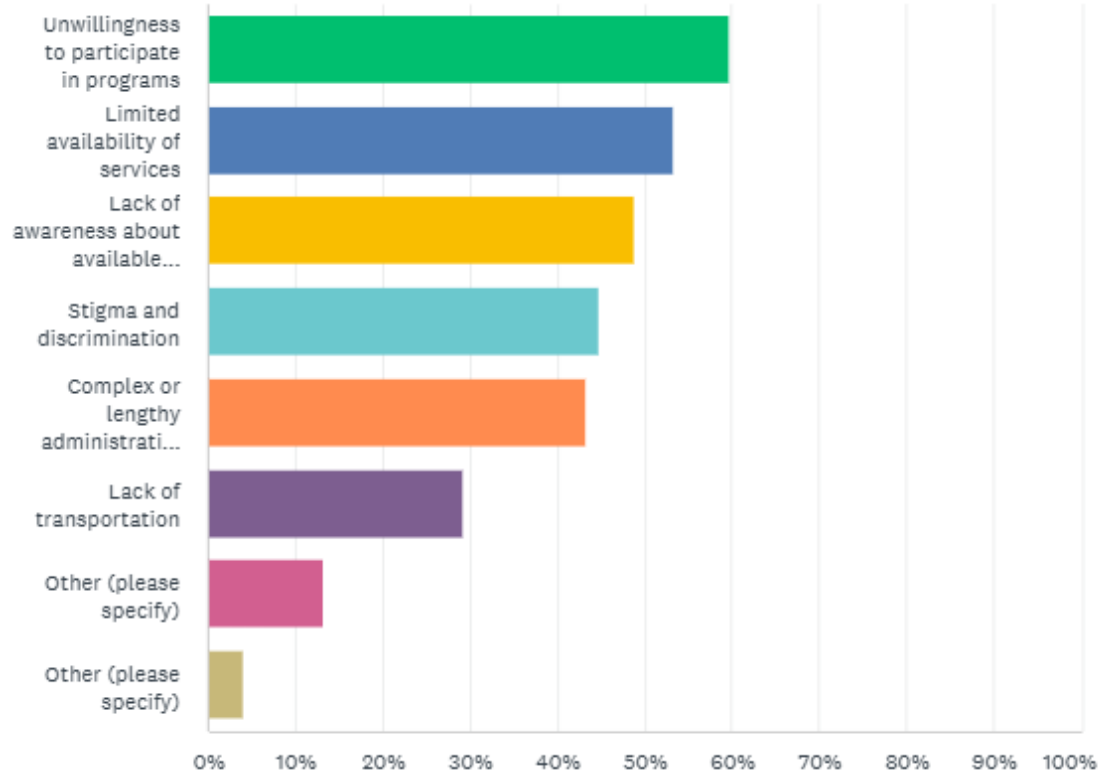
- ▶ Respondents represented:
 - ▶ 75% concerned residents
 - ▶ 18% service providers
 - ▶ 8% volunteers
 - ▶ 10% government representatives
 - ▶ 6% have experienced homelessness
 - ▶ 0.5% are currently experiencing homelessness

Q3: Which of the following services do you think are most needed to address homelessness?



- ▶ Survey respondents emphasized behavioral health services (80%)
- ▶ Job training and employment services (55%)
- ▶ Emergency shelter (46%)
- ▶ Move in assistance (45%)
- ▶ Long-term supportive housing (44%)
- ▶ About 2.6% of respondents wrote in “other” responses that no assistance other than relocation.

Q4: What barriers do you think people experiencing homelessness face?



- ▶ Survey respondents thought that unwillingness to participate was the most significant barrier (60%)
- ▶ Followed by limited availability of services (53%), and stigma and discrimination (45%).
- ▶ Several respondents mentioned they didn't know about barriers faced by homeless people and wanted more information.

Q5: What successful strategies or programs in other communities that be implemented here?

- ▶ Need for More Affordable Housing and individualized financial assistance programs for transition.
- ▶ Successful Programs:
 - ▶ Year-round emergency shelters (UGM), tiny home villages, and Housing First models.
 - ▶ Wraparound case management and sober housing.
- ▶ Many respondents noted limited successful examples and the challenges that many communities in Washington are facing in addressing homelessness.

Q6: Who should we engage in our community to help address homelessness?

- ▶ Recommended Organizations:
 - ▶ Nonprofits, civic leaders, faith organizations, businesses, community members and more.
- ▶ Engagement:
 - ▶ Workgroup contacted key organizations for focus group discussions.
 - ▶ Draft plan objectives will be shared for feedback and engagement.
- ▶ Responses indicate a strong desire for community engagement to stay informed.

Q7: Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

- ▶ Differing Perspectives:
 - ▶ Concerns about increased services potentially attracting more homeless individuals to the area.
 - ▶ Emphasis from others on the urgent need to improve services for people in need.
- ▶ Strong focus on the need for individualized solutions to address homelessness effectively.
- ▶ Opportunities for service coordination across provider organizations highlighted by several respondents.

FOCUS Groups

- *People with Lived Experience with Homelessness*: 5 participants
- *Service Providers*: 5 participants (Ellensburg Public Library, Kittitas County Public Health Department, HopeSource, Kittitas County Recovery Community Organization, APOYO)
- *Law Enforcement/Local Government*: 4 participants (Kittitas County Sheriff's Office, Kittitas Police Department, Ellensburg Police Department, City of Ellensburg)
- *Community Members*: 6 participants
- *Central Washington University*: 8 participants (students, faculty, and staff)

Q1: Is the homelessness problem in the County better, worse, or the same than 5 years ago? Why?

- ▶ Same or worse
- ▶ Increased Visibility: More individuals are seen camping, living in cars, or seeking assistance publicly.
- ▶ Community Fatigue: Reduced tolerance and collaboration challenges hinder progress.
- ▶ Economic Pressures: Rising costs and stagnant wages are pushing more people toward homelessness.
- ▶ Service Gaps: Barriers, like substance use and limited temporary housing, highlight the need for better coordinated, individualized solutions.

Q2: Do the priorities identified in the community survey resonate with you? Are these priorities? Why or why not?

- ▶ Yes: Behavioral health and job training are priorities, but housing and basic needs must come first.
- ▶ Housing First Approach: Stable, affordable housing is foundational to success in other areas.
- ▶ Behavioral Health and Stigma: Services must be low barrier and nonjudgmental to reduce stigma and encourage access.
- ▶ Substance use disorder and mental health support are seen as critical for long-term stability.
- ▶ Support for Job Training: Basic needs like showers, meals, and clothing are essential for job readiness.

Q3: Survey identified unwillingness to participate and limited availability. How can we address these barriers?

- ▶ Top Barriers: Stigma, addiction, complex processes, lack of transportation, and limited availability.
- ▶ Solutions:
 - ▶ Advocacy and Support: Personal advocates and support to navigate systems.
 - ▶ Simplified Access: Streamline intakes and improve communication about requirements.
 - ▶ Holistic Care: Expand mental health services and provide ongoing support for housing stability.
- ▶ Key Takeaway: Addressing barriers requires trust building, simplified processes, and individualized support to make services accessible.

Q4: With limited resources, what would you prioritize to address homelessness?

- ▶ Housing: Increase affordable, transitional, and permanent housing options.
- ▶ Shelters: Establish year-round, low-barrier shelters with wraparound services.
- ▶ Behavioral Health: Expand mental health and substance use treatment, emphasizing nonjudgmental, trauma-informed care.
- ▶ Public Awareness: Improve outreach, reduce stigma, and educate the community about resources.

Q5: Are the priorities from the previous plan still priorities or have they shifted?

- ▶ Participants agree existing priorities remain crucial but urge greater progress, and inclusion of behavioral health support.
- ▶ Progress in Affordable housing: But there are still waitlists for all affordable properties.
- ▶ Support services to prevent guest from being trespassed from shelter. Need alternatives to jail.
- ▶ Need for community education: humanize the issue, garnering more neighborly support.
- ▶ Other suggestions included funding for RRH programs, addressing pet policies at shelter, legislative initiatives to address high rents.

Q6: What should be the key messages to the community? How can we effectively share this information?

- ▶ Anyone Can Experience Homelessness
- ▶ Humanize & Reduce Stigma: it's not a moral failing.
- ▶ Situational Factors: Trauma, mental health, and economic challenges
- ▶ Community Impact: Ignoring the problem is costly; solutions benefit everyone.
- ▶ Key Channels to Share:
 - ▶ Social Media & Public Campaigns
 - ▶ Community Presentations
 - ▶ Personal Stories & Volunteerism

Key Take Aways



**Visibility
Increasing**



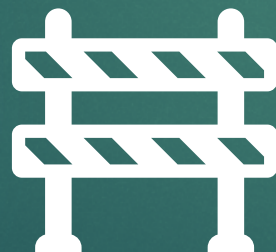
**Behavioral
Health**



**Basic Needs
First**



**Individualized
Supports**



Barrier Removal



**Collaboration &
Navigation**



**Community
Engagement**

Affordable Housing Commission Work Program

January – June 2025 (subject to change)

