

AGENDA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

October 1, 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, October 1, 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 September 10, 2025 regular meeting minutes
- 4. New Business**
 - 4.A First and Pine Proposal Revision
 - 4.B Review and feedback on Kittitas County five-year homeless housing plan
- 5. Unfinished Business**
- 6. Public Comment**
- 7. Staff Update/Discussion Items**
- 8. Commission Representative Update**
- 9. Adjournment**



For more information on the Affordable Housing Commission, contact the Community Development office at 509-962-7270



CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Minutes of Affordable Housing Commission, Regular Meeting

Date of Meeting

September 10, 2025

Time of Meeting

4:30 PM

Place of Meeting

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members

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

Present: Courtney Garzone; John Perrie, Dan Witkowski, Kim Funston

Absent: Sarah Bedsaul (excused), Delano Palmer

Others present: Lily Frey-Housing Program Manager; Dan Carlson-Community Development Director; Kathy Boots-Planning Technician; Sarah Syverson

Commissioner Funston motioned to excuse the absence of Commissioner Bedsaul. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Perrie motioned to approve the agenda. Motion passed 4-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.A June 4, 2025 Regular meeting minutes

Commissioner Funston motioned to approve the meeting minutes from June 4, 2025. Motion passed 4-0.

3.B July 10, 2025 Joint Study Session with Planning Commission meeting minutes

Commissioner Witkowski motioned to approve the meeting minutes from July 10, 2025. Motion passed 4-0.

4. New Business

4.A Review co-living housing code changes

Lily Frey informed the Commission about 2024 legislation that will require co-living to be incorporated into the planning code by the end of 2025 in the presented code amendments. She explained the definition of co-living, proposed locations where co-living can occur, and gave examples.

Commissioners discussed the value and challenges of this type of housing for specific populations. Commissioner Perrie motioned to recommend the proposed code amendments to Planning Commission and City Council. Motion passed 4-0.

4.B ADU Info Session feedback and next steps

Lily Frey informed the Commission about the feedback from the ADU Info Session survey. The ADU Info Session was received well by the community and several takeaways were useful for future sessions. The video is available on the ADU page of the City website. Commissioners would like to be able to see an enhanced FAQ section on ADUs, including resource links for homeowner tenant law, Rental Housing Association of Washington and how to contact presenters. Discussed options for future events included providing setback information, recent code changes, and photos of existing ADUs.

4.C Periodic update housing goals and policies preliminary discussion

Planning Technician Boots introduced the comprehensive plan periodic update process and invited commissioners to give feedback on the existing housing element goals and policies. Commissioners asked about the meaning of several goals and policies, reviewing the applicable programs in these cases. Commissioners provided questions and suggestions for the revision process. Commissioners discussed the level of generality that is helpful when establishing a framework for a 20-year planning period. Boots described the next steps of collecting additional feedback to create a revised draft of the goals and policies for the Commission to review. Commissioner Garzone requested a presentation from the City's housing consultant in a future meeting.

5. Unfinished Business

None.

6. Public Comment

Frey introduced Sarah Syverson to the commissioners. Syverson has applied for the vacant position on the Affordable Housing Commission. Ms. Syverson stated the ADU Info Session was good for the community.

7. Staff Update/Discussion Items

7.A Remainder of year schedule

Frey shared that the adaptive reuse / existing buildings topic requested by the commission would be on the November 5 agenda based on staff availability for this discussion. For the remainder of 2025, meetings will return to the first Wednesday of the month.

Frey noted that the Kittitas County Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee met today (September 10) and requested the AHC review the draft five-year homeless housing plan for the County and provide any feedback to that committee. This plan will appear on the October 1 agenda along with an update on ongoing housing projects.

8. Commission Representative Update

Frey stated the Addison Place contract is nearing finalization. The Planning Department met with the consultants for the comprehensive plan and discussed the land capacity analysis for housing and forthcoming public outreach events.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.



Meeting Date: October 1, 2025

City of Ellensburg

Affordable Housing Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: First and Pine Proposal Revision
Submitted by:
Department: Community Development

Suggested Motion/Action:

Recommend project as revised to City Council OR recommend withdrawing the letter of intent and reissuing request for proposals for the property

Background/Summary:

The City issued a request for proposals from February to March 2024 for the 1st and Pine property after the previous developer failed to meet milestones. The AHC heard presentations from applicants in May 2024 and recommended the Inversion Design Build project to Council.

The 2024 RFP evaluation criteria included:

Design requirements:

1. Multifamily Design.
2. Adequate parking plan.
3. Demonstration of financial means to execute the proposal.
4. A reasonable timeline for completion.

Preferred features included:

5. Accessible units (universal design, Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility, other accessibility elements)
6. Proposals that maximize density (Studio & 1BR units)
7. Proposals that maximize affordability timeline commitments
8. Proposals that account for livability (green space, resident amenities, etc.)

Council reviewed and issued a letter of intent to award the property to Inversion Design Build on the basis of their proposal (12 x 3 unit stacks – 36 total units) on August 5, 2024.

The AHC reviewed Inversion Design Build's revised design (15 townhomes with 1 ADU each – 30 total units) at their March 5, 2025 meeting and recommended it for approval to Council. Council then authorized the City Manager to sign the affordable housing agreement with Inversion Design Build for the revised project on March 17, 2025.

The developer has kept the city apprised of lending and underwriting challenges with the project as accepted by Council and recently met with City staff and submitted documentation for a revised approach to the site and development and assignment to another development entity for AHC consideration.

Previous Council Action:

As summarized in background/summary section above

Analysis:

City staff provided additional questions for the developer based on the revised proposal to assist the AHC in considering the risks and trade-offs of the revised approach, which follow the developer letter.

The AHC can consider whether to recommend the proposal as revised to City Council or recommend re-issuing an RFP for potential projects on the site.

Financial Impact:

None.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

1. 250924_E1P_ACH Letter
2. 250924_E1P_Preliminary-Materials

September 24, 2025

To:
City of Ellensburg
Affordable Housing Commission

From:
Skylar Bisom-Rapp
Partner, Planning & Development | MAPD - Manastash Architecture Planning & Development
Former Director of Operations | Inversion Design Build

Respected Commissioners,

We are writing this letter in advance of presenting an update on the First and Pine project during your October 1st meeting, in which we will address four topics:

1. The delay in project progress since we last presented to the Commission in March.
2. The winddown of Inversion Design Build and the potential transfer of the project award to a joint venture between Manastash Architecture Planning & Development (MAPD) and TM Construction
3. The need to remove rental ADUs from the project and implement a new, entirely ownership program
4. The reasons why this project remains a unique opportunity for Ellensburg and the fastest way to realize housing on the site

1. Explanation of Project Delays Since March

When Nathan Poel, the founder of Inversion, responded to the RFP for the site at 1st Avenue and N Pine Street in March 2024, the proposal was based on a single, central assumption: that a memo issued by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2023 (Mortgagee Letter 2023-17) allowed 2-4 unit buildings, sometimes known as “small multifamily buildings,” to be purchased with conventional, FHA-backed single-family mortgages, as long as they were owner-occupied. The memo clearly stated that rent from these additional units, or rent from ADUs on the property, could be counted as “Effective Income” for the purpose of qualifying the buyer for the loan. Based on this, Nathan assumed that it would be easy for qualified potential buyers to secure financing for what would be a completely novel project.

Almost exactly one year ago, convinced by the strength and ingenuity of this approach, I left a senior position at a New York architecture firm where I had worked for nine years to help Nathan realize this unique model. However, in the following months, we discovered that despite the clarity of the guidance from HUD to FHA lenders, the underwriters who approve these loans for banks were reluctant to approve loans for such an untested arrangement. For every bank we approached, the reliance on rental income for mortgage payments, the 51-year affordability covenant that would govern the properties, or the combination of the two proved to be insurmountable hurdles for the more than a dozen home loan lenders we discussed the project with.

When we last presented the project to this Commission in March, we thought that removing one of the two ADUs initially proposed for each property would simplify the project enough for some banks to get on board, as many of the initial mortgage broker contacts we spoke with highlighted the lack of comparable 3-unit properties in Ellensburg as a key obstacle to clearing underwriting for potential buyers. What we learned between the Commission's recommendation and the subsequent reapproval by the Council in March and June—when we exhausted our last home-loan lending lead—is that, despite the enthusiasm for the project from the numerous brokers and community lending directors with whom we began our discussions, the underwriting departments that ultimately authorize the loans were fundamentally uncomfortable with the premise of the project and declined to proceed.

This may have been true in any political and economic context, but the uncertainty that characterized the housing policy establishment and lending markets in 2025 created even stronger headwinds. Layoffs at HUD and the FHA, along with the discussion of privatizing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, made underwriters reluctant to endorse anything other than the most typical lending scenarios. Underwriters also noted the elimination of pilot grant programs and loan guarantees from HUD that could have mitigated the risks associated with testing new models. Additionally, broader economic uncertainty about a potential recession foregrounded the rising delinquencies that underwriters were beginning to see within their larger lending portfolios, making it difficult for lenders to consider holding on to these loans without the ability to sell them in the secondary market. By midsummer, the only commitment we received to lend on any of these homes came from our non-profit development partner, HomeSight, which only had enough liquid capital to agree to finance two of the fifteen units. Every other bank, credit union, and community lending non-profit ultimately declined to participate.

2. The Wind Down of Inversion Design Build and Transition to a New Development Team

This extended delay and the eventual dead end in the project's path to financing the sale of the units coincided with Nathan's move out of state for personal reasons in May. Initially, Nathan had hoped to continue leading Inversion remotely, with me in the role of Director of Operations managing day-to-day activities. However, this plan was predicated on First and Pine being underway by the time he left. Without the cash flow from the construction of the project and without any other project pipeline, it became clear that Inversion Design Build needed to wind down its operations. Around this same time, I began discussing forming a partnership with local architect Marc Brown, who has been practicing in Kittitas County for nearly 28 years, and my wife, Molly McNamara, who is also a licensed architect in Washington. The three of us started working together in April, along with Jordan Lowe, another Ellensburg-based licensed architect who had been my colleague at Inversion. In August, we formalized our partnership as Manastash Architecture Planning & Development, (MAPD). It was Nathan's intention upon his departure that we continue to pursue this project under the new banner if possible.

We have recently signed a Letter of Intent with TM Construction to form a Design Build Joint Venture for First and Pine, aligning the project delivery with Inversion Design Build's original vertically integrated model. TM's established presence in Ellensburg and relationships with local sub-consultants are added benefits for the project. TM owners Henry Thomas and Troy Morris both have backgrounds in construction management in addition to contracting, making them invaluable partners from preconstruction through to project closeout. All five partners—Henry, Troy, Marc, Molly, and I—will be personally invested in this project, just as we are in Ellensburg as a community. We are all local to Ellensburg and care deeply for it. We will prioritize other local firms for the subcontractors and consultants we need to realize this project. It is truly a passion project for the whole team.

Finally, HomeSight is still a core part of the development team. They remain excited to participate in the project as a nonprofit development partner and lending lead. The transfer of the project from Inversion can be accomplished with a simple contractual reassignment of the project award between Inversion and the new MAPD/TM + HomeSight Development Partnership, followed by the City Council's approval of the transfer.

3. Project Program Changes

Should our new development group be allowed to proceed with the project, the program will need to change to allow for buyer financing. We propose removing the ADUs from the

program and moving forward with simple, single-family, ownership-only townhomes. The resulting units should be financeable with conventional loans and able to be resold on the secondary market. HomeSight has confirmed that this means they could lend on every unit using their primary model, selling the loans to the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. Our plan is to offer both an accessibility-adaptable 560 SF 1BR model (which could be delivered fully accessible to a buyer who requested it) and a 900 SF, two-story, 2BR model. The units are designed to be the same width and fully interchangeable on the site plan. Because our construction lender is requiring pre-sales as a condition of closing, our proposal would not dictate the unit mix but rather allow buyers to choose during the pre-sale period, mitigating some of the market risk for the project.

The footprint of these units is smaller, resulting in more open space, both private and shared, and the project will likely be able to fit 16 or 17 units (pending a topographic and boundary survey to confirm the availability of space for parking). The site design remains similar to the previous scheme, with bars of townhomes, some facing Pine Street and some facing the alley; however, the 17-unit configuration places a bar facing 1st Avenue as well, creating welcoming street-facing entrances on both frontages. In general, at one to two stories, the project is even more aligned with the scale of the immediate residential context than the previous version.

The project would still have an HOA to maintain paths, parking, and other common areas, as well as to coordinate roof repairs and other common elements between the townhomes and contract for trash, recycling, and snow removal. Its role would be much smaller and more straightforward than the previous proposal.

4. This Project Remains a Unique Opportunity for Ellensburg

While we still believe in the eventual promise of the housing model that Nathan originally proposed last year, we are equally excited about the potential of this project. We see at least five key reasons why this project is the best way for the city to proceed with the land at 1st Avenue and N Pine Street:

1. **Unique Ownership Opportunity:** The project will provide badly needed affordable ownership opportunities for families who do not currently have other options in the county.
2. **Proof of Concept for Ownership Townhomes in Ellensburg:** To our knowledge, there are currently no examples of ownership townhomes in Ellensburg. They remain a key unrealized component of Ellensburg's Housing Action Plan for middle housing. Providing comparisons for other developers who may be interested in building similar projects across all income bands will benefit Ellensburg's overall housing stock.
3. **Proof of Concept of Building Affordable Housing without Direct Subsidy:** Affordable housing development almost always requires direct subsidy in the form of local grants, state Housing Trust Fund dollars, and/or Low-Income Housing Tax

Credits (LIHTC). These are all limited resources, and the latter two come with extensive regulatory compliance overhead that limits their accessibility to smaller developers and projects. Demonstrating that affordable housing can be built in Ellensburg solely through the Surplus Land Program without other direct subsidy opens the possibility for future projects to follow this model.

4. **Bringing HomeSight's Unique Model to Ellensburg:** Our non-profit development partner brings three decades of experience in affordable ownership lending, financial counseling, and foreclosure relief assistance to the project and to the Ellensburg community. HomeSight is excited to be the primary lending partner for this project; however, just as a buyer could use any lender for these homes at First and Pine, any qualifying buyer in Ellensburg can also utilize HomeSight's programs for almost any other property for sale in town. HomeSight is eager to become a new resource for our community, and making connections between residents and other institutions in town will be beneficial for building awareness among Ellensburg residents about the kinds of assistance available to potential buyers.

5. **The Fastest Way to Realize Housing on the Site:** While we understand that there may be some frustration with the delays on this project since the award last March, and we apologize for Inversion's part in those delays, we remain convinced that our model is the fastest way to realize housing on the First and Pine Site. Sending the project back to RFP will likely take several months of drafting, soliciting, and contract negotiation, and we feel confident that any other respondent would be dependent on grants, trust fund dollars, and/or LIHTC, such that their schedules would be tied to those award calendars. Overall, a different project would likely not be online until 2028 at the earliest. Should our new program and team structure be approved, we plan to break ground next year, with residents in the first phase homes by the first half of 2027.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. We look forward to presenting additional materials at your meeting on October 1st.

Sincerely,



Skylar Bisom-Rapp

City-provided Question Responses:

What additional market research have you done regarding unit design and market interest?

We are in the process of conducting new market research, some of which we hope to share at the October 1st meeting. Preliminary investigations demonstrate that the limited number of transactions in one- and two-bedroom units results from a limited supply, and that the prices being considered are competitive with those seen in the market.

How would you propose to handle the suggested mix of 1- and 2-BR construction?

As discussed in Section 3, we have designed the two unit types to be interchangeable and will offer them both as options to the market, allowing buyers to determine the unit mix.

How many units would you need to presell to begin construction?

Depending on the final site plan, the first phase may have 4, 5, or 6 units, corresponding to the number of pre-sales needed to begin. We aim to build a waitlist of at least 6 to 8 buyers before pre-selling begins to hedge against the risk of buyers falling through after the pre-sale.

What would happen if you can sell some units but not the full project?

Different things would happen depending on where we are in the project:

- If we are unable to sell enough units to begin construction of the first phase, the land would revert to the city.
- Once we have begun the first phase, we need to sell 14-15 of the units to break even, so we will be highly motivated to find buyers. The goal is to transition directly from the first phase into a second phase that would sell the remainder of the project. Should sales in the second phase be slow, there is a logical way to carve out a third phase, allowing second phase units to begin construction along the planned timeline.
- In the event of project default after the first phase has begun, in line with the previous agreement, the assumption is that the city would be able to reclaim the unencumbered portions of the property that had been set aside for future phases. The only complication is that there may be technical reasons why infrastructure for the later phases may need to be built at the same time as the first, and any land they are situated on would need to be encumbered by the construction loan, and thus would be subject to foreclosure by the construction lender.

Does the mix of units affect your planning for open space and any applicable community amenities?

There is less communal open space in the new plan than in the previous plan, but each unit now has a private yard, which the previous plan did not include. We believe this will be preferable to buyers.

What would the HOA responsibilities be? How would you budget for owner ability to pay for repairs and maintenance while maintaining affordability? Would the HOA have any role in affordability?

This is discussed in Section 3. The HOA would no longer be directly involved in pooling money for repairs, except for communal elements like the landscape, which aligns more with a traditional HOA role. However, HomeSight offers a range of homeowner education resources to help individuals budget for repairs and maintenance. The HOA would not necessarily have an ongoing role in affordability, though using the HOA to administer income verification for future purchasers could be an option to discuss further with City staff.

Would you propose owner occupancy requirements?

Given that any renters would be required to be income qualified, we would not propose owner occupancy requirements. However, if this is a crucial issue, we are not opposed to it.

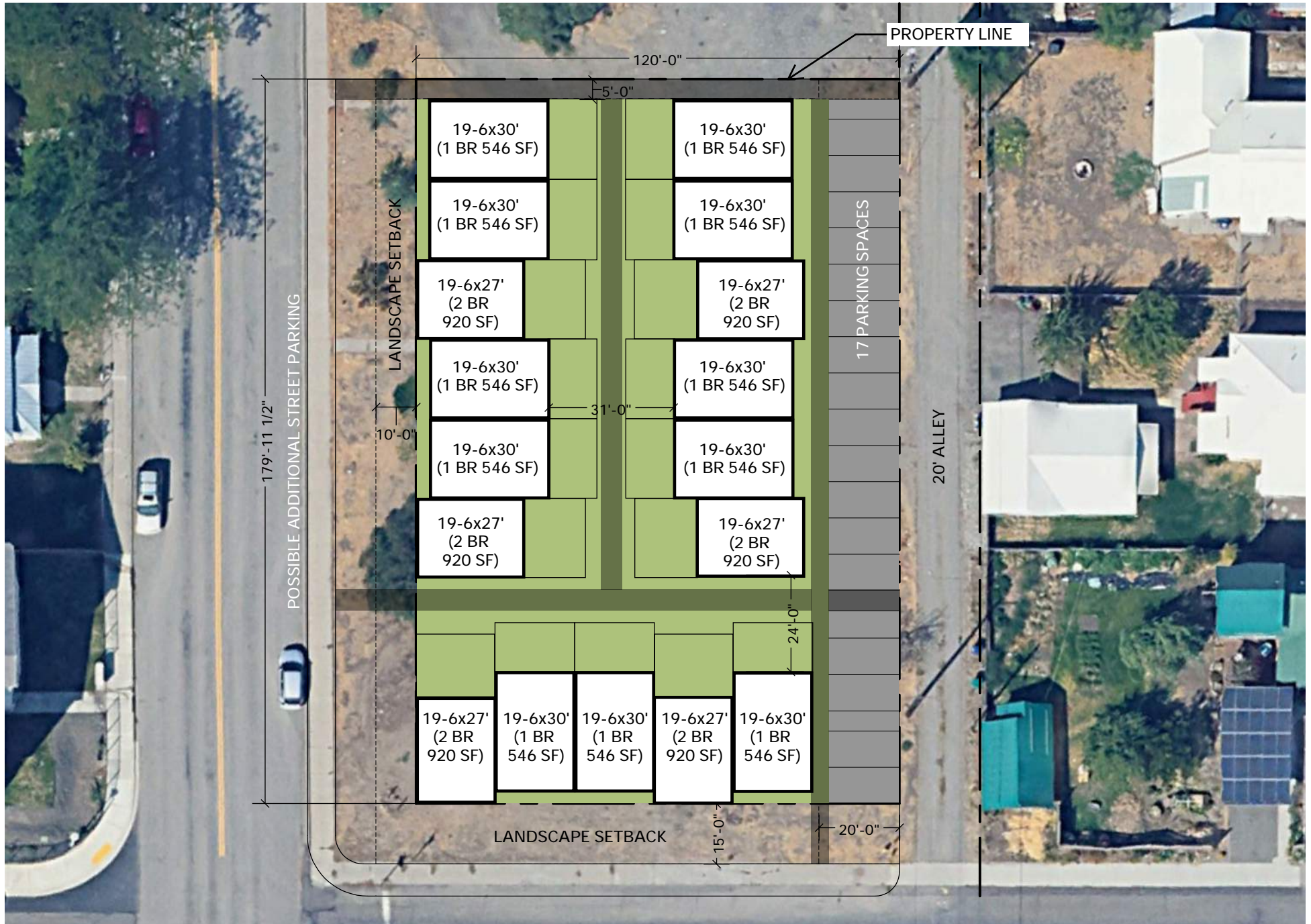
How would you plan for unit sales to subsequent owner to occur while meeting the long-term affordability requirements?

Just as in the previous project format, income qualification for future buyers will be required to receive title to the property as long as the covenant remains active (currently proposed by the City at 51 years). A simple sample income verification form was provided to the City earlier in the year, which we recommend continuing to use. Either the HOA or City staff would certify the receipt of pay stubs and W-2 forms, along with an affidavit from the purchaser. The certification would be required by the title company before closing. In other jurisdictions, having the City be the adjudicating body is common, but we could look into incorporating this into the HOA and then contracting out that responsibility to someone else.

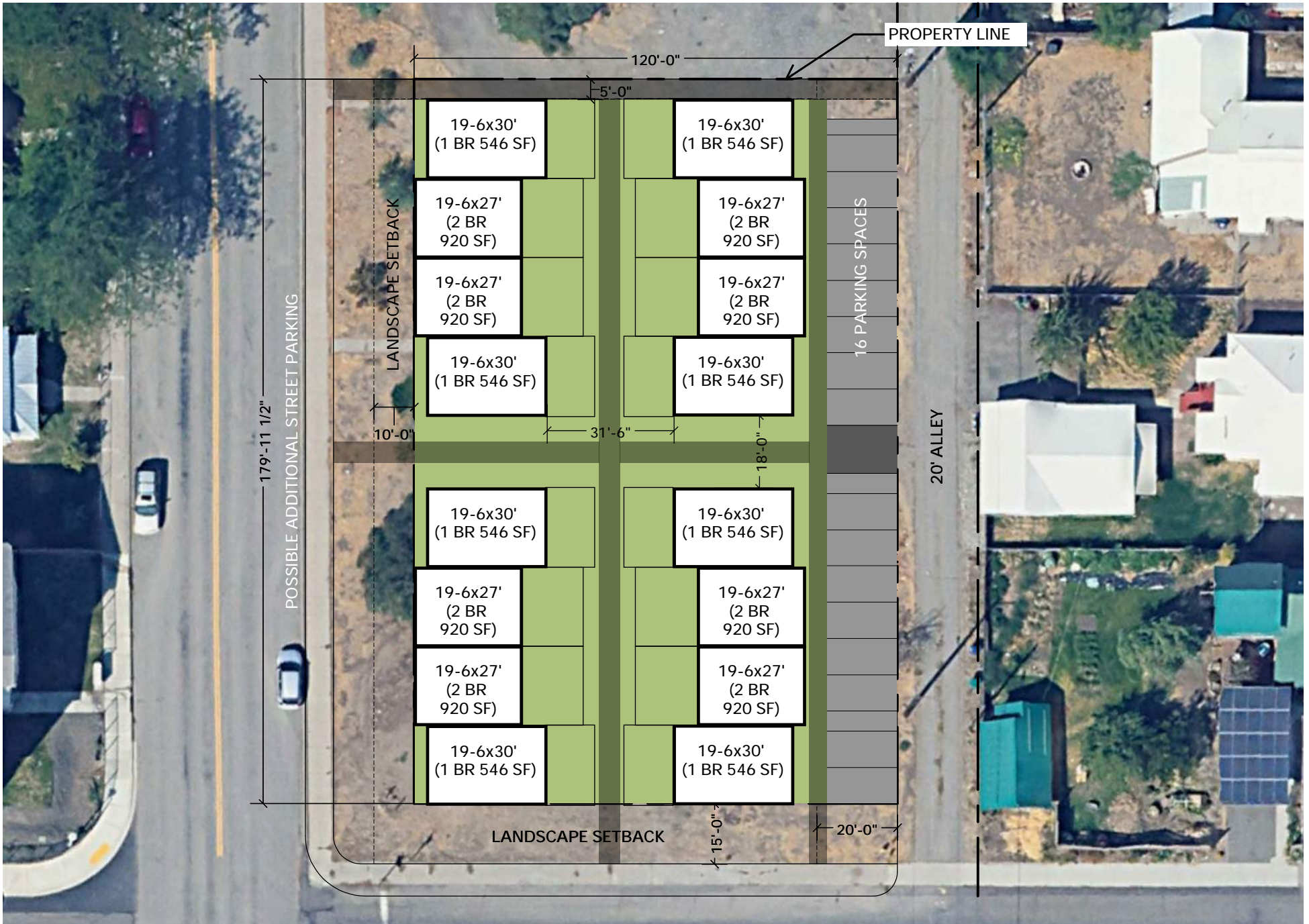
What risks remain for this redesigned project and how do you plan to manage them to ensure completion?

Construction risk is inherent to any development project, though it is mitigated in our case by the presence of the contracting team within the development group, aligning incentives around project completion.

Market and demand risk is also a potential issue, though the pre-sale model reduces exposure for both the developer and the city, as delinquency would result in the reversion of the land rather than a drawn-out foreclosure process. Contingencies regarding slow sales are discussed earlier in this Q&A.



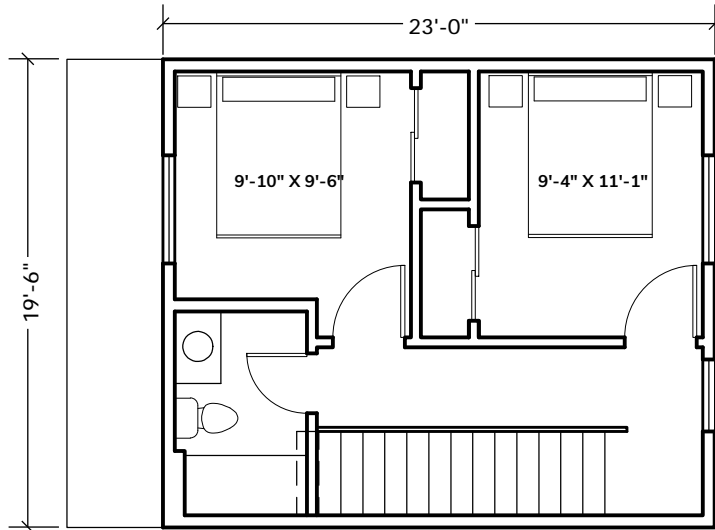
PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN DIAGRAM - OPT 01
17 UNITS (6 2BR, 11 1BR - PENDING UNIT MIX)
17 PARKING SPOTS



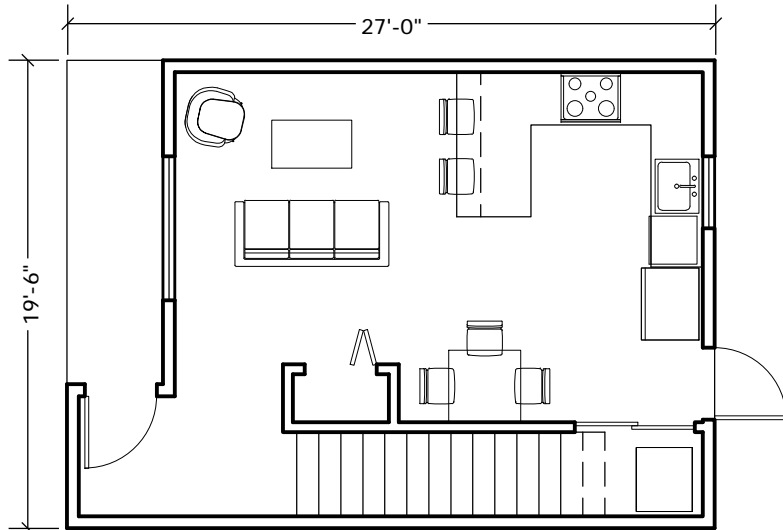
PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN DIAGRAM - OPT 02
16 UNITS (8 2BR, 8 1BR - PENDING UNIT MIX)
16 PARKING SPOTS

TWO BEDROOM

(+/- 920 GSF)



LEVEL 2: 449 GSF
(23 X 19'-6")

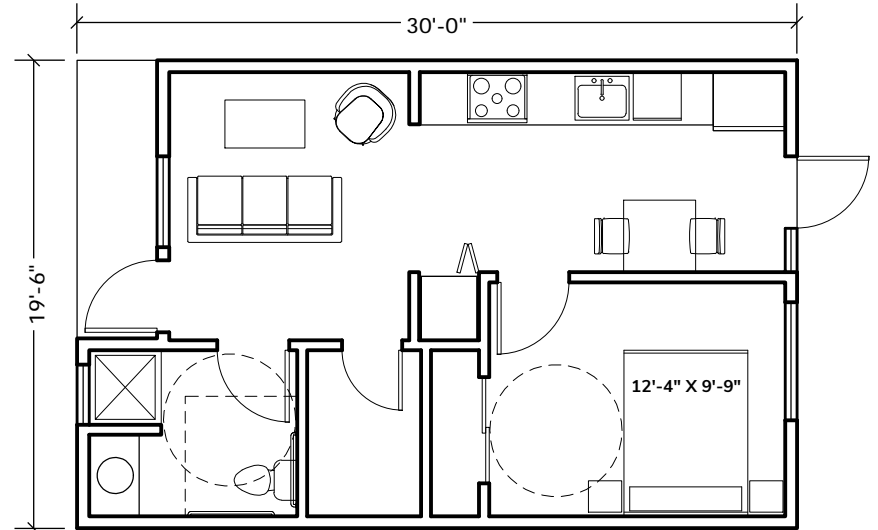


LEVEL 1: 471 GSF
(27 X 19'-6")

2 BR - 920 GSF

ONE BEDROOM (ADA)

(+/- 546 GSF)



1 BR - 546 GSF
(30 X 19'-6")

PRELIMINARY UNIT LAYOUTS

1 & 2 BEDROOM TOWNHOMES

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Meeting Date: October 1, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Affordable Housing Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Review and feedback on Kittitas County five-year homeless housing plan

Submitted by:

Department: Community Development

Suggested Motion/Action:

Provide any agreed feedback to the Kittitas County Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee

Background/Summary:

Under RCW 43.185C.050, all counties in Washington are required to prepare a five-year homeless housing plan based on guidance from the Washington State Department of Commerce. The Board of County Commissioners approves the plan and the County's Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee (HAHC) is tasked with reviewing annual progress on the plan and uses its framework to allocate their homeless funding. The plan update is due by December 31, 2025. The plan applies to all parts of the county (cities, towns, and unincorporated areas) unless a city formally opts to create its own plan. All counties are required to include the statewide homeless housing strategic plan goals and may add locally-specific goals if desired.

HopeSource led development of this five-year plan with widespread input. The City of Ellensburg has been involved in plan development through Councilmember Goodloe and Housing Program Manager Frey serving on the steering group to develop the five-year plan. Councilmember Goodloe is a member of the County's HAHC. The City, County and HopeSource also received a Coordinating Low-Income Housing Planning grant that partially funded the development of the plan.

Previous Council Action:

At the February 2, 2025 meeting the AHC reviewed survey and focus group data used in the development of the five-year plan.

At its September 10, 2025 meeting, the County Homelessness and Affordable Housing Committee asked if the City had any additional feedback on the plan.

Analysis:

Commerce has reviewed the draft Kittitas County plan and provided limited feedback around, inclusion of estimates of service levels, prioritization criteria of homeless housing capital projects, and formatting for integration into the final version. Under the grant that supported our collaboration on this plan, the City of Ellensburg planned to align relevant portions of the Housing element of our Comprehensive Plan with the strategies and figures provided in this

countywide plan to meet homeless housing needs.

Cities are listed as the lead or a key partner for the following actions identified in the plan :

Goal 1: Equitable, Accountable, Transparent System

Action: Hold community meetings / forums

Goal 5: House Everyone in Settings That Meet Their Needs

Action: Advance pipeline of affordable/supportive housing

Action: Policy/code for flexible housing (ADUs, shared, congregate, sober living)

The plan identifies alignment with current City of Ellensburg Comprehensive plan goals, but some of these do not clearly map as presented. Possible alternate aligned goals and policies could be

Goal H-2: Allow and encourage and accommodate a variety of housing types and densities to meet all economic segments of the community

Policy 2.C - Consider housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations and procedures.

Policy 2.D - Create and preserve ADA-accessible and affordable housing opportunities locally and with a regional perspective.

Policy 2.E - Identify potential properties to allow for emergency housing, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing

Financial Impact:

None at this time.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

1. Updated - KC 5yr Plan 2025_Draft

Kittitas County 5-Year Homelessness Plan

Executive Summary

The Kittitas County 2025–2030 Homeless Housing Plan provides a coordinated roadmap for addressing homelessness¹ and housing instability² over the next five years. Grounded in local data, community input, and best practices, the plan outlines shared goals and strategies to ensure that all residents of Kittitas County have access to housing that meets their needs, and the individualized support required to maintain stability.

Homelessness is a complex challenge. It affects individuals, families, and entire communities. Addressing it requires clear priorities, collaboration, and a sustained commitment to measurable progress. This plan sets that direction.

Key goals

- Promote an equitable, transparent, and accountable homeless response system.
- Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce.
- Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible.
- Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and risk of harm.
- Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.

Key priorities

- Expand the supply of affordable and supportive housing.
- Strengthen partnerships across sectors.
- Improve access to behavioral health services.
- Enhance prevention, diversion, and outreach efforts.
- Build community awareness and foster public support.

¹ **Homelessness** is the lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. It includes people who:

- Sleep in places not meant for habitation (cars, parks, abandoned buildings)
- Stay in emergency shelters or transitional housing
- Flee domestic violence or unsafe conditions without stable housing
- Youth or young adults who rely on temporary arrangements like “couch-surfing” without a permanent home

² **Housing instability** is the condition of being at risk of losing safe and adequate housing. It includes people who:

- Face eviction, foreclosure, or loss of housing
- Struggle to pay rent, utilities, or other basic housing costs
- Move frequently or rely on short-term, unstable housing
- Live in overcrowded or unsafe conditions that threaten long-term stability

Current context

Housing costs in Kittitas County continue to rise faster than incomes, placing severe strain on low-income households. The Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) projects a need for approximately 1,351 new housing units over the next five years, with the greatest demand among extremely low- and very low-income households.

The 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) ³Count identified 26 people experiencing homelessness in the county. Recent counts have fluctuated sharply, with a spike in 2024 followed by a decline in 2025, influenced by new housing placements and limited outreach capacity. These shifts demonstrate how homelessness is shaped by both local conditions and the way data is collected, underscoring the importance of coordinated and responsive strategies.

Recent federal changes have also created uncertainty in homelessness policy and funding. For Kittitas County, this makes flexibility, strong local planning, and regional collaboration essential to securing resources while ensuring strategies remain centered on the needs of our community.

Moving forward

Implementation of this plan will be guided by the Homeless and Affordable Housing Committee, with broad engagement from public, private, and nonprofit partners. Progress will be measured through data-driven outcomes, community feedback, and regular evaluation.

Homelessness remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Kittitas County, but by working together, sustaining strong partnerships, and maintaining a shared focus on dignity, housing stability, and community well-being, meaningful progress is both possible and within reach.

About the 5 Year Plan

The *Kittitas County 2025–2030 Homeless Housing Plan* is a strategic framework that outlines how the county will respond to homelessness over the next five years. It sets shared goals, defines priorities, and identifies concrete actions to reduce homelessness and improve housing stability across the county. The plan serves as a tool for coordinating local efforts, aligning funding, and guiding decision-making across public agencies, nonprofits, and other partners involved in housing and homelessness services.

The plan is required by state law (RCW 43.185C) and must comply with guidance from the Washington State Department of Commerce. It applies to all parts of the county (cities, towns, and unincorporated areas) unless a city formally opts to create its own plan. Once adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, the plan becomes the official roadmap for how local document recording fees and other public funds related to homelessness are used.

This plan exists because homelessness affects individuals, families, and communities throughout Kittitas County. It helps ensure that limited resources are used effectively, that people with the greatest needs are prioritized, and that

³ **Point-in-Time (PIT) Count** is a survey conducted on a single day each January that records the number of people experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered. It is used to track trends, guide planning, and meet federal reporting requirements.

the community is working toward shared outcomes. It also aligns with key housing, health, and service priorities in local Comprehensive Plans, supporting a coordinated approach across county and city efforts. More than a requirement, this plan is a commitment to making homelessness in Kittitas County rare, brief, and non-recurring. A reference table summarizing this alignment is included in the Appendix.

Previous Plan and Achievements

Kittitas County adopted its most recent 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan in 2019. That plan outlined five key objectives aligned with state and federal priorities: identify and engage people experiencing homelessness, prioritize those with the greatest needs, ensure swift access to permanent housing, project system impact, and address racial disparities in service delivery.

Over the past five years, progress has been made across all five areas. Highlights include:

- **Functional zero for veteran homelessness** - Kittitas County became the first in Washington to reach this milestone.
- **Emergency shelter expansion** - A seven-day-per-week winter shelter system was established, providing consistent access to safe overnight space during the coldest months.
- **Rapid rehousing and permanent housing** - Dozens of new housing units were created through local investments, including transitional and youth-specific options.
- **Housing First adoption** - Local providers implemented low-barrier, housing-first approaches that reduce entry requirements and focus on stability and support.
- **Coordinated outreach and data tracking** - Mobile outreach, by-name lists, and improved system coordination has increased responsiveness and system alignment.

Annual reports from 2021 to 2024 reflect growing alignment across service providers, increased use of Coordinated Entry, and measurable housing outcomes, including exit rates to permanent housing exceeding 80% in some years.

While gaps remain, especially in affordable housing stock, behavioral health support, and rural access, this work laid a foundation for the next five-year cycle. This plan builds on the progress of the last five years while recognizing where continued focus and innovation are needed.

Local & State Context and Background

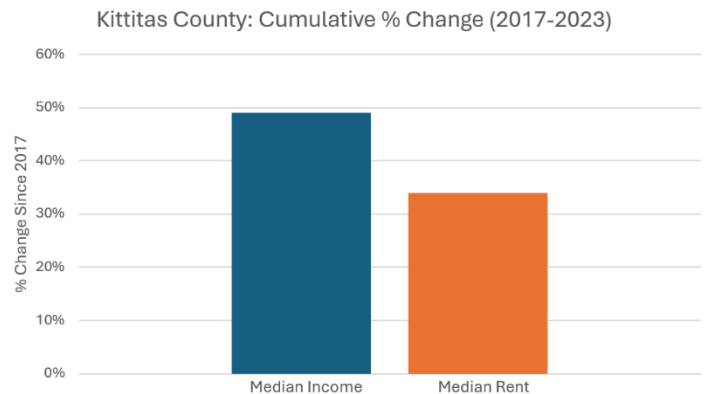
This plan is closely aligned with housing, community development, and health goals articulated in the Comprehensive Plans of Kittitas County and its cities. Across these plans, common priorities include increasing affordable housing, promoting housing stability, supporting vulnerable populations, and fostering community resilience. These shared priorities are fully reflected in the objectives and strategies of this plan.

Current State Landscape in Kittitas County

As of the 2024 Preliminary Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, there were 26 individuals experiencing homelessness in Kittitas County, 19 sheltered and 7 unsheltered, across 20 total households.

The factors contributing to homelessness in Kittitas County reflect broader state and national trends, but with a distinctly rural context:

Housing Costs vs. Income: Between 2017 and 2023, the median gross rent in Kittitas County increased by nearly 50%, while median household income remained below the state average (U.S. Census ACS 5-Year Estimates). As of 2023, nearly 1 in 5 Kittitas County renters spent more than 50% of their income on housing, classifying them as severely cost-burdened.



Limited Affordable Housing: The Washington State Department of Commerce projects that Kittitas County will need more than 2,000 additional housing units by 2044 to meet demand across all income levels. Low vacancy rates, particularly for units affordable to extremely low-income households, make it difficult for individuals to secure or maintain stable housing.

Behavioral Health and Substance Use: Local focus groups and service provider reports identify untreated mental illness and substance use as common risk factors. According to the Washington State Department of Health, rural counties like Kittitas often face gaps in behavioral health service availability, particularly for outpatient care, detox, and supportive housing programs.

Systemic Barriers: Transportation, documentation requirements, and stigma continue to prevent many individuals from accessing services. Community survey respondents and participants in the 2025 5 Year Plan focus group sessions noted that stigma and judgment, both from the public and providers, are key deterrents to seeking help.

Despite these challenges, Kittitas County has built a network of crisis response resources. Services include emergency shelters, rapid rehousing programs, and case-managed transitional housing, offered by agencies such as HopeSource, Catholic Charities, ASPEN, and Comprehensive Healthcare. These are coordinated through a centralized Coordinated Entry system and prioritizing immediate access to services.

In the State Fiscal Year 2024, Over \$3.3 million was invested in Kittitas County for housing and homelessness programs, according to the WA Department of Commerce Annual Expenditure Report. These funds supported prevention, shelter operations, outreach, and rental assistance, underscoring the importance of sustained funding to address the region’s needs.

To ensure that local efforts align with long-term housing needs, Washington State requires each county to estimate how many units of permanent supportive housing (PSH⁴) and emergency housing⁵ will be needed over time. These estimates generated using the state’s Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT), help translate population growth, homelessness trends, and local housing gaps into concrete targets. For Kittitas County, the HAPT projects a need for at least 509 units of PSH and 119 units of emergency housing by 2045. These figures provide a data-informed foundation for planning capital projects, setting program priorities, and making policy decisions. Including them in

⁴Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Long-term affordable housing with optional support services for people with chronic homelessness or high housing barriers.

⁵Emergency Housing: Short-term housing with minimal barriers, designed to provide immediate shelter for people experiencing homelessness while they seek permanent housing.

this plan ensures that local strategies remain grounded in projected need and support coordinated investment across the region.

State and Federal Trends

Homelessness in Washington State continues to rise, with the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count reporting 31,554 individuals experiencing homelessness—a 12.5% increase from 28,036 in 2023. This positions Washington as having the third-highest homeless population in the U.S., following California and New York. Notably, chronic homelessness surged by 56% between 2023 and 2024, accounting for nearly half of the state's homeless population.

In contrast, Kittitas County reported 91 individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2024 PIT Count, with approximately 65 sheltered and 26 unsheltered. While the county's numbers are lower, the challenges mirror statewide trends, including rising housing costs and limited access to behavioral health services ([ellensburgwa.gov](https://www.ellensburgwa.gov)).

The Washington State Homeless Housing Strategic Plan (2024–2029) outlines five key objectives:

- Promoting equity, transparency, and accountability
- Strengthening the homeless service provider workforce
- Preventing episodes of homelessness whenever possible
- Prioritizing people with the greatest barriers to housing
- Ensuring everyone has access to housing that meets their needs.

Nationally, the 2023 PIT Count identified 653,104 people experiencing homelessness in the U.S., a record high, constituting a 12% increase from the previous year.

At the federal level, significant changes in 2025 are reshaping how homelessness policy and funding are coordinated. The elimination of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) ended the central body that previously aligned efforts across HUD, HHS, VA, and other federal agencies. In its absence, priorities are now determined independently by each agency, creating a more complex and less predictable environment for communities seeking federal support.

For Kittitas County, this shift increases the importance of monitoring multiple federal agencies and adapting to changing program requirements. Aligning with state strategies may improve access to resources, but our state's political differences with the current administration could reduce the amount of passthrough funding available. These changes highlight the need for our community to maintain flexibility in planning, to strengthen local and regional collaboration, and to remain responsive to evolving federal and state priorities while ensuring that our strategies continue to reflect local needs.

Community Engagement

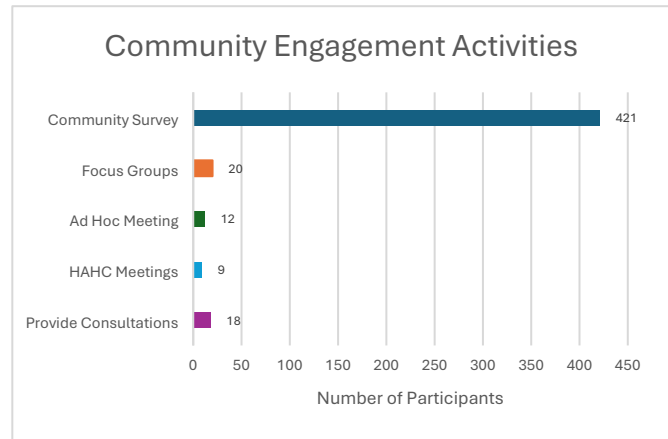
Washington State's Local Plan Guidance requires that counties involve a broad range of stakeholders in developing homeless housing plans, including people with lived experience of homelessness, local governments, service providers, and the public. But more than a requirement, community engagement is essential to building a plan that is practical, responsive, and community owned.

Homelessness affects the entire community, and solutions are more effective when they are shaped by the people most directly impacted—whether they are trying to access services, deliver them, or navigate the housing system. Community input brings clarity to local gaps, validates or challenges assumptions, and fosters collective responsibility for addressing homelessness.

To develop this plan, Kittitas County carried out a broad engagement strategy in fall 2024:

Community Survey: Open to all residents and distributed through nonprofits, direct service locations, and online platforms.

Focus Groups: Facilitated by an independent consultant, with participants representing lived experience, service providers, law enforcement and local government, Central Washington University, and community members.



Stakeholder Meetings: One-on-one and small group discussions with municipalities, housing and health partners, and frontline workers

This process informed the priorities and strategies laid out in this plan.

Community Survey Key Insights

Survey responses reflected shared concerns across diverse perspectives:

- Dedicated support for more affordable housing, emergency shelter, and expanded behavioral health services.
- Widespread concern that stigma, limited-service capacity, and complicated systems prevent people from accessing help.
- Differing opinions on the role of public resources, with some emphasizing individual responsibility and others advocating for expanded support
- A clear desire for community-driven solutions, collaboration across agencies, and more public education about the root causes of homelessness

Focus Group Takeaways

Across five focus groups, participants agreed that homelessness in Kittitas County has become more visible and harder to ignore. Common themes included the lack of low-barrier housing options, difficulty navigating the system, and a disconnect between what’s available and what people actually need.

“People want help and want to get sober, but it’s hard to stay sober on the streets.”

—Participant with lived experience.

“It’s not that people are unwilling to engage—it’s that they’re tired of being treated badly or getting stuck in a system that doesn’t work.”

—Service provider participant.

Participants consistently emphasized the need for peer advocates, simplified processes, and a shift in how the community talks about and treats people experiencing homelessness. These ideas helped shape the plan's focus on low-barrier access, dignity-centered services, and targeted investment in critical supports.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

The following Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles provide a shared framework to guide Kittitas County's collective efforts to prevent and address homelessness. These elements reflect community values and priorities, shaped through public engagement and collaboration across sectors.

Vision

Everyone in Kittitas County has access to housing that is safe, affordable, and appropriate, combined with the individualized services needed to foster long-term stability, dignity, and community belonging.

Mission

To build and sustain a comprehensive, coordinated system that prevents and addresses homelessness by meeting immediate needs and supporting long-term stability for all people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Kittitas County.

Guiding Principles

- Client-Centered Care: Services should recognize the humanity of every person and be delivered in a person-centered, individualized, and trauma-informed manner, supporting both immediate needs and long-term outcomes.
- Equity and Inclusion: All individuals across Kittitas County should be able to access housing and services without unnecessary barriers, through fair, open, and consistent systems.
- Collaboration: Strong partnerships and cross-sector coordination are essential to achieving shared goals, maximizing impact, and ensuring efficient use of resources.
- Data-Informed Decisions: Planning, funding, and programs should be guided by objective data, measurable outcomes, and accountability to ensure resources are used effectively and continuously improved.
- Transparency and Accountability: Processes and decision-making should be transparent, grounded in clear communication, and accountable both to the people served and to the broader Kittitas County community.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system.

A community-wide effort to address homelessness requires a clear, coordinated, and transparent system. Kittitas County has multiple providers and services working to support individuals experiencing homelessness, but public understanding and awareness about how these resources fit together can be improved. Increasing transparency and accountability within the homeless crisis response system builds public trust and ensures resources are used effectively.

To achieve this, the community will focus on clear communication, regular reporting, and ongoing engagement. This includes:

- Holding regular community meetings and forums to provide updates, gather input, and build awareness.
- Producing clear and accessible annual progress reports.
- Developing a communications and educational toolkit, including a visual system map, messaging, and key resources, that municipalities, service providers, and local organizations can use to share accurate, consistent information about homelessness, the local response system, and available services.
- Strengthening the use of the Coordinated Entry system, ensuring consistent and fair access to housing and services, minimizing duplication, and maximizing efficiency.

The goal is to increase transparency so that everyone, residents, service providers, elected officials, and people experiencing homelessness clearly understand how the system works, where to access help, and how public resources are being used. This is an ongoing effort that will evolve as the system matures, and the community needs change.

Goal 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce.

A strong and sustainable homeless response system depends on the capacity, resilience, and well-being of the people working within it. Retaining skilled staff and fostering a culture of shared learning and support are essential to improving service quality and building a more consistent, collaborative homeless response system across Kittitas County.

Funding capacity building and staff development remains a critical gap across the non-profit and social services sector. Addressing this need is important to building a sustainable workforce and ensuring high-quality services for people experiencing homelessness in our community.

To achieve this, the community will focus on creating professional development opportunities for service providers and volunteers, including:

- Providing training and cross-agency learning opportunities to strengthen staff skills in trauma-informed care, client-centered approaches, boundaries, wellness and resilience, and consistent service delivery practices.
- Exploring the creation of a dedicated funding source, through public, private, or philanthropic sources, to support workforce development, capacity building, and training needs across the homeless response system.
- Engaging volunteers, interns, and community members to support providers by creating structured opportunities, pathways for involvement, and training to strengthen long-term workforce capacity.

This goal focuses on strengthening the professional workforce engaged in the local homelessness response system. Shared learning also contributes to broader collaboration and communication across the system, reinforcing efforts outlined in Goal 1.

Goal 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible.

Preventing homelessness is both humane and financially responsible. Studies⁶⁷ show it is less costly to prevent a housing crisis through diversion or eviction prevention, than to assist individuals and families after they become

⁶ National League of Cities: [Eviction Prevention as a Tool for Cities](#)

⁷ Urban Institute: [Cost Effectiveness of Eviction Prevention Programs](#)

homeless. In addition to the financial benefit, keeping individuals and families stably housed avoids the trauma of homelessness and reduces the demand on emergency services and housing programs. Kittitas County already supports prevention through diversion, eviction prevention efforts, and barrier removal funds⁸, but coordination, and communication can be strengthened.

Kittitas County's approach to achieving this goal focuses on improving coordination and early intervention through community partnerships. Prevention must be seen as a shared responsibility across the system, including non-profit providers, public agencies, private organizations, and landlords. Partnerships with the private sector, particularly property owners and managers, are an important part of this effort, and creating opportunities to engage landlords as active participants in prevention is a priority.

The county will pursue this goal through the following strategies:

- Improve coordination of existing prevention resources across the community, with an emphasis on aligning barrier-removal funds, strengthening data coordination, and supporting shared evaluation of outcomes.
- Strengthen partnerships with private organizations and landlords to increase early identification of households at risk of homelessness and promote collaborative prevention efforts.
- Expand and support diversion practices that resolve housing crises without system entry, including consistent referral pathways and cross-sector collaboration.
- Increase public awareness of available prevention resources and promote early help-seeking by individuals and families at risk of homelessness.

Goal 4: Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm.

Individuals with the greatest barriers to housing stability and the highest risk of harm often face the most complex challenges, chronic health conditions, severe behavioral health needs, generational poverty, or histories of trauma. Many are also the least well served by traditional systems and may not consistently engage with available services. Ensuring that the community prioritizes assistance for these individuals requires clear definitions, strong partnerships, and shared understanding across sectors.

Kittitas County recognizes that refining prioritization practices and defining "high risk" will require further community discussion and collaboration. This work must balance equity, safety, and system capacity, while responding flexibly to the changing needs of the population. It will also require shared guidance on how partners, including service providers, law enforcement, healthcare providers, schools, and businesses can effectively support and refer individuals with high needs.

The communication toolkit being developed under Goal 1 and the training and learning opportunities outlined in Goal 2 will help build a more consistent community approach to responding to high-risk individuals. These tools will include practical guidance for frontline staff, community members, and local organizations on how to engage with individuals safely and appropriately.

The community will pursue this goal through the following strategies:

⁸ Barrier Removal Funds: Flexible financial assistance used to help individuals and families overcome obstacles (transportation, identification documents, utility deposits, rental application fees, minor repairs, etc.) that may prevent someone from securing or maintaining housing.

- Strengthen collaboration between non-profit, public, faith-based, and private organizations to improve identification of high-need individuals to support consistent triage and prioritization of high-need individuals.
- Expand and support street outreach and proactive engagement with individuals at greatest risk of harm, with particular attention to those not connected to traditional service pathways.
- Support approaches that seek to reduce harm and promote engagement, even when individuals are not ready to fully engage.

Goal 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.

Housing is the foundation for stability, well-being, and community connection. Yet stable housing does not look the same for every person. For some, it may mean a one-bedroom apartment; for others, shared housing, sober living, staying with family or friends, or other flexible arrangements may be preferred or most appropriate. Kittitas County’s goal is to end homelessness, not to prescribe one standard pathway, but to ensure that individuals and families can access housing that supports their stability and meets their needs.

Recognizing the constraints of the local housing market and the varied needs of higher-barrier individuals, the community will pursue creative, person-centered approaches. This includes advancing policies that enable more flexible housing options, supporting individuals who choose non-traditional forms of stability, and mitigating the public and financial impacts when individuals decline traditional housing offers.

This focus on flexible, affordable housing options supports key objectives found in the Comprehensive Plans of Kittitas County, Cle Elum, Ellensburg, and Roslyn, all of which call for expanded housing opportunities across income levels and for populations with special needs.

- The county will pursue this goal through the following strategies:
- Increase the supply and availability of permanent housing options, including both traditional and non-traditional models, to reflect the diverse needs of individuals and families.
- Expand access to rental assistance programs and supportive services that help individuals secure and maintain stable housing.
- Advance policy coordination and advocacy to promote flexible housing solutions, reduce barriers to development, and support innovative housing approaches that meet local needs.

Addressing Challenges

Community engagement through surveys, focus groups, and direct feedback identified persistent challenges that must be addressed to build a more responsive and effective homeless response system in Kittitas County. Addressing them directly will help advance this plan’s vision of ensuring that all residents have access to stable housing and the individualized support they need to thrive, consistent with the plan’s guiding principles of client-centered care, access for all, collaboration, and accountability.

Reducing Reluctance to Participate

Stigma, trauma, and mistrust of systems are well-established barriers to participation among people experiencing homelessness. Community input reinforced this reality, with many individuals citing fear of judgment, concerns about system involvement, or prior negative experiences as reasons for not seeking help. National best practices

consistently emphasize that building trust and offering low-barrier, trauma-informed engagement are foundational to increasing participation (USICH, HUD).

In alignment with these principles, Kittitas County is already expanding outreach efforts and improving frontline training to build trust and engagement (Goals 2 and 4). The forthcoming communications and educational toolkit (Goal 1) will further equip providers and community partners to present services clearly and respectfully. These efforts will help ensure that individuals feel safe and welcome when seeking assistance—supporting the plan’s commitment to client-centered care and equitable access.

Improving Service Access

Complex intake processes, inconsistent communication, and fragmented navigation pathways create unnecessary barriers to accessing services—a challenge highlighted by both local stakeholders and national best practices (HUD Coordinated Entry guidance, Housing First models). Individuals in crisis benefit from simple, clear, and coordinated pathways to services, yet community feedback indicated that many still encounter confusion and delays.

Improving service access directly supports the plan’s goals of transparency, accountability, and collaboration (Goal 1) and aligns with national calls for streamlined Coordinated Entry systems and low-barrier service models. It also reflects priorities found in local Comprehensive Plans, which emphasize equity, community health, and inclusive service delivery. Kittitas County will continue to strengthen Coordinated Entry and cross-system coordination (Goals 1 and 3), while also simplifying intake and referral processes and promoting consistent communication across partners. These efforts will help ensure that people receive timely and appropriate support, further advancing the plan’s vision of access for all.

Expanding Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral health needs, including mental health and substance use, are both a cause and consequence of homelessness. Community input consistently emphasized that addressing these needs in isolation from housing is ineffective. National research strongly supports integrated models that combine housing with behavioral health services⁹, as these approaches lead to better outcomes and housing stability¹⁰.

Expanding behavioral health integration aligns directly with the plan’s emphasis on client-centered care, holistic support, and individualized services (Goals 2, 4, and 5). Kittitas County is building on existing partnerships with behavioral health providers and will continue to promote integration through training, cross-sector collaboration, and policy advocacy. These efforts will help ensure that individuals with complex needs receive the coordinated support necessary to achieve and maintain stable housing.

Current Resources and Future Needs

Our community has made considerable progress and built a strong network of services, yet the need continues to outpace available resources. Achieving the vision outlined in this plan, where every person in Kittitas County has access to stable housing and individualized support, will require a continued commitment to aligning resources with community needs. Community feedback, national best practices, and analysis of current data and projected needs

⁹ SAMHSA [Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices \(EBP\) Kit](#)

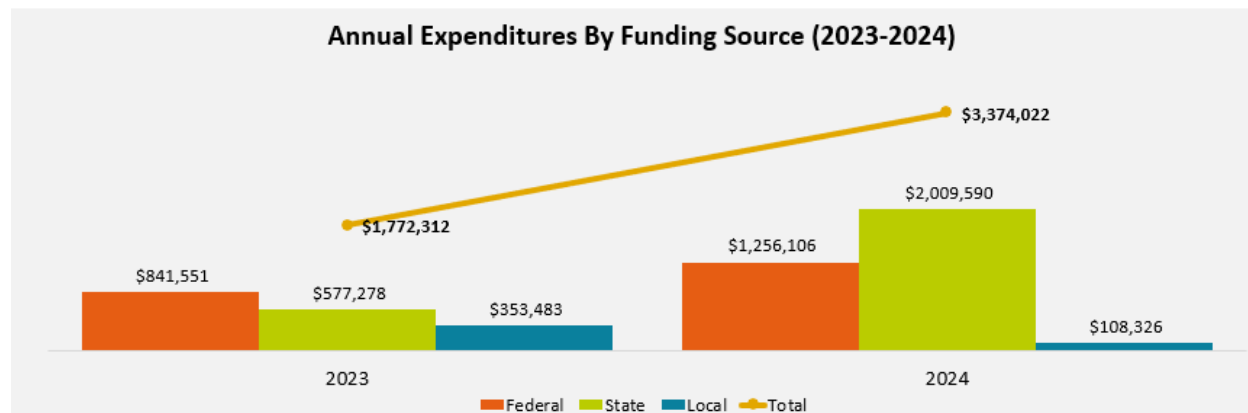
¹⁰ NASEM [Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness \(2018\)](#)

all point to a clear conclusion: Kittitas County’s homeless response system must both expand and evolve to meet increasing demand and address persistent gaps in housing and services.

This section provides an overview of current investments and a forward-looking assessment of the resources that will be needed over the next five years to support the plan’s goals.

Current Resources

Kittitas County’s homeless response system is currently funded through a mix of federal, state, local, and private resources, as detailed *Appendix G: Survey of Fund Sources*. These resources support a network of community-based organizations that provide critical housing and support services.



Source: Washington State Department of Commerce

Local funds:

- *Mental Health Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.460)*: supports mental health and drug treatment services.
- *Affordable and Supportive Housing Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.540)*: supports affordable and supportive housing development and operations.
- *Document Recording Fees*: supports shelter operations, affordable housing, and homeless housing programs.

State funds:

- *Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG)*: primary flexible funding source for homeless housing and assistance.

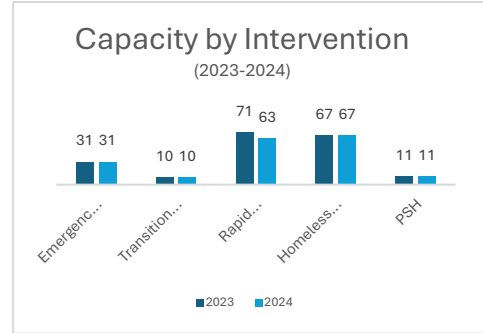
Federal funds:

- *HUD Continuum of Care Grant*: funds permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing.
- *HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Grants*: supports a range of youth housing and service interventions.

These investments support a range of services currently provided by organizations such as HopeSource, Comprehensive Healthcare, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Charities, and other community-based agencies. The system delivers emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, prevention services, street outreach, and supportive services.

Current service capacity

Based on the most recent Estimated Service Levels calculated by Washington State Department of Commerce, Kittitas County currently funds 31 emergency shelter beds, 11 permanent supportive housing beds, and prevention and rehousing services for approximately 183 households annually. While outreach and supportive services are also funded, overall enrollment capacity remains limited.



Projected Resource Needs

The gap between current housing capacity and projected need is significant, particularly for low-income households and those with the highest barriers to housing stability. Meeting the needs identified through community engagement and the HAPT tool will require scaling both housing and service capacity. The HAPT tool (Attachment C), which projects housing needs through 2045, estimates that Kittitas County will require approximately 5,405 additional housing units across all income levels. For the purposes of this five-year plan, this translates to roughly 1,351 new units, with the greatest needs concentrated among extremely and very low-income households and individuals requiring supportive housing.

- The county would need 88 additional emergency shelter beds available to meet the 2030 estimated need.
- In addition to the 11 PSH units available, to meet the 2030 need, 133 additional units are needed.
- 473 units for Extremely Low-Income households (0-30% AMI¹¹)
- 258 units for Very Low-Income households (30-50% AMI)
- 94 units for Low-Income households (50-80% AMI)

Projected Housing Needs for Kittitas County (20-Year Projection, 5-Year Planning Focus)

	Permanent Housing Needs by Income Level (% of Area Median Income)								Emergency Housing Needs (Temporary)
	Total	0-30%		>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	
Countywide Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	19,975	841	1	2,799	6,330	2,814	2,519	4,671	119
Countywide Total Housing Needs (2045)	25,380	2,734	577	3,832	6,709	3,106	2,800	5,622	119
Countywide Additional Units Needed (2020-2045)	5,405	1,893	576	1,033	379	292	281	951	0

The largest share of projected housing need falls among extremely low- and very low-income households, those earning below 50% AMI, who face the greatest barriers to finding affordable housing in the private market.

Given current service levels and development pipelines, Kittitas County will need to substantially increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing, including flexible housing options as described in Goal 5, and ensure that new housing options are paired with appropriate services and supports.

Services

In addition to housing capacity, the county must also expand and strengthen supportive services to ensure that individuals can achieve and maintain housing stability. Community feedback, national best practices, and current capacity data all point to the need for scaling supportive services alongside housing.

The key areas that this plan will focus on include:

- **Behavioral health services:** Addressing this gap is essential to ensuring housing stability for higher-barrier populations, as emphasized in both community feedback and the Housing First model.

¹¹ AMI (Area Median Income): The midpoint income for households in a specific geographic area. Housing programs often use income thresholds based on AMI (such as 30% AMI) to determine eligibility for affordable and supportive housing.

- **Prevention and diversion:** Expanded capacity is needed to reduce new entries into homelessness, consistent with Goal 3.
- **Street outreach:** Current capacity is limited and must be strengthened to engage unsheltered individuals more effectively.
- **Workforce development:** Sustaining and growing the system’s workforce is a key priority under Goal 2.

Addressing these gaps will require sustained investment, cross-sector collaboration, and ongoing leadership commitment to ensure that the county’s homeless response system evolves to meet community needs.

Implementation Plan

Achieving the goals outlined in this plan will require sustained, coordinated action across multiple sectors and partners over the next five years. This Implementation Plan provides a roadmap for translating the plan’s vision into practical progress, sequencing near-term actions, building toward medium- and long-term outcomes, and establishing a foundation for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

Throughout this process, the Homeless and Affordable Housing Committee, in partnership with county and community stakeholders, will guide implementation, monitor progress, and ensure alignment with evolving community needs and opportunities.

Goal 1: Equitable, Accountable, Transparent System

Action	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Performance Measures (KPIs)	Data Source
Hold community meetings/forums	HAHC	Cities, providers	Launch 2026: Ongoing	Cross-agency workgroup participation; actions completed from minutes	Rosters, minutes, partner reports
Publish annual progress report	HopeSource / County	Providers	Annually, Q2	Report on time; BOCC and HAHC briefing delivered	Report Submission; Committee Agendas
Deploy comms/education toolkit (system map, messages, resources)	County Comms	Providers	2027	Orgs using toolkit; correct referrals up; public understanding up	Distribution list, Web Analytics, CE referral data, community survey
Strengthen Coordinated Entry (use + consistency)	HopeSource	Providers	Launch 2026: Ongoing	% enrollments via CE; referral turnaround; diversion rate	CE reports, HMIS

Goal 2: Strengthen the Provider Workforce

Action	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Performance Measures (KPIs)	Data Source
Cross-agency training & learning collaboratives	County	Providers	Launch 2027: ongoing	# of Staff trained; competency gained; number of sessions	Sign-ins, evals, manager checks
Establish workforce development fund	County + Community	Providers	Design 2027; launch 2028	Dollars available; grants awarded; Increased retention rate	Fund reports; provider HR departments
Engage volunteers & interns (structured roles + training)	Providers	CWU, faith groups, community	Launch 2026; ongoing	Volunteers/interns onboarded; training completion; volunteer hours; supervisor satisfaction	Volunteer logs; training records; pulse surveys

Goal 3: Prevent Homelessness Whenever Possible

Action	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Performance Measures (KPIs)	Data Source
Align barrier-removal funds + shared outcomes	County	Providers, Courts	Framework Y1; operate Y2–Y5	Households stabilized; time to assistance; cost/HH	Program reports; CE/HMIS
Scale diversion at the “front door” (CE)	HopeSource	All access points	Launch in 2026: Ongoing	Diversion attempts; diversion success rate; 6-mo re-entries	CE diversion fields
Public awareness for services	County Comms	Providers	Launch in 2026: Ongoing	Calls to access points; “Get Help” web visits; earlier contact pre-eviction	web analytics; Number of CE Applications

Goal 4: Prioritize Highest Barriers / Highest Risk

Action	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Performance Measures (KPIs)	Data Source
Shared high-risk triage protocol & referral paths	County Comms + BH Providers	Providers	Protocol 2027; adopt 2028	CE (time from application to contact); successful warm handoffs	CE Data
Expand targeted street outreach	County	Providers	Staff 2026; expand 2027-2030	Outreach Contacts; Decrease in crisis calls	Outreach Data; 911/EMS summaries
Harm-reduction engagement supports	Public Health	Providers	Launch in 2026: Ongoing	Retention in services, linkage to BH care	Program records; BH referrals

Goal 5: House Everyone in Settings That Meet Their Needs

Action	Lead	Key Partners	Timeline	Performance Measures (KPIs)	Data Source
Advance pipeline of affordable/supportive housing	County + Developers	Cities, funders	Launch in 2026: Ongoing	Units funded/started/completed ; PSH set-asides	Project trackers; award notices
Expand rental assistance & tenancy supports	Providers	Providers, Community, landlords	Scale Y1–Y5	Exits to Permanent Housing, Average Time until Housed	HMIS.
Policy/code for flexible housing (ADUs, shared, congregate, sober living)	Cities + County	BOCC, Planning Commissions	Work plan Y1; adopt Y2–Y4	Policies adopted; number of units; permit time ↓	Ordinance logs; permit data

The success of this plan will depend not only on coordinated action but on a shared commitment to learning, collaboration, and sustained progress. The following section offers concluding reflections on this shared path forward.

Conclusion

This plan represents both a roadmap and a shared commitment to addressing homelessness in Kittitas County over the next five years. It builds on past progress, reflects local strengths, and acknowledges the significant work still ahead.

Homelessness is a complex, community-wide challenge, and solutions require the collective efforts of government, nonprofit organizations, service providers, the private sector, and the public. The guiding principles of this plan: client-centered care, access for all, collaboration, data-informed decision-making, transparency, and accountability, are intended to keep people and partnerships at the center of this work.

No single agency or system can meet this challenge alone. Achieving the vision of a community where everyone has access to stable housing and the individualized support they need will require sustained leadership, continuous learning, and adaptability as conditions evolve.

This plan is not static. The Homeless and Affordable Housing Committee, in partnership with the county and key stakeholders, will guide its implementation and regularly assess progress. Community voices, especially those with lived experience, will remain essential to refining priorities and ensuring the system continues to meet real-world needs.

By investing in strong partnerships, scaling proven interventions, and fostering an inclusive, accountable system, Kittitas County can continue to make meaningful strides toward making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Appendices:

- A. Notice of Plan Development
- B. Notice of Public Hearing
- C. Focus group Report
- D. Key Stakeholder Participation
- E. Goals and Strategies
- F. Alignment with County and Cities Comprehensive Plans
- G. Survey Funding sources (current and available)

Notice of Plan Development

A Notice of Plan Development was posted to the County website on November 6, 2024. Kittitas County Does not maintain a social media presence.

The notice can be found here: [Notice of 5 year Plan Development.pdf](#)

Notice of Plan Development for the 2025-2030 Local Homeless Housing Plan for Kittitas County

Kittitas County in collaboration with HopeSource is initiating the development of the 2025-2030 Local Homeless Housing Plan aimed at addressing homelessness in our community. This five-year plan will include goals, strategies, activities, performance measures, and timelines to eliminate homelessness within Kittitas County. The 2025-2030 Local Homeless Housing Plan is expected to be adopted by the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners in June of 2025.

Please direct your comments to Brittany Bouchouari with HopeSource: bbouchouari@hopesource.us

Notice of Public Hearing

[TBD]

Focus Group Report

Key Stakeholder Participation

Category	Engagement	Organization/City
Representatives from the two largest Cities	Participation in survey, focus group sessions, participated in the Homeless Ad Hoc meeting and member of Homeless and Affordable Housing Committee for Kittitas County	City of Ellensburg and Cle Elum
Individuals with lived experience of homelessness	Participation in survey, focus group sessions, and member of Homeless and Affordable Housing Committee for Kittitas County	N/A
A representative of a Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization OR a Managed Care Organization	Participation in survey and focus group session and Homeless Ad Hoc meeting.	Comprehensive Healthcare and Kittitas County Health Network
A representative from a By and for organization within the local government's jurisdiction	Participation in survey and focus group session.	Peers Rising (formerly KCRCO)
Emergency shelter operators	Member of the HHTF Participation in survey and focus group session and Homeless Ad Hoc meeting.	HopeSource
Domestic violence/sexual assault shelter and housing providers		
Homeless outreach providers		
Rental subsidy administrators		
Permanent Supportive Housing providers and operators		
Coordinated entry staff		

Homeless Housing Taskforce Members

Category	Name	Organization
A representative of the county	Emily Brown	Kittitas County Lower District Court
A representative of the largest city located within the county.	Lily Frey	City of Ellensburg
At least one homeless or formerly homeless person	Bradly Esparza	
A representative of a private nonprofit organization with experience in law-income housing (if feasible)	Brittany Bouchouari	HopeSource

Goals and Strategies

Goal	Strategies	Success Measures	Timeline	Data Source
Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system	Hold regular community meetings and forums	Engagement in community workgroups and collaborative efforts	Ongoing	Meeting rosters, community partner reports
	Produce clear and accessible annual progress reports	Distribution and active use of communications toolkit	Annual	Toolkit distribution logs, partner feedback
	Develop a communications and educational toolkit	Improved public understanding (community surveys)	Year 1, updated annually	Community survey data
	Strengthen use of Coordinated Entry system	Increased use of Coordinated Entry as primary access point	Ongoing	Coordinated Entry data (CE reports)
Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce	Provide training and cross-agency learning opportunities	Participation in workforce-focused training opportunities and learning collaboratives	Semiannual	Training attendance records, feedback forms
	Explore creation of a dedicated funding source for workforce development	Improved staff retention	Annual	Provider surveys
		Feedback on training effectiveness and value	After each training cycle	Training evaluations
Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible	Improve coordination of existing prevention resources	Reductions in new entries into homelessness	Ongoing	PIT Count, Coordinated Entry data
	Strengthen partnerships with landlords and private organizations	Lower eviction rates	Ongoing	County court eviction records
	Expand and support diversion practices	Increased rates of successful diversion	Ongoing	Coordinated Entry, program reporting
	Increase public awareness of prevention resources	Community awareness levels (survey)	Annual	Community survey data

Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm	Strengthen collaboration to improve identification and triage of high-need individuals	Improvements in housing stability and service engagement	Ongoing	Coordinated Entry, HMIS, provider data
	Expand and support street outreach and proactive engagement	Reductions in recidivism	Ongoing	HMIS, County Report Card
	Support harm reduction and engagement approaches	Increased cross-sector coordination in responding to high-need individuals	Ongoing	Partner feedback, outreach data
Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs	Increase supply and availability of permanent housing options	Reductions in number of unhoused individuals	Ongoing	PIT Count
	Expand access to rental assistance and supportive services	Increased exits to permanent housing	Ongoing	Coordinated Entry, HMIS, County Report Card
	Advance policy coordination and advocacy for flexible housing solutions	Completion of all affordable housing projects currently funded and in progress	5-year period	County housing reports, project tracking

Survey of Fund Sources

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount received SFY24	Actual/ projected received SFY25
Mental Health Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.460)	Local	Receiving / collecting	Mental health and drug treatment	\$1,872,178.56	\$449,838.36
Housing and Related Services Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.530)	Local	Receiving / collecting	Acquisition, construction of AH or behavioral health housing, O&M for AH or supportive housing	\$809,339	\$734,406 (budgeted)
Affordable and Supportive Housing Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.540)	Local	Receiving / collecting	Acquisition, rehab, construction of AH, O&M for AH or supportive housing	\$227,500	\$204,750 (estimate)
Local Housing Levies (RCW 84.52.105)	Local	Not eligible / Not collecting	Affordable Housing for very-low income households, affordable homeownership, owner-occupied home repair, foreclosure prevention	N/A	N/A
Document Recording Surcharge, Local Portion (RCW 36.22.250)	Local	Receiving/collecting	Acquisition/rehab/construction; operations & maintenance of AH; shelter operations	TBC	TBC
Local Document Recording Fees Support	DOC-State	Receiving / collecting	"For maintaining programs and investments" under local homeless housing plans and affordable housing under RCW 36.22.250.	\$67,644	TBC
Consolidated Homeless	State	Receiving / collecting	Homeless housing and assistance	\$2,497,586.00	\$1,998,068.80

Grant/System Demonstration Grant (including Housing and Essential Needs)					
HUD Emergency Solutions Grant	Federal	Not eligible / Not collecting	Rapid re-housing, emergency shelter, and homelessness prevention	N/A	N/A
HUD Community Development Block Grant	Federal		Acquisition, preservation of existing housing, rehab, weatherization, home buyer assistance. NO NEW Const.	\$77,202.02	\$75,657.97
HUD Continuum of Care Grant	Federal	Receiving / collecting	Permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, supportive services, acquisition/rehab	\$58,997.00	\$65,837.00
HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Grants	Federal	Receiving / collecting	Rapid rehousing, permanent housing, transitional housing, and host homes for youth	\$314,538.83	\$429,014.67
HOME	Federal	Receiving / collecting	New construction, acquisition, preservation, rehab, home buyer assistance	N/A	\$829,857.00
Connecting Housing to Infrastructure (CHIP)	State	Expired (last 2023, are we applying for 2025?)	Utility improvements for affordable housing, reduce per unit connection fees	N/A	\$1,985,650.00

Alignment with Comprehensive Plans

5-Year Plan Goal	Relevant Sections in Local Comprehensive Plans
Goal 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless response system	Kittitas County Plan: Housing Goal H-3 (coordinate housing with other services) Ellensburg Plan: Community Involvement Element (Goal CI-1) Roslyn Plan: Chapter 7 (Civic Engagement)
Goal 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce	Kittitas County Plan: Housing Goal H-3 (partner with service providers) Cle Elum Plan: Housing Goal 4 (collaborate with partners to provide services) Ellensburg Plan: Goal H-1, Policy H-1.6 (support service providers)
Goal 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible	Kittitas County Plan: Housing Goal H-2, Policy H-2.3 (encourage prevention strategies) Cle Elum Plan: Housing Goal 3, Policy 3.2 (support programs to prevent homelessness) Ellensburg Plan: Goal H-1, Policy H-1.7 (support homelessness prevention efforts)
Goal 4: Prioritize assistance based on greatest barriers to housing stability and greatest risk of harm	Kittitas County Plan: Housing Goal H-1, Policy H-1.4 (meet needs of special populations) Cle Elum Plan: Housing Goal 4, Policy 4.3 (address needs of vulnerable populations) Ellensburg Plan: Goal H-1, Policies H-1.1 & H-1.5 (expand housing for special needs and vulnerable groups)
Goal 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs	Kittitas County Plan: Housing Goal H-1 & H-2 (expand housing options and affordability) Cle Elum Plan: Housing Goals 3 & 4; Ellensburg Comp Plan: Goal H-1 (increase affordable housing options) Roslyn Plan: Housing Chapter Goals 1 & 2 (promote housing diversity and affordability)

Links to Comprehensive Plans:

[Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Cle Elum Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Roslyn Comprehensive Plan](#)

