MEMORANDUM

To: Implementation Board System Planning Committee
From: KCRHA Sub-Regional Planning Team
CC: Marc Dones, CEO
Subject: Community Engagement and Recommended Revisions to the Five-Year Plan
Date: March 1, 2023

I.   Executive Summary

To support the deliberative revision process to the draft King County Regional Homelessness Authority's first Five Year Plan, KCRHA staff have prepared this memorandum for the Implementation Board to provide context on the method of receiving and the nature of the feedback from various stakeholder groups on the draft Five Year Plan. Staff recommendations on revisions to the plan based on the feedback provided is detailed in Section VII.

II.   Background

KCRHA staff lean into community-oriented approaches which involve consistent engagement paired with iterative feedback. Leading up to the formation of the draft Plan, staff have been heavily engaged with various stakeholders around King County. The sub-regional planning team has been tracking their community reach and has captured that they've connected with 500 different stakeholders in one-on-one focused conversations; various teams within the organization also support and are actively engaged in regional tables, hold base building spaces, meet with jurisdictions and system partners. In July alone, there were 38 workshops that engaged over 400 people. Teams were invited to bring these workshops to coalition meetings, community tables, and advocacy organizations, in addition to regular standing sessions that the KCRHA hosts.

In the next phase of engagement to inform this plan, which occurred in the fall of 2022, KCRHA, staff convened groups to ensure the input of specific subpopulations was obtained, including populations that interacted with the systems that are highlighted in the agreement creating KCRHA. These engagements were seen as necessary because sub-populations within the unhoused community require distinct strategies, approaches, and system changes to appropriately support them in their transition to permanent housing and stability. The Authority sought input from members of the following sub-populations and people interacting with the following systems:

Sub-population exploration included:
- High Acuity Individuals
- People Living with Disabilities
- Native/Indigenous Communities
- Immigrants and Refugees
- Black and African American Communities

- Youth and Young Adults
- Families with Children
- Vehicle Residents
- Veterans
- Survivors of Gender-Based Violence
- Seniors and Elders
- LGBTQIA2S+ Single Adults

Leading up to the release of the draft Five Year Plan, KCRHA staff estimate that over 1,000 King County community members were engaged throughout this process to inform the draft Plan.

Since the release of the draft Five Year Plan, KCRHA staff have been collecting feedback from government partners, people with lived experience, community partners, and the public through:
- Formal Letters
- Emailed Feedback
- In-person Engagements
- Three "Lunch and Learns"
- Provider Leadership Briefings
- Public Feedback Survey

The Sub-Regional Planning Team is responsible for shepherding and synthesizing the feedback from the outlined areas. This team has prepared this recommendation memo that includes proposed revisions to the draft Five Year Plan based on the feedback from partners, a synthesis of the survey findings, and an appendix with all supporting documentation (letters, emails, notes from engagements, survey findings) to support the deliberative process for the subcommittee.

## III. Synthesis of Survey Findings

A public feedback survey was published alongside the draft Five Year Plan via the [KCRHA blog](#) on January 18, 2023, and remained open through February 8th, 2023. Additionally, KCRHA broadcasted the tool via existing provider networks/convenings, social/local media, and direct communication with community stakeholders.Respondents were asked questions related to prioritization of goals, initiatives, and each respondent was given an opportunity to provide up to 8 narrative comments on various areas of the plan. For all raw survey responses, please review Appendix D or [this webpage](#).

Staff evaluated findings from the survey along the basis of respondent's lived experience status and geography. Further, the team looked at which areas of the plan ranked the highest in terms of favorability. Lastly, the team conducted an initial qualitative coding exercise where of the 2,527 comments provided, 1720 comments from all 7 goal areas and the overall comments have been thematically coded to-date. While the team is continuing to analyze the dataset, the following are initial findings.

The majority of respondents were residents with no lived experience of homelessness.

There was some representation of those with past experience of homelessness but limited responses for those currently experiencing homelessness. **For additional background on how KCRHA approached input from those with lived experience of homelessness please refer to Section VI.**
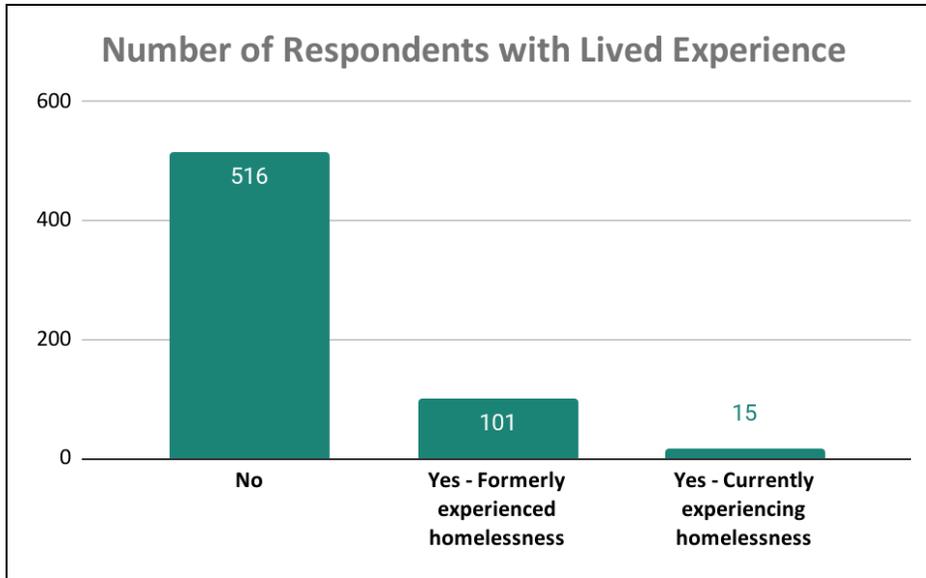

There was full regional representation across survey respondents with even those living outside of King County weighing in. The option to mark outside of King County was added due to feedback regarding how many frontline staff may work in King County but live in Snohomish or Pierce County.
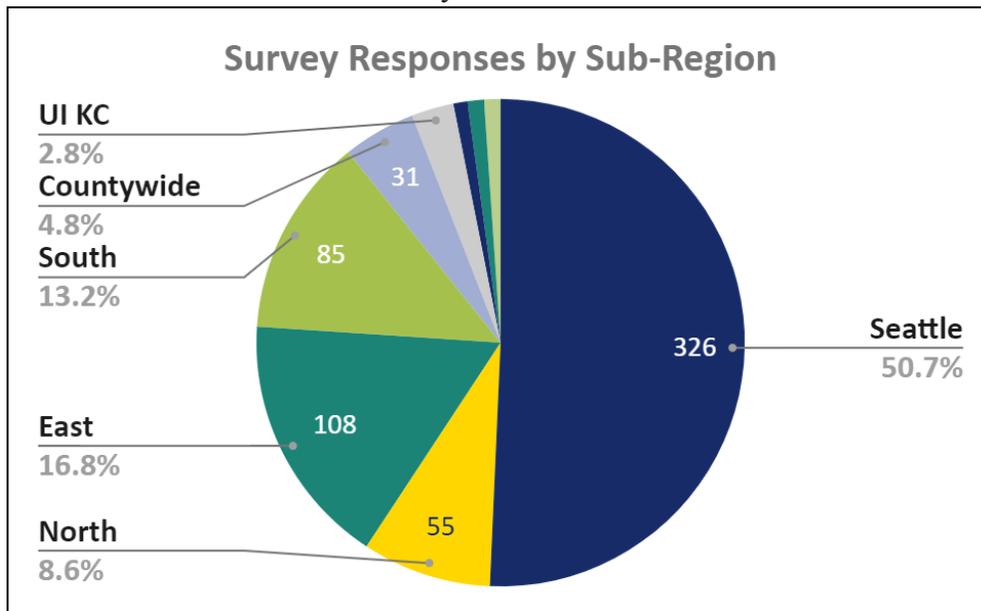
When looking at the strategies in the draft plan that received the highest levels of support, all three strategies within Goal 5: No Family with Children Sleeps Outside ranked in the

top ten. The bars colored in blue received the highest level of support after averaging all responses received for that strategy, and conversely the bars colored in yellow received the least support after averaging responses. Not all survey participants completed these questions—an average of 469 out of 640 respondents indicated their level of support for each strategy.
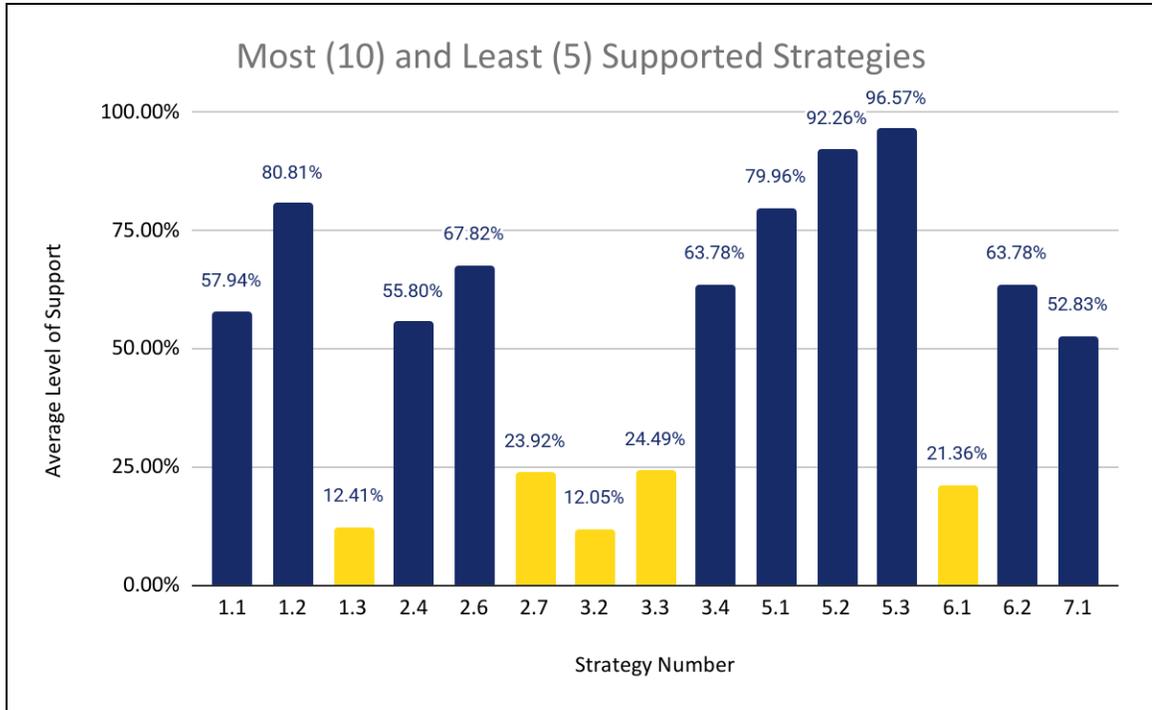
In order of level of strong support:

1. 5.3: Improve Coordination Between Homeless Service Providers and Community Supports to Ensure Families Experiencing Homelessness Have Rapid Pathways to Housing
2. 5.2: Partner with Healthcare and School Systems to Improve Early Warning Systems, Prevention, and Wrap-Around Services
3. 1.2: Improve and Expand Temporary Housing and Wrap-Around Support for People with High Acuity Health Needs
4. 5.1: Expand Evidence-Based Program Interventions that Prevent Family Homelessness
5. 2.6: Stabilize the Front-Line Workforce
6. 3.4: Support Accurate and Up-to-Date Information Around Unit or Other Resource Availability
7. 6.2: Expand Housing and Programmatic Interventions Specifically Developed for YYA, Informed by Evidence-Based Practices, and Tied to Identified Housing and Service Gaps
8. 1.1: Expand Housing to Meet the Need
9. 2.4: Improve Severe Weather Response System Performance
10. 7.1: Partner with All 39 Cities in King County to Consolidate and Streamline Funding for Homelessness Services

In order of least supported strategies:

1. 3.2: Develop a Web- and Mobile-Based Communication Channel for Program Participants to Provide Continuous Feedback on Their Experience
2. 1.3: Scale Partnership for Zero to Achieve Functional Zero Countywide
3. 6.1: Develop a YYA Coordinating Body, Supported by KCRHA, to Systematize Cross-System Alignment and Strategy
4. 2.7: Grow and Diversify Portfolio of Service Providers
5. 3.3: Develop and Support an Integrated Approach to Data that Allows Client Access

Lastly, in our initial thematic coding of the survey responses, staff distilled codes down to 76 themes in responses. Staff will continue to analyze the dataset and provide a report at a later date of the full prevalence of themes. The following table details an initial look into the themes identified. The Sub-Regional Team spent many hours reading through and coding the majority of the comments and throughout this process, the team anticipated receiving comments that were not supportive of the plan or KCRHA's mission. We took comments in opposition to the plan into earnest consideration and you will see those represented in the themes below.

Staff did not consider comments that did not demonstrate regard for human life, autonomy, and flourishing — including comments suggesting internment camp-style solutions, forced abortion or contraceptive care, and ignoring the impact of racism or homophobia on people experiencing homelessness. These comments will not be taken into consideration in our future planning efforts.

For all raw data survey responses, please see Appendix D or this webpage.

Theme	Example Survey Response
Access/Accessibility	"Most people homeless aren't going to have access to computers, technology, and/or the capacity to utilize it. Navigating technology another roadblock. Go back to the basics."
Accountability	"Accountability is the key word here. Organizations and the homeless themselves must be held accountable for their actions."
Action	"Pretty self explanatory. Do it, not continue to talk about it."
Acuity	"The terms drug use and addiction, alcohol use and addiction and mental illness are never mentioned in this plan. It appears that the term acuity is used to cover these. This is unacceptable as addiction and mental illness are pervasive across the homeless population. Face reality and call it what it is. And develop a program that will successfully deal with people who have these issues."
Advocacy	"Advocate for ending criminalization of homelessness by agencies like the city of Seattle. Stop the sweeps, have advocates and resources actually available to meet people's needs during sweeps, and decriminalize the existence of encampments,

	provide safe places for people to stay (indoors or outdoors) on their terms where they feel comfortable."
Affordability	"Why not help out with childcare/ improve child care facilities. Make it affordable for families to have their children in daycare instead of investing money in this nonsense."
Affordable Housing	"$25B??? We can't afford it! This will raise costs for those who can barely afford housing now forcing them into assisted housing. Government shouldn't be fully responsible for fixing people's poor choices growing up."
Anti-Racism/Equity	"Being fair and anti-racist is fundamental in how services are provided. Data collection on race and ethnicity as part of the by-name list (done sensitively and non-intrusively) is important, but not as critical as fairness and lack of bias in serviced provision."
Apathy	"Graft. That's all this is. $12 billion spread across a population of 23,000 is over $500k PER PERSON! The KCRHA are out their collective minds."
Behavioral Health	"Not housing alone. Trauma recovery, substance issue and reintegration planning must be part of it. Also need a drug maintenance plan so that the drug crisis no longer fuels crime and violence and enables people to recover if and when they are ready. Also removes reliance on toxic and adulterated street drugs"
BNL	"I chose Strategy 7.2 as the first priority because I believe that the COORDINATED and PLANNED ENTRY into the pathway to transitional and then permanent stable housing is a crucial first step. The five-part strategy of KCRHA -- leading with a "by name" list and an individualized plan for moving each person to transitional and then permanent stable housing makes great sense to me. Each Council District in Seattle should be part of the action. Part of KCRHA's modus operandi should be to involve every neighborhood in seattle"
Burden	"We are already a "charity" City / State. Providing more free housing is only going to attract more drug addicts to our City. Once the proposed homes are filled, more homeless drug addict / transients will relocate here. Then what? As taxpayers, we are already burdened with more than our fair share of financial support."
Bureaucracy	"Goal is not backed by specifics in the plan that will achieve the proposed outcomes. Creating a coordinating body is just more bureaucracy which will divert resources from helping real people."
Burnout	"Service providers need to be paid enough to sustain themselves in a highly needed and high burnout environment for front line workers, including peer support."
Cause of Homelessness	"Me and my family became homeless because I filed for disability for my complex PTSD and bi polar disorder and did not see my social security disability benefits for over a year in that time I went through a divorce and could not pay rent and

	was evicted. An eviction on my record led to 8-10 years of off and on again chronic homelessness then being homeless and being put in low barrier housing like creston point with no security details only further retraumatized me and my family further deteriorating our mental health. SECURITY IS CRITICAL!! REPORTING ABUSE BY THE SYSTEM IS CRITICAL!! SAFETY IS AS IMPORTANT IF NOT MORE IMPORTANT AS HOUSING!!"
Children/Youth	"Teens who are able to "couch surf" to avoid domestic violence are the lucky ones. Those who have no place to go end up being preyed upon. There needs to be better solutions than treating these teens as runaways and placing them back into the abusive situations that caused them to run in the first place."
Choice	"there needs to be an easy and safe way for clients to give feedback on client services that informs funding choices"
Cities	"If KCRHA exists, it needs to work with all 39 cities. Improving Coordinated Entry has a bias for action that I support"
Concern	"The biggest concern we all have is the drug problem. This plan does not address that. Even the recovery housing. Addressing the drug problem will drastically reduce the theft, destruction of our city, violence etc. The number 1 priority is building drug rehab (which includes housing). Complete wrap around services."
Confusion	"I thought all of this was already happening. Why is it still being discussed?"
Congregate	"Again, we need dormitories on school campuses. And we need congregate housing and job training skills for older teens, young adults."
Coordinated Entry	"There is no mention of the DV Coordinated Entry System and the need to support this separate but parallel system to mainstream CEA. This current plan does not even acknowledge that there is a parallel system. There is ongoing work that needs to be done to streamline this system and do more to connect and integrate it to the larger system while still being cognizant of the specific needs of survivors."
Coordination	"Believe this has been a major issue - lack of coordination and collaboration."
Cost	"$5B a year is ridiculously costly. It's more than we spend on the schools and clearly shows poor management."
Criminalization	"Decriminalize homelessness in all areas of king county, end the harassment and abuse if unhoused folks from sweeps enacted by different jurisdictions, end the criminalization of encampments and participation or police in homelessness responses"
Data	"Homeless people have different needs. Some require more intensive support. Assess the level of services by individual using data, questionnaires, etc. Have spaces that can support based on individual needs instead of placing everyone together."
Deservedness	"1.1 and 1.3 are pipe dreams. You need to focus effort on the slice of the population who are willing to engage with services, then disincentivize camping

	etc. for everyone else, not provide more free handouts without contingencies."
Definitions	"what does YYA mean."
Detail/Concreteness	"Again this needs to be explained in more detail, particularly 7.2. Expanding programs should be done only after a thorough assessment of the existing programs and amount of funding already spent on those programs."
Disability	"I believe retention will be greater for front-line workers with a wage increase. Front-line workers are having the same challenges of the population we serve. Rent increase, but no wage increase. More services are needed for the disabled and elderly homeless population."
Disbelief/Doubt	"I doubt the KCRHA is qualified to manage this kind of money and actually solve the problem. And if you don't produce results ..... Then what !? Let me guess ..... Create another group or committee to take up responsibility of the last ones failure."
Diversion	""Recommend that Diversion resources be made available to all. Diversion resources have historically only been available to those already experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Assure that the severe weather response system has solutions for families with children. Front-line workforce stabilization should be a high priority for new resources. The living wage requirements in RFPs and contracts should take into account rates of pay across organizations, not just staff who work for contract funded projects. None of the work outlined in this plan is possible without a strong workforce."
Do not Support	"I do NOT support these plans. Make homeless encampments and all other activities pertaining to them illegal. Of course, we know you won't listen, so more of us will leave this city."
Domestic Violence	"Front line Workers need support! We definitely need funding opportunities and especially for those working with survivors of domestic violence and victims of sexual assault. Most women who are homeless are survivors."
Education	"The first very important to stop the drugs and the education to go back at point that to educates the children for science."
Efficacy	"Partnership to Zero is not successful in the downtown core. Successful permanent housing of people is very low compared to those who have ended up in a shelter or shelter like environment (ie. Tiny House Villages). Do not feel it should be scaled up. Safe Parking needs many more spots."
Enable	"Is there any evidence that suggests this city has done anything right for the addicted and homeless. All I see is enablement"
Encampments	"Stability seems to be most important. Use any every means available to develop stability, even big parking lots so people in tents and cars aren't swept."
Evictions	""Getting people sheltered as quickly as possible and standing up spaces for that is

	top of the list for me.

Strategy 1.2 II - is there any Advocacy piece KCRHA can push for around removing some of the current barriers that exist for mental health care professionals? I understand the need for training, but much like teachers and other high-skilled and in-demand occupations, the pipeline isn't providing enough of these trained professionals to support the needs of community members.

Strategy 1.3 IV - along with that relationship with private landlords, how about we also push for them to stop evicting people? Knowing that evictions can result in homelessness means that we should all be pushing for further rent protections." |
Evidence Based Practices	"Expansion of housing has not been proven effective as a strategy to address long-term homelessness. Recognizing and addressing real roadblocks to persons' rehabilitation is needed. Health, safety, life skills, and opportunities to become self supporting are essential."
Expansion	"Although I strongly support expansion of shelter and housing, I think the wrap around support for people with complex situation (in addition to high acuity health needs) is critical and in desperate need of support."
Failure	"Stop the harm reduction strategy. It's been a failure"
Faith Partners	"A partnership with local leaders and religious groups would be great to increase the support network for the homeless. Support services and operations need to be mandatory for repeat offenders."
Families	"Every child (and their caregivers) should have immediate access to emergency housing on demand. That should be the first priority of the KCRHA, above all others."
Federal	"This is not a Seattle, King County, or even a Washington problem. It's going to take an inclusive ultimately country-wide epidemic, regional solutions alone will not stop this travesty."
Fiscal Responsibility/Cost Effectiveness	"There are 13,000 (rounding) in king county experiencing homelessness and over 5 years that's almost 900k per person. It will take me 10 years to reach that income. You could spend 36k a year just paying rent for them at 3000 a month apartment. Outrageous period"
Frontline Staff	"Again, I believe the current programs need more supportive services and we need to make sure that we stabilize our front line workforce. We are seeing an incredible amount of turnover (way higher than normal) because of the lack of funding, resources, which in turn creates burn out."
Frustration	"Do not waste money on endless talking head meetings. That is a total waste of hard earned taxpayer dollars. I am sick and tired of listening to talking heads. Please find substance abuse and mental health. That is the root cause."
Funding	"Provide accountability for existing funding."

Government	"I'm not willing to pay any more money. Not a cent. I work hard for my money. The last thing that will help is another bloated government project that only feeds itself"
Healthcare	"Schools and healthcare clinics are great places to educate around the warning signs of homelessness, ie getting behind on bills, gentrification of neighborhoods, mental illness etc. I would add the housing app to the education so people know where to go to find housing before/after they are homeless."
Homeless Industrial Complex	"Enforce current laws. Disincentivize drug use and abuse, restore societal values. This is the HIC (Homeless Industrial Complex) run amok."
Housing Models	"The Partnership for Zero model is new and has not been proven to be an effective model yet. A large focus and potential investment in a new, unproven model is not a strong strategy. Ensure that housing models listed address the needs of families with children."
Jobs/Training/Employment	"Don't just give them housing, help get them back into the working force, off drugs."
Lived Experience	"I and my 3 kids were abandoned by their father who was making $3,000 and no income tax overseas. We were evicted from our house we were buying and Instead of going homeless I borrowed $150 from my Step Mother and rented a crappy house. I beat the streets every day until I got a job. We saved and paid back the $150. Then we saved and moved into a much better situation. I am not alone. Lots of people face these hardships and don't rely on their community to pay their bills for them."
Moving People	"Give them a one-way bus ticket to San Francisco. Short of that, force them to go to a shelter. I cannot camp anywhere I desire and neither should they. Most are drug addicts and prefer to live on the streets, quit enabling that behavior, there shouldn't be a choice for them. This stupid region is getting exactly what it promotes."
Outcomes	"Overall this sounds ok, but more details on outcomes and implementation strategies would be important. Also since it's talking about no kid unhoused, there should be a discussion of scale and sustainability if the unhoused population continues to grow. Without it, people not already sharing your views might not be convinced."
Outreach	"In the outreach I do I see that even when people find housing they are still in dire need of wrap around services."
Person-Centered Care	"Temporary housing while assessing needs of people that can be helped. Not all people can be helped."
Pets	"We need not only more housing but more housing that meets people where they are at. We need housing that allows pets, has access to private outdoor space and that caters to some who have lived outdoors for decades at times."

Prevention	"Assisting households to prevent homelessness should be a top priority. This includes addiction and mental health services to prevent homelessness"
Program Requirements	"Overall this program is too expensive. $883,000 per homeless person over 5 years is cost prohibitive and invites corruption, overhiring and graft. What is needed depends on the homeless individual. Priority should be addiction treatment, they do not get housing unless they agree to treatment and can be ejected if they do not follow the rules. Second priority is job skills development through public private partnership with local business. Third would be ongoing support through checking and benefits supplied as long as skill training continues through wage subsidies. This would cost far less than the 883k per person."
Public Safety	"Inpatient MandatoryTreatment Sites, No allow public spaces, parks, bus stops, sidewalks, etc. and other areas of public domain to be overtaken and unusable for public & public safety."
Resources	"Each city has their own issues. Let's not create a system of resources that enable homeless to drift from city to city using resources."
Roles	"Strategy 4.2 should be done by the Federal Government not state and local. This study should be studied and designed by a group of experts in Sociology."
Seniors/Elders	"Many seniors are facing homelessness as they age in place. When selling their property they have minimal to zero options to stay in the area. Rents are outside their means."
Severe Weather	"100% front-line workers should be paid a living wage. You should also be paying the Lived Experience Coalition. There's no Severe Weather shelter in West Seattle, the only one is run by a private citizen."
Sub-Regional	"Partnering with all 39 cities requires other cities to step up. So far, many of the cities have declined the invitation. Developed sub-regional implementation plans may be the best opportunity for success."
System Partners	"All three strategies are extremely important. I gave Strategy 5.2 the highest priority because it builds directly on existing systems, and the coordination between service providers and community support is crucial to success in radically reducing homelessness -- especially, but not solely, for families."
Taxes	"My level of support is that I pay property taxes, about 25 percent of my income."
Transparency	"Results need to be transparent and explained - even failures when trying new options. Personally I have no issue with exploring a new option that may or may not be successful as long as learnings can be rolled into a better approach."
Unsheltered	"Accountability is extremely important for the Authority. However, the Authority's job and success should be in placing people in housing. I'm not sure what value there is to the taxpayer if we get feedback on program participants' satisfaction with the program. This situation is not a YELP review, it's an emergency."
Vehicle Residents	"Would like to see 1.1 and 1.2 addressed simultaneously as we have many vehicle

	and encampment residents who need reprieve from the discomfort and vulnerability of sleeping in tents or a vehicle during winter months. Definitely want to increase and possibly co-locate behavioral health services to improve care coordination for program participants. I'd also request therapists for staff who are vulnerable to secondary trauma and burnout."
Veterans	"The reason I was homeless was that I had just gotten out of the military from overseas, and had no support when I arrived back in the states. Getting an apartment required a bank account. A bank account required an address. To get a PO Box requires an address. I'm sure I was not the only person having this issue."
Volunteers	"I think helping folks like families and the working unhoused first may be a good idea. Perhaps they have the most opportunity to stabilize and are the best able to thrive with that support. I volunteer in a day shelter and the folks with high acuity needs--would need so many expensive supports. Why not start increasing addiction and mental health svcs year 1 and slowly build that while learning what works best?"
Wrap-Around	"Many clients I work with are above the level of care shelter and supportive housing that the county has available. Wrap around services are crucial but the people giving the services and care need to be paid a living wage with appropriate oversight, so people/clients are not taken advantage of. Partnership for Zero to Achieve Functional Zero Countywide - this is not explained well."

IV. Government Partners Feedback

a. Correspondence from Cities

Staff from Bellevue, Kirkland, and Issaquah drafted letters to KCRHA to provide direct feedback and support for the draft Five-Year Plan. These letters are attached in the Appendix of this memo. Some comments listed below in this section will also reflect the remarks stated in the letters. While we did not receive letters from all King County cities that KCRHA engaged with throughout this process, we value the time and thoughtfulness provided by city staff and want to ensure their feedback is meaningfully considered throughout the revision process.

b. Background on Engagement with Government Partners

The Sub-Regional Planning Team meets regularly with city partners, typically human services staff, throughout King County to provide updates, receive feedback, and jointly problem solve. In the East, KCRHA staff meets with city staff from Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Sammamish. In the South, KCRHA staff meets with city staff from Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Renton, SeaTac, and Tukwila. In North King County, KCRHA staff engages independently with city staff and meets with the North King County Coalition on Homelessness monthly to provide updates and receive feedback. Finally, KCRHA staff regularly correspond with the City of Seattle staff and council members, as well as King County staff and council members. Throughout Autumn 2022, KCRHA engaged these government entities to have them provide input during the development of the draft Five-Year Plan. The Sub-Regional Team

garnered an understanding of the concerns and supports each sub-region had for the plan and worked to embed feedback into the plan where possible. When the full draft plan was released in January 2023, government partners provided additional comments and feedback both in written comment form, as stated above, and through regular convening times focused on reviewing the draft plan. Their feedback, including outstanding concerns and gaps, follows. The recommendations resulting from this feedback is reflected in the recommendation section, as well as the recommendation matrix.

c. **Summarized Feedback by Sub-Region**

North King County
Regional Approach
As demonstrated by the initiation and completion of an inter-local agreement between North King Cities (Bothell, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Shoreline, Woodinville), North King is supportive of a coordinated, regional response through KCRHA. However, the North King County Coalition on Homelessness (NKCCH) has expressed a desire to have better representation from North King within KCRHA's structure. Specifically, NKCCH elevated the need for KCRHA have a sub-regional planner dedicated to North King County, have a representative from North King County sit on the Implementation Board, and have KCRHA board and committee meetings have more rotating locations so they are hosted across the county.

Programs
North King County sees gaps and opportunities in the ways that KCRHA develops and carries out programs. Specifically, NKCCH would like additional clarity around procurement of new programs, how new funding will be identified and allocated for new and existing programs, and defining program terms such as emergency response and wrap-around services. NKCCH also raised the issue of ensuring provider staff are not only paid a living wage, but that KCRHA and service providers are also invested in their overall wellbeing. Finally, programs need to be accountable to people accessing them, including clear, barrier-free ways to report to the Ombuds Office and developing information sharing techniques that allow for a diversity of communication mechanisms.

System Collaboration
NKCCH recognizes that KCRHA cannot act alone in eliminating homelessness and therefore flagged a few places where collaboration with other systems, particularly the behavioral health system, should be required and concrete. NKCCH expressed curiosity around how behavioral health centers may interact with shelter and housing models and if there are specific steps to integrate the two systems. They also recognize that changes in legislation are paramount to change current systems and promote effective, person-centered services.

East King County

Shelter Model Shift

Eastside City Staff have consistently expressed concern around KCRHA's posture towards congregate shelters due to the subregion having made significant investments in this model and preparing to open a new building which will house the only shelter serving single adult men across multiple subregions. There has also been concern raised around shelter utilization rates being highlighted as indicative of lack of efficacy of this model given these rates are significantly higher in East King in comparison to other areas of the county.

Cost Modeling

Clarity on cost modeling methodology is needed. Some partners expressed confusion around the dollar amount necessary to scale the permanent and temporary housing models and were seeking to better understand the methodology behind the large price tag. Others raised the concern of overwhelming the stakeholders and the public with such a large price tag particularly when additional funding streams aren't clearly articulated in the current plan.

Data on Utilization

Curious about utilization rates of congregate shelters mentioned in the plan. Observations of higher utilization within East King Provider Programs, which is demonstrated in the HMIS data for 2022.

Growing Portfolio

Expressed concern about expanding the portfolio during a time when many agencies are struggling to hire and retain staff at adequate levels and when agencies are competing for funding resources that are historically competitive.

City Engagement

Utilizing ILAs as a primary measurement for successful implementation of Goal 7 is a concern for city partners. While this was not shared to express a hesitance to pursue and ILA collaboratively, it was shared to suggest alternative measures that could and should be considered under Goal 7.

South King County

Passivity

South King City Human Services Planners (SKC Planners) are principally concerned with the passivity of the Five Year Plan. Throughout the Five-Year Planning process, SKC Planners have pointed out that the plan does not maintain a sense of urgency in building up a shelter system and bringing people inside in the very-short term. SKC Planners do not see an element of the plan that reflects the crisis-levels of unsheltered homelessness relative to the number of shelters available and the need to develop new shelters in the immediate future. When talking about racial disparities, the most recent data released by KCRHA demonstrates that the highest racial disproportionalities exist within the single

adult population of people experiencing homelessness, yet this plan specifically calls out families with children and youth and young adults and does not have a plan to address the single adult population explicitly stated.

Finally, in addition to the urgency of bringing people inside, we want to ensure that we are also focused on providing the appropriate level of service and staffing in order to give people (and programs) the best chance for success.

<u>Cost Allocation</u>
SKC Planners are concerned with the lack of cost allocations for goals other than Goal 1. They are hoping to see a cost analysis that represents all 39 cities / 7 subregions. They are troubled by the uncertainty of how KCRHA will acquire the funding for the plan and the ability for KCRHA to carry out the plan given current staffing and capacity constraints.

<u>Severe Weather</u>
The process for coordinating and streamlining severe weather contracts across the region is not well-described or outlined. Many South King Cities creatively stretch funding to stand up severe weather shelters and are eager for more support but they have raised the need to identify standardization on level of services, staffing, and cost to ensure best practices for severe weather shelters across the region.

<u>Data and Metrics</u>
The 2022 UUHP and PIT complete data, analyses, and report was not released. Cities are interested to know the distribution of interviews and the breakdown of data by city and sub-region. This disaggregated data would help to demonstrate sub-regional differences and provide context to community members ahead of the sub-regional planning process. SKC Planners also noted that, in addition to the metrics identified in the plan, targets or benchmarks to measure success and provide project timelines would help make the plan more actionable and realistic for implementation.

<u>Clarity on Scope and Implementation</u>
They also note that while the document provides a robust educational overview, it lacks action items that explain how the plan will come to fruition. South King Cities have repeatedly raised concerns around the siting of new services and the ability to appropriately serve individuals with adequate resources, including proximity to community, staffing, behavioral health supports. The plan lacks assurance that new shelters will be sited within a timeline that recognizes the acute need of the unsheltered population.

City of Seattle
<u>Tiny Home Villages</u>
The City of Seattle raised concerns around the low projections for tiny home

villages. Some folks within the City have noted the benefits of tiny home villages and would like additional clarity around the future of this housing model and why the projections identified in Goal 1 of the plan were so low.

Scope and Specificity
Folks at the City of Seattle appreciate the bold statement this plan makes, but they feel the plan lacks the appropriate amount of specificity and scope. Particularly, staff and electeds asked the question, "how will the next dollar be spent?" In response to this question, they are hoping for concrete action steps that provide a clear, cohesive path forward. With all of the metrics and information, it can be hard to discern what KCRHA will focus on and what the public takeaways are.

Data & Evidence-Based Practices
The City highlighted a few places where the data provided in the plan could be a bit stronger. Specifically, folks are seeking more background information on the current landscape of services and the demographics and dis-aggregated data that KCRHA collected. Folks also feel the modeling and profiles are lacking connections to the overall system and would like to see those elements folded into the plan better, and for KCRHA to provide more information on how modeling will be incorporated into the broader, existing landscape.

Partnership for Zero
The City of Seattle notes that, in addition to describing the need for Partnership for Zero, information on the current structure and elements of Partnership for Zero would be helpful, particularly for understanding how it can or will expand to other areas. They also note that the plan that does not involve Partnership for Zero could use the same level of attention and detail as the Partnership for Zero work.

King County Government
Strengths
King County is supportive of much of the draft Five Year Plan. Specifically, they appreciate the clarity and alignment in many of the goals (see below for their feedback on rearranging Goal 2). They note that KCRHA's role and scope in housing modeling is more clear than previous versions of the plan, and they applaud the approach KCRHA is taking with working with By/For agencies and in promoting non-congregate shelter. Overall they see this document as very comprehensive of the services and actions required, and highlight the strong connection to the NIS report.

Sequencing of Actions
King County appreciates the ambition in the draft plan, but is worried about KCRHA's ability to achieve these goals within the specified timeframe. They suggest a re-evaluation of the 24-month timeline and a clear sequencing or prioritization of actions so the public and partners know what to expect and can appropriately hold us accountable. They recommend the first priority being to

reduce unsheltered homelessness, with other goals and strategies to follow.

Content & Organizational Changes

Similar to sequencing, King County staff and elected officials also suggest some content and structural shifts within the document. Specifically, they recommend re-arranging Goal 2 to be a focused, service-specific goal, which would involve shifting strategy areas from elsewhere in the plan to Goal 2, and shifting some areas of Goal 2, such as severe weather, to other goal areas in the plan . This, they believe, will allow for more clarity and homogeneity within Goal 2 to allow the public to understand clearly what KCRHA is working toward. Through re-organizing, King County staff believe this will provide a clear narrative and pathway for the public to follow. Finally, they uplift that the metrics are often not meaningful without baseline numbers or denominators with which to compare the data. As it currently stands, it is unclear which direction change or effect we are seeking in the metrics to measure success.

Describing and Prioritizing Sub-Populations

King County staff and elected officials feel that KCRHA's identification and explanation of subpopulations was not adequate for this document. First, they note that families and youth and young adults were specifically called out with their own goals, while single adults represent the most prevalent population experiencing homelessness in King County. They also note that other subpopulations, such as Veterans, do not have specific strategies to the degree that families and youth have, although that population would benefit from the same level of focus.

They also believe that this plan focuses some areas on people not currently experiencing homelessness, such as folks living in RV parks, permanent supportive housing, or long-term care facilities. While these populations are important to consider broadly, King County questions the scope of KCRHA and the draft plan in its attention to these populations and our mission of focusing on people experiencing homelessness.

Finally, they feel the description of people currently experiencing homelessness is lacking in that it does not provide information on geographic dispersion, demographics, levels of chronic homelessness, and variety of service needs.

Data, Evidence, & Metrics

King County notes that some elements of this plan require more clarity and research support, which could include the number of units needed, which they call out as a fundamental element of the plan. They flag a disparity in numbers in Goal 1 between the estimate of 45,000 and 23,000 households experiencing homelessness and also note that then in Strategy 1.1, the unit estimates do not align with these overall projections of homelessness. They are seeking more clarity in how the numbers in Strategy 1.1 were derived to understand these incongruities and to request revisions to clarify why some housing types have

zero units identified in the current system (i.e., RV Parking, Recovery Housing) when those services do exist to a limited degree in King County.

In addition to unit count confusion, King County staff also seek clarity on cost estimates as they note some sections have well-developed cost analyses while others lack cost estimates altogether. They are hoping KCRHA can clarify the cost shifts from existing resources that would be needed. Both staff and elected officials would like specific discussion of how additional dollar(s) would be spent in order of importance.

Finally, while much of the plan provides evidence-based assertions, King County highlights that some areas are lacking supportive information or references. They were also hoping to see more information on the Regional Action Framework (RAF) incorporated, in addition to the references to the NIS Report.

V.   Provider Feedback

a. Correspondence from Providers

Staff from some service providers drafted letters to KCRHA to provide direct feedback and support for the draft Five-Year Plan. These letters are attached in the Appendix of this memo. Some comments listed below in this section will also reflect the remarks stated in the letters. While we did not receive letters from all service providers that KCRHA engaged with throughout this process, we value the time and thoughtfulness provided by all provider staff and want to ensure their feedback is meaningfully considered throughout the revision process.

b. Background on Provider Engagement

To engage the homelessness service provider community, including frontline staff and provider leadership KCRHA staff hosted or attended the following virtual sessions to review the draft plan.

- Provider Leadership Sessions (December 2022)
- Lunch and Learn Sessions (January 2023)
- Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness (January & February 2023)
- King County Youth Service Providers (February 2023)
- KCRHA Base Building Spaces (January & February 2023)
- East KC Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC) (January & February 2023)

Additionally, KCRHA staff reviewed and coded the 54 comments shared from providers via our Five Year Plan online feedback survey as well as documented the generative comments from the 4 letters we received from service provider organizations or service provider coalitions. Key themes from our efforts to hear from service providers regarding the plan are explained below.

c. Summarized Provider Feedback

Overall

Providers share an overall appreciation that this plan uplifts the budget that providers know is necessary to end homelessness, however they expressed the desire to see actionable implementation that works within the current budget to be included with a particular emphasis on the immediacy of addressing unsheltered homelessness. There is no doubt that workforce stabilization is of high priority as well as providers desire to see the overall homelessness response system de-siloed, coordinated, accessible, holistic and regionalized. Additionally, providers are asking for more clarity around definitions, the system re-bid process, and the data used. Providers also emphasized that real-time bed availability should be cited as a high priority.

Overall, concerns were raised about Tiny House Villages (THV's) not being prioritized within the plan, as providers shared that THV's are their clients' overall preferred option. Additionally, much emphasis was placed on the desire for RHA to take immediate steps to fund and stand up regional overnight severe weather shelters.

Lastly, there was overwhelming feedback from providers uplifting their concern that single adults were not specifically addressed in this plan, as they make up the majority of the unhoused population.

Concern of the Role and Implementation of Modeling

Providers are seeking clarification and more background information on the modeling numbers. Specifically they are hoping for more detail on how KCRHA determined the modeling numbers and in some cases, such as safe parking, what that housing model includes and what the process is for citing locations for additional services. The provider community also highlighted several models as a high need or vital for their communities, including: Tiny House Villages, Transitional Housing, Recuperative Care / Recovery Housing, and some congregate shelter settings. Finally, folks are seeking information on the sub-populations each housing model is intended to serve.

Sub-Population Strategies

Providers across King County emphasize the need for and support of sub-population specific strategies but question why KCRHA chose to focus on particular sub-populations and not others. The community would like to see the five year plan be inclusive of single adult strategies as well as provide greater clarity on how RHA will bolster the Youth and Young Adult strategy that was highlighted. Additionally, while providers shared their support of capacity building as a strategy, they uplifted the need for clarity around what capacity building means and what role it will play in the planning process and system re-bid? Finally, providers continue to emphasize the need for RHA to be explicit about the intersection between domestic violence/gender based violence and homelessness and to prioritize integrating these providers and services into the

greater homelessness response system.

System Health
The provider community has emphasized the need for increased investment across the homelessness response system, including bolstering the need for living wages with the added need of personal benefits, investing in accessible trainings so current staff can meet the unique and growing needs of the unhoused population, increasing funding for wrap-around services, and providing more flexible funding to respond to the needs of each individual. In addition to supporting these new investments, providers want to uplift the need for maintaining and fully funding existing services, including expanding hotel voucher options when existing shelters are at capacity, while also creating a more robust future for the homeless services system.

When envisioning a future-state homelessness system, providers are avid about ensuring programs and services reflect regionalism, meeting people where they are. They want to see KCRHA develop not only a crisis response system, but a commitment to create a holistic system that includes temporary and permanent supportive housing. Finally, they believe a robust system includes investing in the development of a program or tool that demonstrates real-time bed availability to guide their clients appropriately without burdening providers at capacity and limiting the number of folks who are turned away.

Diversion Strategy
Providers recognize the importance of diversion for long-term positive impacts on clients, in addition to system efficiency and cost savings. However, they are seeking clarity on KCRHA's definition of diversion, how it may or may not differ from HUD's definition, and how that could impact client eligibility and funding requirements.

Coordinated Entry
Similar to diversion, providers are seeking additional clarity around the future of Coordinated Entry (CE). Specifically, they are wondering if CE will undergo any changes either as a result of the current challenges and / or in response to strategies identified in the plan. They note that CE is foundational to the homelessness response system and curious to know how CE will interact with strategies, specifically how it intersects with Partnership for Zero and if there can be information added to the plan around filling beds using the CE system. Finally, if there are changes made to the CE system, provider partners are eager to be included and to provide input into those changes.

Severe Weather
The current severe weather shelter system highlights the burn out within the homelessness response system as it relies heavily on volunteers and currently requires some providers to open sites on short notice. Provider partners strongly recommend opening a seasonal severe weather shelter to provide consistency for

both staffing and for unhoused folks to know where to go on any given night in the winter months. Additionally providers are asking for more training for their staff to be able to run severe weather shelters and appropriately respond to incidents and refer individuals to supportive services once they exit the shelter. Finally, the provider community emphasized the need for seasonal shelters to be dispersed throughout the region.

VI. Lived Experience

a. Engagement with People with Lived Experience

The strategies within the draft Five Year Plan were developed through centering the voices of lived experience at the inception and drafting of content of the plan. To continue this process of vetting content and evaluating for revisions, staff engaged in a few efforts to engage those with lived experience.

On the survey, there was a field for respondents to indicate if they had lived experience with homelessness—past or current. Out of the 640 survey respondents, 101 respondents (15%) indicated that they had formerly experienced homelessness, and 15 (2.3%) respondents indicated that they were currently experiencing homelessness. In an attempt to further engage, the Sub-Regional Team members visited two sites in partnership with services providers to engage with our unhoused neighbors. These sites included the encampment at Green River Road in South King County, and Aurora Commons in North Seattle. Additionally, one of the chairs of the KCRHA Advisory Committee also engaged folks currently experiencing homelessness on the Eastside regarding the plan.

Lastly, in recognition of the relationship service provider staff hold with current program participants, we put forward a request and supporting pathway to allow service providers to ask key questions regarding the plan to their current program participants.

b. Summarized Lived Experience Feedback

Key themes from these efforts to hear from those with lived experience regarding the plan include:
- A desire to elevate the sub-regional nuances and dynamics; folks with lived experience who lived outside of Seattle emphasized how different the services and needs are. They felt as though the draft Plan did not recognize these differences fully.
- Concern that the plan does not address enough the drivers of homelessness, including folks exiting domestic violence situations or folks exiting incarceration.
- Emphasized the need for more supportive services in emergency shelter/housing programs, including structured programs with embedded accountability.
- Desire for a more connected homelessness response system, including improving communication and connection with the folks experiencing homelessness.

- Emphasis on the importance of service matching, both geographically and identifying the best supports for each person.
- Elevating the desire for autonomy and privacy. Folks shared that during severe weather incidents, they prefer to stay outdoors and "hunker down" for the night rather than travel a far distance, risk losing their belongings, and be around people.
- Desire to be connected to employment so they can have an income to maintain housing once they are connected. Many folks expressed a strong passion for working and staying busy.
- Uplifting the role that substance use and addiction play on folks experiencing homelessness, particularly the barriers to maintaining stability, the inability to find long-term treatment, and the lack of urgency around identifying treatment for those who are willing.

VII. Recommended Revisions

After reviewing feedback from survey responses and letters from city partners, provider partners, and people with lived experience, the Sub-Regional Team tracked all suggested changes in a single spreadsheet, combining responses from multiple partners that requested the same change. The Sub-Regional Team considered all requested changes and evaluated the merit of bringing forward each piece of feedback as a recommended revision. This evaluation was grounded in the team's knowledge of the overall service landscape of King County, the current gaps and an understanding of which changes are possible for KCRHA to carry out in order to strengthen the homelessness response system and advance KCRHA's mission. The Sub-Regional Planning team advances the following 78 recommendations for the System Planning Committee's consideration.

Number Change	Area of Plan	Type of Change	The Change	Sponsoring Stakeholder
1	Add New Section	New Strategy	Add an 8th goal focused on what the community can do to help. NOTE: Strategies and Initiatives within this goal area are under-development.	KCRHA Staff
2	Add New Section	Technical Revision	Background: Add statement on intersectionality throughout plan	Community Partner KCRHA Staff
3	Executive Summary	Technical Revision	Background: Add section outlining legal requirements of the Five-Year Plan	King County
4	Executive Summary	Technical Revision	Add section related to role/scope of five year plan and delineating between annual KCRHA work plans and Sub-Regional Implementation Plans	KCRHA Staff King County
5	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add description on the derivation of "units needed" for each housing type.	King County
6	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Background: Prepare Funding Options related to Modeling	Board or Committee Member King County
7	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Adjust language to ensure consistency with Commerce's underlying assumptions	City Partner
8	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add descriptive language on how new models will more equitably connect folks to homelessness services and better support services matching.	King County
9	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Describe the characteristics, housing, and service needs of the PfZ population	King County
10	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: Add clarifying language/material about the "Housing Needs Form".	King County
11	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: Add language related to coordination with the criminal justice system and the King County Veterans	King County

			Program.	
12	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Background: Add language that speaks to the core purpose and role the modeling content plays in system transformation and future re-procurement.	City Partner Provider Leadership
13	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add language noting the needs for units to accommodate larger household sizes when serving families.	Provider Leadership
14	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add content on programmatic elements/best practices in VR to safe parking and RV parking programs.	King County Provider Leadership
15	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add content related to the role of Adult Family Homes and Skilled Nursing Facilities in addressing housing options and homelessness for seniors.	Community Partner Lived Experience
16	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Define recuperative housing and how it differs from medical respite.	King County
17	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: In recovery housing – clarify that ACT is primarily for people with psychotic disorders rather than substance use issues that are more typically addressed with clean/sober housing or harm reduction approaches.	King County
18	Goal 1	Technical Revision	Reclassify to fold in THV figures into Emergency Housing/Non-Congregate Shelter	KCRHA Staff
19	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 4: Adjust language around severe weather throughout Goal 2.4 to accurately reflect that cities outside of Seattle still operate severe weather response independently, with communication and coordination from KCRHA.	City Partner
20	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 4: Add language related to moving severe weather response system towards ensuring severe weather shelters have compensated trained staff.	Provider Leadership City Partner
21	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 4: Add language regarding how families require a different strategy and process during severe weather.	Provider Leadership
22	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "Incorporate into existing contracts, allowances for severe weather shelter response, to support standardization of severe weather activation."	City Partner Provider Leadership

23	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "Support coordination with faith-based communities to explore potential untapped physical spaces to be used as severe weather shelter and to support knowledge sharing around resources."	Board or Committee Member Provider Leadership
24	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "Work in partnership with jurisdictions to identify and evaluate spaces for severe weather with cities to expand the number of options during severe weather".	Provider Leadership
25	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "Pivot severe weather response to a seasonal weather response rather than only in severe and life-threatening circumstances."	Lived Experience Provider Leadership
26	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "Enhance outreach contracts to be appropriately staffed during severe weather events, including evening support, to help folks navigate indoors."	Provider Leadership
27	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 4: Add an initiative to "KCRHA always ensures adequate staffing for severe weather events, even during office closures."	Provider Leadership
28	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 3: Add an initiative for KCRHA to hold and offer trainings to support the standardization of person-centered healing-based services, with trainings designed by those with lived experience.	Provider Leadership
29	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add background information/definition content on what is meant by capacity building.	Provider Leadership
30	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Add language related to the development of trainings done in partnership with those with lived experience.	Provider Leadership
31	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Incorporate language that speaks to how we will partner with service providers in implementation of wage equity and also speaks to the nature of different sized agencies. Moving toward increasing supports for front line staff on wages but ultimately taking into account the approach for each services provider with regard to org size	City Partner Provider Leadership
32	Goal 2	Substantive Policy	Strategy 6: Remove "Should the funding be available"	Provider Leadership

		Change	conditional statement in first initiative	
33	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 2: Add initiative related to supporting coordination between all agencies providing diversion services through KCRHA base building spaces to share information to serve clients more efficiently.	Provider Leadership
34	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: Add language in background that clarifies the difference between diversion and prevention.	Provider Leadership
35	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 2: Add initiative that proposes changing the definition/eligibility for diversion resources from exclusive to those experiencing homelessness to allow for those at risk to also access.	Provider Leadership
36	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 3 and Strategy 6: Add language that acknowledges the need to maintain existing service levels.	Provider Leadership
37	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Across Goal Area: Add Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence to outlined subpopulations	Community Partner Provider Leadership Public
38	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Across Goal Area: Include background detail on evidence-based practices.	King County Public
39	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Add analysis on estimates on cost savings with Foundational Community Supports, Medicaid Billing Strategy	KCRHA Staff
40	Goal 2	New Strategy	HOLD: Strategies to implement increased billing of FCS/Medicaid in provider network	KCRHA Staff
41	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Clarify that service models listed (e.g, Trauma-Informed Care, Harm reduction, shared decision-making and person-centered care) are evidence-based practices.	King County
42	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add language to "Further, ensure the same providers are supported in any transitioning process of program models such as from congregate to non-congregate models"	Provider Leadership
43	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add descriptive language around how	King County

			procurement processes are being developed and reference to the procurement manual appendix.	
43	Goal 2	Technical Revision	Introduction: Add narrative in how the role/purview of KCRHA is to set programmatic standards for different program types.	KCRHA Staff
44	Goal 2	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 7: Add an initiative that speaks to exploring procuring for sub-population specific identified needs, with an emphasis on the identification of confidential emergency housing options for Trans and gender non-conforming individuals.	Community Partner KCRHA Staff
45	Goal 3	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add detail as to what the ombuds investigation process means for service providers.	Provider Leadership
46	Goal 3	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 1: Add initiative related to the stand-up of the Ombuds Advisory Board	KCRHA Staff
47	Goal 4	Technical Revision	Add content related to disproportionate rates of homelessness experienced by Trans and Gender non-conforming individuals	Community Partner KCRHA Staff
48	Goal 5	Technical Revision	Background: Add language to acknowledge families who hold intersecting identities: Black, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQIA2S+, etc.	Community Partner Provider Leadership
49	Goal 5	Technical Revision	Background: Add content relating to the intersection of DV and family homelessness	Community Partner Provider Leadership
50	Goal 5	Technical Revision	Background: Add content relating to the intersection Youth and Young Adults who also have children and are experiencing homelessness.	Community Partner Provider Leadership
51	Goal 6	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 2: Add an initiative that calls for the coordination between DV services to support families who are also fleeing domestic violence.	Community Partner Provider Leadership Public
52	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Change 'hybridizing w/ PfZ' to developing a youth-specific HCC center.	King County
53	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: In initiative 2, change from "Create strong	King County

			connections to other systems..." to "...Align our efforts with other systems"	
54	Goal 6	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 2: Add an initiative to develop a funding mechanism to create more after care programs for young people transitioning out of homelessness	Community Partner Provider Leadership
55	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: In initiative 2, explicitly name criminal justice/carceral system along with the other listed systems.	Community Partner Provider Leadership KCRHA Staff
56	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: In initiative 2, add behavioral health system along with the other listed systems.	Provider Leadership Public
57	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: In initiative 1, add language around improvements to data collection.	Provider Leadership
58	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: In initiative 1, adjust language to incorporate how solutions KCRHA is exploring to end YYA homelessness are intended to be dynamic and flexible	Provider Leadership
59	Goal 6	New Strategy	Add Third Strategy to YYA: Establish a pilot program for direct cash transfers to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in King County, with the goal of providing immediate financial support to meet basic needs and reduce barriers to stable housing.	Provider Leadership
60	Goal 6	Technical Revision	Change Goal Title to "Every Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult has a Home" to clarify between family strategy and youth strategy	Community Partner KCRHA Staff
61	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 1: Add language how in interim, KCRHA will coordinate investments with other funders until sub-regional ILA's are completed.	City Partner King County
62	Goal 7	New Strategy	Strategy 3: Add initiative related to analyzing UUHP dataset with a sub-regional lens to better understand sub-regional differences in services access.	City Partner
63	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Add background information related to the number of interviews conducted during understanding unsheltered homelessness project in each sub-region.	City Partner Lived Experience

64	Goal 7	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 3: Remove the Public Interest Committee as the body to affirm sub-regional plans and remove corresponding metric.	City Partner Elected
65	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Background data pieces on sub-regional analytics also looking with an eye towards congregate/non-congregate shelters	City Partner
66	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Add content on how homelessness looks different in different sub-regions	City Partner Lived Experience Provider Leadership Public
67	Goal 7	New Strategy	Strategy 3: Add initiative to "support regional infrastructure development of homelessness services while working to appropriately maintain the level of service as appropriate to each sub-region."	City Partner Lived Experience Provider Leadership
68	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Add into initiative 3 how sub-regional implementation plans will outline in more concrete detail with local context in mind the connection to behavioral health, public safety, and other system partners in the development of plans.	City Partner Lived Experience Public
69	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: Incorporate more background material on the role and current state of CE	King County Provider Leadership Public
70	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 2: Add content about intersection between Partnership for Zero and Coordinated Entry	King County Provider Leadership
71	Goal 7	Substantive Policy Change	Strategy 2: Add initiative "To review Regional Access Point design to support improvements for client experience and overall access to housing."	KCRHA Staff Provider Leadership
72	Goal 7	New Strategy	Strategy 2: Add initiative "To support the Advisory Committee in their role advising the functions of Coordinated Entry."	King County Provider Leadership
73	Goal 7	Technical Revision	Strategy 3: Add Actions to describe how plans will be developed "with input from Governing Committee, Advisory	King County City Partner

			Committee and Sound Cities Association"	
74	Goal 8	New Strategy	Add initiative: Faith-based partnerships: Partner around accompaniment training, potentially tapping into spaces to support non-congregate shelter options (THVs, sanctioned encampments, safe parking), and other supportive services.	Board or Committee Member
75	Goal 8	New Strategy	Add initiative:Engage media and the art industry to shift public narratives around homelessness	Community Partner City Partner
76	Introduction	Technical Revision	Add background information on PIT requirements to reflect KCRHA's PIT policy / frequency.	Provider Leadership City Partner
77	Introduction	Technical Revision	Add background and clarifying content regarding one-time COVID funding that was a part of the 2021-2022 biennium regional investments from jurisdictions and add 2023-2023 biennium regional investments	City Partner
78	Overall	Technical Revision	Add content in areas across the plan to make the single adult strategies explicit.	Community Partner Provider Leadership City Partner

February 10, 2023

To: Marc Dones, Chief Executive Officer
        King County Regional Homelessness Authority
        400 Yesler Way
        Seattle WA 98104

Dear Marc,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Five Year Plan. We commend KCHRA for presenting a bold vision and an equity-focused, person-centered approach for addressing homelessness across King County. We also appreciate the ongoing collaboration between your subregional planning team, staff in our city, and others on the Eastside.

Bellevue and neighboring cities have a strong history of working together to address the evolving homelessness crisis across our communities. This has included prioritizing the development of affordable housing, supporting enhanced 24/7 shelter capacity, implementing an effective joint application process for service providers, allocating millions of dollars annually to social services and homelessness response, directly employing outreach staff, and implementing a safe parking pilot program, among other initiatives.

Bellevue city staff have reviewed the Draft Five Year Plan and provide the following high-level comments to be addressed in the final Plan:

- **Equity and Families (Goals 4, 5, 6):** We support the Plan's emphasis on explicitly reducing the impact of racism, and prioritizing ending unsheltered homelessness for families with children, youth, and young adults.
- **Severe Weather Response (Strategy 2.4)**: KCRHA's severe weather response work has already been of great value to our community and local providers, particularly the improved coordination, information-sharing, and emergency funding for providers during severe weather events. We appreciate your work in this area and support continued growth.
- **Implementation Costs**: The estimated implementation costs are a significant feature of the Plan. For clarity, the Plan needs a single summary table of total implementation cost estimates in each category – directly contracted services by KCRHA, prevention funding (by others or KCRHA, please clarify), and temporary or housing development (by others or KCRHA, please clarify). The costs associated with this Plan, particularly those identified for increasing housing supply, clearly far exceed any currently available funding in the region Further, housing development is beyond the scope of KCRHA's mission and relies on other housing providers. In order to support successful implementation, we recommend that the final Plan more clearly identify KCRHA's role in that work.
- **Data analytics, utilization and exit rates (Strategy 1.1)**: The Plan notes low utilization rates for congregate shelters and rates for people existing homelessness to permanent housing: "vacancy

rates for KCRHA-funded shelters have ranged from 11% in 2019, their lowest rate in recent years, but have grown steadily to 23% in 2021." While this may be true in other parts of the region, the Eastside has not experienced this. The four congregate shelters on the Eastside are regularly at capacity, with average subregional bed utilization rates across these shelters of over 90% (2021). The Plan should acknowledge that in certain subareas, shelters are a critical component of the current service environment, and utilization will remain high in the absence of other alternatives. KCRHA's funding allocations must also reflect this.

- **Congregate shelters (Strategy 1.1)**: We appreciate that the Plan acknowledges the significance of emergency congregate shelters in the current service environment, by "recognizing that congregate shelters continue to play an important role in addressing unsheltered homelessness, any new transitions from congregate to non-congregate models would need to be phased in over time and implemented in collaboration with cities and service provider partners." Within the Eastside subregion, public and private funders have supported two relatively new congregate shelters plus a new permanent building for the CFH Men's Shelter opening this spring. The City of Bellevue and our partners have made significant investments in this critical service. Congregate sheltering is currently an essential component of the limited shelter and emergency housing options in this subregion. Any transition to an emergency housing model in the future will require (1) continued or increased funding to maintain current service levels until such time as an appropriate local alternative is available and (2) funding to support transition costs for existing facilities and programs. The Plan must explicitly reflect these commitments.

- **Vehicle Residency (Strategy 1.1)**: The Five-Year Plan considers Safe Parking and RV parking under expansion of shelter and housing even though vehicle residency is technically unsheltered homelessness. The proposed investment over 5 years is nearly $200 million, with estimated on-going costs of about $24 million. The plan should emphasize ways to lift individuals and families out of their vehicle residency and into temporary and permanent housing.

- **Micro-modular shelters (Strategy 1.1)**: The Five-Year Plan indicates this is not a desirable option (temporary or permanent) and does not contemplate any additional expansion beyond what is available today. This option, while not permanent housing, has seen success in some locations providing individual shelter spaces as an alternative to sleeping outside, and can support exits to housing. It should be considered as a viable temporary option while additional affordable housing is constructed.

- **Service Contracts (Strategies 2.6 and 2.7)**: While beyond the scope of this high-level plan, additional clarity is urgently needed regarding rollout and potential criteria for the proposed 2023 KCRHA rebid process with service providers. As noted above, at least maintaining existing shelter funding and capacity on the Eastside must be a near-term priority. Current service levels for eastside shelters are already strained by limited funding and a history of under-funding from King County. Further, while we support livable wage requirements, available funding must also ensure that providers are fully funded for their services plus receive increases to address wage increases. Finally, we recognize that growing and diversifying the portfolio of service providers will be challenging in this employment climate.

- **Subregional Implementation Plans (Strategies 7.1 and 7.3)**: These goals identify performance measures for funding consolidation from all 39 cities in King County and completion of seven subregional implementation plans. This may be better worded as *working toward* this goal. Further, the performance measure for subregional plans identifies that these plans are to be "affirmed" by

the Sound Cities Association Public Issues Committee – please clarify the intent of this additional process step. Developing and affirming or approving subregional plans should be the role of individual jurisdictions within a subregion, and the performance measure should reflect this. We look forward to being active participants in the subregional planning process, along with other Eastside stakeholders. It will be important for our Council and community to have input on and be able to support the Subregional implementation plan and to have a direct seat at the table

- **Coordinated Entry (Strategy 7.2)**: We have previously discussed with KCRHA staff our concerns regarding the Coordinated Entry system. The Plan identifies that significant improvements are needed, and we strongly support that sentiment. In particular, it is essential that CE allow residents to be prioritized for housing within their communities (this is particularly impactful for families with children in local schools) and ensure appropriate matches between individual needs and on-site service levels.

We recognize that while each community has unique needs, homelessness is not limited by jurisdictional boundaries, and that supporting our most vulnerable residents requires a broad collaborative approach. We are eager to build on the strength of our existing partnerships to continue this critical work.

Sincerely,

Brad Miyake
City Manager

CC: KCRHA Implementation Board
         KCRHA Governing Committee
         David Hoffman, Executive Director, Sound Cities Association

King County Regional Homelessness Authority

Five-Year Plan (2023 - 2028)

City of Issaquah overall comments:

- Great, comprehensive document, with extensive community engagement.

- Good evidence throughout the document of utilizing lived experience voices and input.

- Comprehensive research of other regional and national models.

- We support the goal of moving away from congregate shelter settings and toward non-congregate shelter models; this aligns with service pattern needs noticed in Issaquah also.

- We would like to recommend that high acuity need residents are prioritized. Given the complexity of needs, the chronicity and persistency of the conditions, this population is currently not benefiting from the services available.

- We applaud the goals to prioritize families with children and youth. In the current proposed goal of expanding temporary housing models for these populations, are there opportunities for collaboration with permanent housing to identify alternative creative options that could lead directly to permanent housing thus limiting additional trauma in children and youth from having to move multiple times, often within the same school year? (Goals 5 & 6)

- Issaquah would like to express support for identifying under-utilized resources, and for amendments proposed to federal regulations that would significantly free up local resources to be redirected toward critical crisis response efforts. (Strategy 2.5: Optimize and Secure Funding Opportunities to Support Services and Operations- pages 65-67)

- The plan recognizes that what we are seeing here at a regional level, is only part of a national problem. The County and Cities alone cannot fund or solve this. It will take state, federal and private funding as well to fully implement this plan.

- We are supportive of developing mechanisms to manage real-time bed availability across the system, inclusive of all types of shelter and emergency housing.

- Supportive of a coordinated system that effectively responds to the need of unsheltered community members, the need to leverage resources, maximize impact, reduce administrative burden on service providers & municipal jurisdictions. (Goal 7)

February 15, 2023

Marc Dones
King County Regional Homelessness Authority
400 Yesler Way
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mx. Dones,

The City of Kirkland is deeply appreciative of the hard work KCRHA has invested in creating a comprehensive document that guides how we address homelessness as a unified region, using an approach that is person-centered, data driven, and committed to justice. The City appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Five Year Plan.

Kirkland and neighboring Eastside cities have worked for decades to streamline how we approach homelessness through coordination and funding to help meet the needs of unhoused community members. Despite the coordination of resources, the Eastside is unable to address the need in its entirety. Eastside subarea voice is critical in shaping KCRHA's mission to create a unified homeless response system across King County, with input into the 5-year Plan and the Eastside Subregional Plan.

City staff have reviewed the Plan to provide comments reflective of the Eastside landscape, recognizing the final Five-Year Plan will subsequently inform efforts in development of the Eastside sub-regional plan in partnership with KCRHA, neighboring Eastside cities, and service providers.

Commitment to Equity
The City applauds the anti-racist lens applied and demonstrated throughout the plan; it is a necessary and direct response to the disproportionality of people of color who experience homelessness in King County.

We are supportive of the prioritization of centering those with lived experience guiding the work and development of the plan through community engagement, data access, and shaping future investment recommendations by the Authority.

We support Goal 4, 5, and 6 in the plan, including:
- Recognition that Black and African Americans, Native Americans, and Indigenous communities are overrepresented and face disproportionate barriers to receiving appropriate and relevant services and care within the current system; subsequently the commitment to diversify providers in the homeless response system;
- Ending homelessness for families with children experiencing homelessness in King County;
- And addressing the unique challenges of youth homelessness and the disproportional impacts homelessness has on a young resident and the risk of future housing instability.

Congregate Shelter and Emergency Housing
The City supports the shift to non-congregate shelter efforts and focusing on emergency housing using the Housing First model. We applaud how the Authority incorporated feedback from users of the system in recommending this shift. The City would like to see additional clarity on the timeline of this transition, and if congregate shelters would remain competitive for funding as the model is phased out.

The Eastside is not seeing a decrease in demand for congregate shelter compared to other subregions. Additional temporary housing models would need to come online to address existing need as congregate shelter is phased out. The Plan needs specific strategies for how this shift happens. Additional clarification is needed around the Plan's recommended decrease in modular homes County-wide, and how the recommended shift ties into the phasing from congregate to non-congregate shelter. Closing congregate shelters without alternatives available will only exacerbate homelessness.

Strengthening Coordination of Systems
The City supports the Authority's role to engage and work alongside parallel systems (e.g. housing, health care, child welfare, education, employment, incarceration) for better outcomes for families, youth, people of color, high acuity individuals, and other identified subpopulations. As part of the subregional plans, we would like to see the Authority identify paths to alignment to increase efficiency across systems and how they work together in responding to the needs of unhoused community members. The City has observed this with the leadership coordinating severe weather response and looks forward to future alignment of efforts and systems to improve efficiency and minimize harm to unhoused residents.

Severe Weather Response
The City is highly supportive of KCRHA's role coordinating regional response to severe weather events. The City has been very impressed by the leadership and resources made available by the Authority over the last year to support unhoused residents, staff, municipalities, and partners to work together on a unified response during severe weather events.

Real-Time Availability
The City supports KCRHA's role to understand the hundreds of programs offered and subsequent criteria County-wide to produce real-time availability of appropriate services for a household in need of shelter.

Coordinated Entry
We applaud the Authority's commitment to improve coordinated entry with a renewed focus on equity, transparency, consistency, and efficiency to appropriately match a user's needs. We are interested to learn more about the specific strategies KCRHA plans to incorporate into its approach to strengthen coordinated entry.

Funding
We support the vision to streamline and coordinate funding for homelessness services across the region. The Eastside currently works as a collective to streamline and support Eastside shelter providers. We look forward to building on existing momentum with KCRHA.

The estimated implementation costs outlined in the Plan far exceed current revenue streams. The City is interested in how the Authority will identify sustainable revenue sources in public and private funding to offset the proposed costs within the Plan. The cost to address homelessness in our region signals the result of a national crisis and requires substantial support. We are also interested in how the Authority plans to identify under-utilized resources and streamline where possible to redirect dollars to support services and operations more efficiently throughout the region as outlined in the 24-month action plan.

Use of Data
The City is supportive of the layered approach and integration of community qualitative approach in data collection methods to center those with lived experience. The shared methodology and use of HB 1220 data from the Department of Commerce is informative, but difficult to understand. There are significant gaps in how KCRHA is using the Cloudburst to inform the housing modeling and cost estimates outlined in the plan; and how the qualitative data is incorporated into the current recommendations.

We recognize the urgent situation our region is facing, and the importance of a streamlined and coordinated response that centers those with lived experience, as a region. The City looks forward to continuing our work with KCRHA in development of the East King County sub-regional plan. Thank you for your vision and commitment to supporting our unhoused neighbors in King County.

Sincerely,
CITY OF KIRKLAND

Kurt Triplett
City Manager

CC: KCRHA Implementation Board
       KCRHA Governing Committee

February 8, 2023

To: KCRHA Staff, Implementation Board and Governing Committee.

On behalf of the Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) Staff and Board of Directors (both of which include individuals with lived experience), I am submitting our written feedback related to the draft KCRHA Five-Year Plan ("Plan") which incorporates how we believe it will impact the welfare of individuals over the age of 18 and who self-identify as men.

We bring forward these thoughts as experts on this complex topic. CFH has been working in and for our community for nearly 30 years through a coordinated combination of street outreach, case management services (including, housing navigation and employment), mental health supports, emergency shelter and permanent housing. Further, CFH serves nearly 1,000 unique individuals each year with the majority of those seeking emergency shelter and services. The majority of people served are between 31 and 60 years old; over 50% identify as black, Hispanic, Indigenous or Person of Color and nearly 70% have one or more disabilities. Within our shelters, roughly half of the people stay 30 days or more. When the men choose to engage with us through our enhanced services, our enhanced congregate shelters support these men who wish to exit shelters to housing, nursing homes and sober living facilities.

We bring forward the following prioritized comments by goal area.

Goal 1: Dramatically Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness

1) We know that congregate settings can provide supportive environments and do work well for some people. This Plan reads as if all congregate shelters need to be phased out based on what appears to be a relatively small sample size of 180 interviews and on region-wide utilization rates which are much lower than CFH's. (Pages 27-29) Rather than dismissing the entire resource as something which needs to be phased out as a temporary housing option— **invest in better understanding and supporting those congregate shelters that do meet people's needs—specifically those enhanced shelters with low barriers to access where people find community and are served in a dignified, respectful and relational way.** Using the Plan's "profile" model, we provide the following three profiles of real CFH clients to illustrate the various ways a congregate shelter can provide a supportive and safe environment :

CFH Profile 1: A white male is placed into a transitional shelter system and is given a hotel room with a roommate. The roommate is constantly in the hospital due to medical problems, so the man prefers to return to the congregate shelter for support and community. At the congregate shelter, he attends mental health programming, socializes with his peers, and finds a sense of purpose through assisting his peers at the congregate shelter. He teaches peers how to navigate bus systems, helps them to understand community resources, and encourages them to get supports they need. This man has been waiting for SSI for two years, has been on the CEA list for housing for multiple years, and is likely to continue his wait for permanent housing being able to access the congregate shelter to connect to his community.

CFH Profile 2: A young Hispanic male is dropped off at the congregate shelter following discharge from an involuntary hold. This young man is undocumented, not covered by health insurance, and is unable to apply for disability. This man is not able work to support himself, does not have social supports due to mental illness, and has not been able to obtain supportive housing due to income and Medicaid requirements. At the congregate shelter, this man was connected to a social worker who advocated for him to be stabilized on medications, was able to help him obtain mental health resources without insurance, and was able to mediate between the family to improve his support system. While living at the congregate shelter, this man found community who embraced him as he is, gave him social connection and looked after him to ensure he was safe and secure. At this point in his life, this man would not thrive in independent housing and cannot locate the appropriate housing he needs because of his undocumented status. The congregate shelter gives him a space to be safe.

CFH Profile 3: An older Hispanic male has been in the congregate shelter for over 5 years. He is undocumented and does not have any income. He has multiple health issues and has been placed in the "medical dorm" of the congregate shelter consisting of 20 beds reserved for men with mobility issues needing increased access to a bed space. Living in the congregate shelter means this man has a safe space to rest during the day and can enjoy the company of their neighbors who are also congregate shelter residents. This man enjoys his daily regimen of getting coffee from the day center, watching the news, and returning to his space to find peace and quiet. This man and the rest of the men in the medical dorm run a self-governed (with oversight) wing of the congregate shelter which allows them autonomy, empowering them to set their own behavioral standards. The men in this space create their ontological security through these practices.

2) As a way to increase temporary "housing" options, the proposed growth in vehicle and RV safe parking by nearly 30% brings up many questions based on our experience and doesn't reflect conversations with those we serve. **To develop greater clarity about what is meant by "safe parking" and under what circumstances this becomes a preferred option for those seeking more permanent housing, we strongly recommend engaging in more conversations with those who actually might use this option.** While "safe parking" might be the preferred option for some, it is rarely the therapeutic or healthy option - either for the individual or the community. Safe Parking has a place in our tool box of temporary "housing" options, but it should be the last choice to serve people and definitely not worthy of increasing by 30% - especially in a time of finite resources, even more so when there are better temporary housing options worthy of funding.

3) **Prioritize investments in Recovery Housing and Recuperative Care as Temporary Housing options.** These two exit options out of emergency shelter really do not exist right now but are critically needed. We feel the Plan understates the amount of people who need true supportive housing--making these types of Temporary Housing options even more critical. Our region is in a housing crisis and a substance abuse crisis - failing to prioritize housing choices that complement an individual's desire for recovery from substance abuse is addressing only half of the crisis. Health and Housing are intertwined and Recovery Housing and Recuperative Care as Temporary Housing addresses both, and needs further emphasis.

Goal 2: Restructure the Service System to Improve Capacity, Supports, and Efficiency

1) The structures we have in place currently would be more impactful if providers had a more stable workforce. Further, many of the Plan's goals and strategies are dependent on a stable work force and strong delivery system capable of delivering the more robust, supportive, accountable services; therefore, KCRHA needs to **prioritize a real commitment to stabilizing the front-line work force** by:

    a. Providing funding which supports paying "living" wages.
    b. Providing greater access to unrestricted dollars which will allow providers to be more innovative and effective.
    c. Providing longer-term operational commitments that allow organizations to scale to meet needs, invest in high-quality trainings and improve overall effectiveness through continuity of planning, funding and performance.

Goal 3: Ensure the Availability of Accessible, Accountable, and Responsive Services

1) We agree that *a key part of building a functional service system is ensuring that the user experience is positive, supportive, and empowering.* (p.76) **The Plan's proposed strategies need to be coordinated very closely with service providers for the following reasons**:

    a. With our more vulnerable clients often living with co-occurring disorders, it is unclear how they would utilize the systems implemented in this goal/plan.
    b. Often our clients' needs are in the moment and they tend to bring up issues as they present themselves with the immediate staff available.
    c. If issues/concerns are raised externally on KCRHA controlled platforms and if we are not receiving the feedback immediately so we can address in a timely manner, we anticipate resulting challenges and confusion for all involved – especially those most impacted.
    d. Over the years, we learned the mechanism of serving people through the CEA process is not efficient or even viable in some aspects. Trying to build a better system on a broken foundation seems unwise and likely to lead to a CEA system that will continue to fail users and providers.

Goal 4: Reduce the Impact of Racism on People Experiencing Homelessness

CFH fully supports this goal and supporting strategies. **This goal is closely linked to the success of Goal 2 and needs to be considered in that context** because it requires strengthening an organization's abilities through staff specifically hired within the agency to support DEI work and increased training and accountability to ensure client concerns/feedback are filtered through not only a program lens but through a lens of DEI.

Goal 5: No Family with Children Sleeps Outside & Goal 6: Every Youth and Young Adult ("YYA") Has a Home

CFH serves one of the largest populations of people experiencing homelessness – single adult men. It is notable that this population is not specifically addressed as a priority goal and **CFH hopes that the referenced contract rebid process clarifies KCHRA's commitment to this population by allocating a proportionate share of available funding for organizations serving adults experiencing homelessness.**

Goal 7: The Region Acts as One to Address Homelessness

As a community-based service provider for nearly 30 years, CFH works hard to tailor how we partner with men and our community to move men from homelessness to stable living. We are heartened to see the Plan makes the following statement: *Through this work we can create tailored and nuanced plans that integrate into the sub-regional communities, while also identifying what work might benefit from centralized administration.* (p.130)

As this 5-year plan gets implemented, we hope KCHRA will honor their commitment to work collaboratively with the local jurisdictions and community-based providers.

CFH looks forward to continue work with KCRHA. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at stevem@cfhomeless.org or 206-437-1304 with any questions or follow up to our comments.

Sincerely,
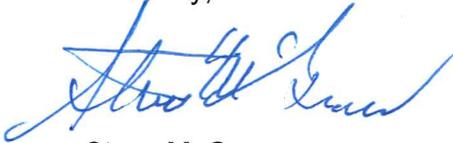
Steve McGraw
Interim Executive Director
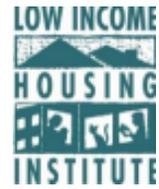
February 8, 2023

To: KCRHA Implementation Board
        KCRHA Governing Committee
        King County Regional Homelessness Authority
        Mayor Bruce Harrell, Seattle City Council
        Executive Dow Constantine, King County Council

From: Sharon Lee, LIHI Executive Director

RE: LIHI Response to KCRHA Five-Year Plan

The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) has had substantial experience providing services to homeless people throughout King County for over 30 years. Our body of work includes congregate and non-congregate shelters, tiny house villages, hotel shelters, tent city mitigation sites, Urban Rest Stop hygiene centers, pop-up winter shelters, RV safe parking, emergency housing vouchers, developing and operating permanent supportive housing, and the ownership of over 3,200 units of affordable housing in the region. From our experience as a nonprofit organization providing housing and services to low-income and homeless people, we are all too aware of the monumental task put before the King County Regional Homelessness Authority to develop a Five-Year Plan that fully engages on the complex issue of ending homelessness.

The draft KCRHA Five-Year Plan is not workable and should not be approved in its current form by the KCRHA Implementation Board and the Governing Committee. It should be retooled to be more realistic, it is largely incomprehensible, and does not have measurable or achievable outcomes. It also contains significant math and accounting errors, unfounded assumptions, poorly drawn conclusions, and the price tag of $12 billion makes it infeasible. Rather than craft a proposal that solves every conceivable issue relating to homelessness; we propose revisions that narrow its focus to get everyone inside and to drastically reduce deaths of homeless people.

We offer criticism in the spirit of helping KCRHA restructure the plan to be realistic, workable and financially feasible. The emphasis is for KCRHA to take steps that are achievable, measurable and accountable, and that respond to these urgent needs:

1. To laser focus on a strategy to address the 7,600 people living unsheltered on the streets.
2. Urgently develop a robust, county-wide severe weather response system.
3. Drastically reduce the rising number of homeless deaths from exposure, fentanyl and other causes. There were 310 deaths of homeless people in 2022.
4. Work collaboratively with providers and people with lived experience to focus on low cost, efficient, common sense and practical solutions to improve the homelessness outreach and response systems.

We find these areas of the Five-Year Plan particularly concerning:

● Telling thousands of homeless people having to sleep outdoors that they have to wait for permanent housing to be built when immediate low cost shelter options are available is not a humane response when shelter beds are needed that night for families with children, youth and young adults, singles and people trying to survive in vehicles. We are not treating the problem as a true emergency. There are many low cost solutions to opening up more severe weather and year-round shelter beds. See our document on a road map attached: *Goal to Dramatically Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness*.

● The Five-Year Plan calls for building a staggering 15,690 new units of temporary housing at a one-time capital cost of $3.3 billion and up to $1 billion in annual operating costs. There is no identified roadmap, no information on where new revenue sources are coming from, nor is this a realistic goal! LIHI has instead proposed a three to five year plan that shows how we can add 7,000 short-term and year-round shelter beds; engage faith-based community partners; improve "throughput" and transition people more quickly into housing; and get everyone who is unsheltered into a warm and safe place. See attached.

● The plan calls for five years of zero investments in tiny house villages —the most sought after form of shelter—yet calls for spending $139 million to create 4,722 parking spaces for homeless people living in cars and RVs. Hundreds of people who were formerly living in vehicles have been moved into tiny houses and then successfully into permanent housing. The City of Seattle, King County and suburban cities do not want to see massive parking lots for 5,000 people, including families with children, to stay living in their vehicles.

- We found math errors and unexplained computations. Under the Non-congregate Shelter section (page 30) it shows funding for 7,137 shelter beds with a capital cost of $286,472 per bed in 2023, $343,987 per bed in 2024, $74,917 per bed in 2025, and $138,091 in 2026. These wildly different costs are not explained. Nowhere is there mention that a typical village of 50 tiny houses has a $15,000 per bed cost.

Tiny House Villages

We also wish to set the record straight on Tiny House Villages. There are many agencies that sponsor tiny houses or micro shelters such as Catholic Community Services, Nickelsville, Chief Seattle Club and many churches are also sponsors. The data clearly shows the superior performance of tiny houses over other forms of congregate and non-congregate shelters.

Even KCRHA's own plan states: "existing micro-modular shelters," commonly referred to as "tiny homes"..."have consistently higher utilization rates at 90% (in comparison to the broader system's 77%), and preliminary data suggests that they create pathways to stabilization and higher rates of exit to permanent housing: nearly 50% thus far, compared to previous congregate shelter models, which produced exit rates to permanent housing of 14-19% in recent years."

The desirability of tiny houses as a model of shelter is also corroborated by the City's own HOPE Team and Human Services Department. Data[1] shows that only about 36.5% who receive shelter referrals actually show up to that shelter and stay overnight. According to a recent report from PubliCola: "In general, tiny house villages—private mini-shelters that are among the most desirable forms of shelter currently available in King County—had a much higher enrollment rate than congregate shelters. Three of the four highest-performing shelters on the HOPE Team's list were tiny house villages."

Tiny houses are far and away the fastest, least expensive, most private form of emergency shelter. Villagers have their own private, insulated, heated, dry space with a locking door. They have access to hot showers, flush toilets and a kitchen. People living unsheltered prefer tiny houses over conventional shelters because they can bring

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[1] Erica Barnett, *"Shelter Enrollments from City referrals, Already Under 50%, Dropped In First Months of 2022",* Publicola, May 6th, 2022

partners, possessions and pets. A tiny house village of 50 houses with a modern hygiene center, common kitchen, caseworker offices, fencing and security office costs approximately $750,000 (including leasing land, utilities, common facilities).

A City Council Central staff memo also concluded that tiny houses have the lowest capital cost compared with other forms of shelter and housing: "The emergency or permanent housing option with the lowest capital cost to create the unit is tiny house villages, which would require an estimated $15,000 per tiny home for startup." The annual operating cost for tiny houses is also the lowest when compared with hotel sheltering or permanent supportive housing. A tiny house village takes 3-6 months to build compared to 4-5 years for a conventional building. See below Table 6 from the 7/6/2021 City Memo:

Table 6: Average Capital and Operational Costs of Non-Congregate Shelter and Housing Programs in Seattle

Housing or Shelter Program	Average Capital Cost Per Unit	Average Operational Cost (Annual) Per Unit
Tiny Home Village	$15,000	$20,000
Hotel Sheltering	$33,000 - $39,000	$23,000 - $64,000
Rapid Re-Housing	-	$17,000 - $35,000
Affordable Housing with Light Services	$350,000	$12,000 - $14,000
Permanent Supportive Housing	$350,000	$23,000

LIHI's tiny house program boasts a nearly 50% rate of exits to permanent housing according to HMIS data. Other shelters are performing at 14-19% exits to housing. Our vacancy rate is near zero, compared to 23% vacancy rate of other shelters as noted in the 5-Year Plan data. Assuming a 50% annual turnover, and occupancy of 1.2 people per unit, a 50-unit village would serve 120 people. It's been LIHI's experience that tiny house villages can accommodate a wide range of individuals and couples who have been living unsheltered including people with chronic health conditions, mobility issues, mental health and substance use issues, provided that the program is adequately funded to include caseworkers, behavioral health specialists and access to health care. Operating costs for a village serving high acuity individuals would be $1.2 million.

Tiny House Performance Comparison - HMIS Performance Dashboard			
Shelter Type	**Permanently Housed**	**Utilization Rate**	**Return to Homeless**
Tiny Houses Average	47%	92%	3.8%
All Shelter Average	16%	76%	9%

*KCRHA Dashboard Date Range 10/1/2020 to 9/20/21; Tiny Houses HMIS Date Range 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2021

RHA also calls for a reduction in the number of tiny houses from the current 439 to 384. This is based on KCHRA staff and their consultants determining that in the next five years only 1.11% of the need will be for tiny houses. KCHRA claims that among the people they interviewed, only two preferred tiny houses! But the interview questions KCRHA used in the 2022 PIT doesn't include any questions about preferences – So who was asked? We have asked KCRHA to share the results of these 180 interviews; as far as we know they have never been published.

The 1.11% need for tiny houses flies in the face of the facts on the ground. Anecdotally, we repeatedly hear from outreach workers that nine out of ten of unsheltered people tell them their first choice is a tiny house. Danny Westneat reported that according to the City, the number one reason unsheltered people rejected offers of shelter: "Want a tiny house" (Seattle Times 1/14/2023). The Five-Year Plan itself notes that "for many years [micro-modular shelters] have offered a significantly more attractive option than traditional congregate shelters."

This raises a big question about the plan's methodology. We understand that to determine the relative needs for different temporary housing models, KCRHA used a sample of 180 individuals, selected from 1000 interviews they conducted during the 2022 point in time count. That means KCRHA based the entire 5-Year Plan for the 53,754 individuals they estimate may become homeless in each of the next five years on one sample of 180 individuals.

Further, we question the validity of sizing King County's emergency homeless response to serve 54,000 people per year. We don't question that this is the size of the universe of individuals who are *at risk of homelessness*. But the 54,000 figure includes households who receive any kind of homeless services including short stays in emergency shelters, housing counseling, diversion programs, etc, in other words; not

necessarily people with a long term need for shelter. More importantly, it doesn't factor in the large majority of people who self-resolve their homelessness every year. A University of Pennsylvania study[2] of New York City's homeless population found that over three years 81% of 59,377 people "enter the shelter system for only one stay and for a short period of time." 9.1% are episodic homeless and go in and out of shelters and stay longer. The chronic homeless comprise 9.8% and stay in shelters an average of 637 days. While this research is from 1998 and the landscape of homelessness has changed significantly; the data is helpful in understanding that a significant portion of the homeless population may not need extended emergency shelter services.

	UNSHELTERED	SHELTERED	
2020 PIT	47%	53%	(N = 11,751)
2022 PIT	57%	43%	(N = 13,368)

We strongly urge KCRHA to focus its scarce resources on serving people who are unsheltered *right now*. The 2022 PIT survey identified about 7,600 unsheltered people. Most observers agree that number is low; but it is a starting point to begin determining the scale of our response.

Focusing on the unsheltered homeless population should be the KCRHA's first priority for the next five years. Critical elements of that focus should be to rapidly expand tiny houses, hotels and other shelters; implement a robust severe weather response so no one has to stay outdoors in dangerous conditions; and significantly reduce deaths.

No single program can meet the needs of all people who experience homelessness. As the Five-Year Plan clearly states, the fentanyl crisis is causing enormous harm to the homeless population. While mental health and substance use are primarily the responsibility of King County, KCRHA must assist homeless service providers with the funding necessary to meet the increasing needs of clients with more severe behavioral health issues.

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[2] Randall Kuhn, Dennis P. Culhane, *"Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data"*, University of Pennsylvania, 4/1/1998, Page 17.
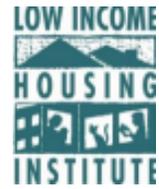
KCRHA should incentivize other agencies that specialize in serving communities that are disproportionately represented among the homeless to develop and manage tiny house villages: Native American, Black and African American, immigrant and refugee communities, LGBTQIA2S+, youth, seniors, veterans and people exiting incarceration. LIHI stands ready to assist agencies with development, tiny houses and other services.

For all these reasons, we believe tiny houses should play a substantial role in the KCRHA's Five-Year Plan, in addition to a constellation of other low cost, quickly deployed program models to connect people to shelter and services.

Please see the attached two documents we drafted as models for the plan. These cover: Severe Weather and Winter Shelters and Expanding Year-Round Shelters.

Regional Coordination
The state has a two-year old Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Program where LIHI, YWCA, Sea Mar, Chief Seattle Club, King County and others were able to add over 750 units of enhanced shelter beds and permanent supportive housing units. The state budget and the Apple Health and Home Program will also bring new resources to King County. The Seattle Housing Levy and JumpStart have increased PSH units at a steady clip. When sufficient permanent housing resources are added we can reduce shelter bed needs. We can also increase throughput in the shelter system. These factors should be mentioned in the Plan. Instead Partnership for Zero, a brand new initiative is mentioned as a model program, but Partnership for Zero has only been able to house about 30 homeless people so far.

LIHI staff are willing to participate with other providers and people with lived experience to work with KCRHA to improve and provide meaningful input into the Five-Year Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan. Jon Grant and I can be reached at sharonl@lihi.org and jon.grant@lihi.org.

Sincerely,

9/27/2022

Sharon Lee   Date
Executive Director, Low Income Housing Institute
sharonl@lihi.org

Attachment #1

Goal to Dramatically Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness

1. Severe Weather and Winter Shelter

Strategy Timeline and Measurable Outcomes

KCRHA Performance Target: A three year plan to eliminate deaths from exposure and prevent hypothermia and frostbite by **providing 3,500 unhoused people with emergency and cold weather shelter.** RHA reported that 1,000 people were served by severe weather shelter and refuge in 2022[1]. The target in 2023 is to increase numbers served by emergency cold weather shelters by 1,500 to a total of 2,500 people served. In 2024, an additional 1,000 people will receive emergency cold weather shelter for a total of 3,500 people who will be kept warm and safe from the elements.

Measurable Outcomes:

1. **Develop a list of 10-15 service providers for RHA to contract with to open temporary short-term facilities for severe weather during the winter and summer months.** 1,000 people were served in 2022. Scale up numbers to serve 2,000 unsheltered people in 2023. Utilize nonprofit facilities, community centers, senior centers, repurposed empty commercial spaces, and other spaces that are available during daytime, as well as in evenings and weekends when other resources are typically not available.

2. **Develop agreements in 2023 and contract with 10 to 20 churches and temples throughout the region to open up their space for 500 people for overnight shelter.** RHA to provide incentive funding to faith-based organizations to cover 25 to 50% of insurance, utilities, beds, staffing and other costs. Contract with umbrella organizations like the Church Council of Greater Seattle, United Way, and the United Black Christian Clergy of Washington to reach out to their members. Lower cost solution.

3. **RHA to establish a budget each year for Severe and Cold Weather Shelters.** This should be no less than $2.5 million in 2023 to accomplish #1 and #2 above. Increase funding for new beds added in 2024 and 2025. Daily shelter costs can

run from $2,000 to $6,000 per day per facility depending on size, set-up, staffing, meals, supplies, etc.

4. **Starting in 2023, develop agreements with 20 suburban cities to open public space** in gyms, lobbies, community centers, meeting rooms, and city halls to shelter an additional 1,000 people throughout the county during severe weather. Urge suburban cities to cover their own costs. Make arrangements with King County and City of Seattle to open up recreation centers and public buildings. Make arrangements with Port of Seattle, Metro, Sound Transit and Seattle Central and other public colleges to open up spaces during severe weather.

5. **Starting winter of 2023 move to a system where overnight Winter Shelter is offered from October through March** to protect people from cold weather—rather than just sporadically when temperatures dip below freezing. Move to a system of guaranteeing a person the same bed each night so they don't have to queue up to wait or risk being turned away with no other place to go.

6. In 2023 RHA to modify street outreach contracts and adopt a unified approach so that **dedicated outreach workers, including system navigators, are scheduled to work evenings and weekends** to assist vulnerable people to get indoors to stay safe and warm[2]. This includes helping to arrange transportation in the late afternoons and evenings for people to get to shelters, day centers, hotels and tiny house villages. During the coldest freezing winter days there should be a surge of outreach workers deployed to locate and bring people indoors. This is a low cost solution as RHA is shifting the work schedule for outreach workers that are already under contract.

7. **RHA to establish one phone number and an interactive website** that shows real time vacancies at emergency shelters in the county so that outreach workers, police, fire, and others can refer people to available openings.

8. When all shelters are full, RHA should fund agencies and outreach workers to **provide short term hotel vouchers for women, extremely vulnerable/frail individuals and families with children** who are on the streets at night with no

other place to go. Annual budget starting at $800,000 will provide approximately 3,000 to 4,000 nightly hotel stays.

9. **Establish two day centers in 2023** for homeless people to get warm, stay out of the elements, charge their phones, rest, get coffee, and access hygiene services and referral services. Establish 2-4 more day centers in 2024 and 2025. Depending on size, budget approximately $1.2 million in annual operating funds for each day center.

10. As the region's homelessness agency, **RHA should keep management, program staff and system navigators on the job or on standby** through the winter holidays (December 22 through January 3) instead of shutting down the entire agency during this critical period of time. Many homeless people face depression, critical mental health, safety and substance use during the holidays. RHA staff should be ready to be deployed to help staff severe weather shelters, offer transportation, and provide immediate support to people living outdoors.

11. **RHA and medical examiner to track deaths and hospitalizations due to inclement weather and exposure with the goal of achieving zero deaths by 2024**. Each incident should be used to improve the severe/cold weather response system.

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1. Duplicate count of people served as reported by RHA, page 63.

2. No RHA system navigators or contracted outreach staff are currently scheduled to work evenings and weekends. Many agency staff work M-F and stop work or will not take in shelter guests after 4pm or 5pm or on weekends. Even with some shelters experiencing high vacancy rates, homeless people cannot get into shelters in the late afternoon or evenings, when the need is the greatest. Homeless people are also not able to access blankets, tents, snacks, warm clothing, hand warmers, etc. from RHA contractors during evenings and weekends.

Attachment #2

Goal to Dramatically Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness

2. Expand Year-Round Shelters

Strategy Timeline and Measurable Outcomes

KCRHA Performance Target: A three year plan to increase shelter for 3,500 people by expanding shelters, non-congregate shelters, tiny houses villages and emergency housing throughout King County; eliminating barriers to entry; and significantly reducing the number of unsheltered homeless families and individuals. RHA reports a current supply of 4,148 shelter beds, including tiny houses[1] and an unsheltered homeless population of 7,619.[2] Once the 3,500 new shelter beds are added along with the 3,500 severe weather shelter beds to the current number of 4,148 beds, the overall supply will total 15,296 beds. **Meeting this performance target will result in the ability to bring indoors close to 100% of the unsheltered homeless population.** The point-in-time count of the homeless population in King County is estimated at 13,368 (2022 PIT). This section complements the increase in severe and cold weather shelter beds found in the previous section. The plan is to add 1,000 year-round shelter beds in 2023, 1,500 beds in 2024, and 1,000 more beds in 2025. This proposal also incorporates the use of shelters and emergency housing for vehicle residents living in RVs, vans and cars.

Measurable Outcomes:

1. RHA to contract with nonprofit and faith-based organizations to **add 3,000 non-congregate shelter beds** region-wide in the form of 24/7 enhanced shelters, tiny houses villages, motel shelters, repurposed boarding homes and nursing homes, SROs, and apartment-style shelters. The cost proposal is detailed below. There are opportunities for vacant land, free rent, and low cost space. As documented by the City of Seattle, the lowest cost option is a heated and insulated tiny house in a supportive village setting at $15,000 per tiny house. A hotel option is $33,000 to $39,000 per room. The most expensive option is $350,000 for an apartment.[3]

2. RHA to contract with nonprofit and faith-based organizations to **establish 500 more year-round congregate shelter beds** in different parts of the region where basic shelter is lacking and are in high demand. There is still a role for

some small number of congregate shelter arrangements if they meet an immediate emergency need and are designed to support the target population. The congregate shelters can take many forms including shared rooms, dormitory style, the use of partitions, repurposed commercial spaces, sanctioned tent encampments, etc. These can include lower cost capital investment models that provide overnight or 24/7 stays. A subset of these shelters should include programs that serve high acuity populations with appropriate staffing and services. The cost proposal is detailed below.

3. **One low cost strategy to "guarantee a bed" for a person. This can be the same bed in a shelter that a person can count on each night.** To significantly reduce the number of tents and outdoor camping, one strategy is to offer a guaranteed bed and secure storage in a shelter. If a person knows they have a warm and safe place every night, plus security for their belongings, they would not need to keep a tent and camping gear ready in the event they get turned away from a shelter. This is a lesson learned from long term shelter stayers who return to the same shelter night after night. These people become good candidates for permanent supportive housing and low cost rental housing when paired with case management.

4. **By adding sufficient case management and housing navigation support to existing shelters we can attempt to double the rate of exits to permanent housing**. RHA data documents that only 14% to 19% of people served by congregate shelters transition to housing compared with close to 50% for tiny house villages and hotel models. This proposal will have RHA fund case managers and supportive services to improve outcomes in traditional shelters.

5. **The cost of providing emergency housing and shelter beds can be significantly reduced by utilizing public, private, nonprofit and faith-based land and buildings.** For example, many tiny house villages have no or low cost land as the City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, housing authorities, Tribes, religious institutions, civic organizations, private property owners, developers, and nonprofits have sponsored villages. There are vast inventories of vacant and underutilized land. Private owners can receive a property tax exemption for sheltering homeless people. Congregate shelters sponsored by religious entities have historically been very cost effective as

shelter beds are located in fellowship halls, meeting rooms, sanctuaries, etc. Church parking lots have been used for tent cities as well as safe parking.

6. **Cities including Olympia, Tacoma, Portland and Seattle have successfully used tent cities, mitigation sites, or sanctioned tent encampments to provide low cost emergency shelter.** There were 712 tents on the streets in Seattle in December 2022. The experience with SHARE, WHEEL, Camp United We Stand and others show the benefit of organized tent cities and their partnership with faith organizations. RHA should develop a plan to support safe tenting and case management services to increase the movement of people from sanctioned and unsanctioned tent encampments to housing.

7. **The ideal strategy is to get the families and individuals living in cars and RVs into shelters and permanent housing, not to create 4,722 long term parking spaces.** RHA calls for 3,128 new safe car parking spaces and 1,594 RV spaces to be set up throughout the county in the draft plan.[4] Currently 147 safe car parking spaces already exist in the community and one RV safe lot is in process.[5] The number of safe parking spaces should be drastically reduced as proposed. LIHI has moved in hundreds of families, couples and individuals who were living in their cars into tiny houses, shelters, hotel shelters, PSH and rental housing. Many other shelter providers have also moved people living in vehicles into shelters and housing without the need of safe parking lots. **Integrating the solutions for safe parking with increased shelter production would eliminate the bulk of the $139 million called for in the Five-Year Plan for setting up and operating safe parking spaces for 3,128 cars**. **A significant number of RV dwellers can also be moved into tiny houses, non-congregate shelters and rental housing as opposed to spending $54 million on 1,594 parking spaces for RVs.[6]** A recent survey documented that a tiny house was the number one choice of people living in RVs.[7] Some pilot programs could be set up to dedicate a new village for vehicle residents or set up an RV safe lot that combines RV parking with tiny houses. Also there are diversion services, legal aid, RV nesting strategies, financial assistance, supportive services that can be offered to RV dwellers (refer to other sections in Plan).

1.   RHA data cites 3,709 existing shelter beds and 439 tiny houses.
2.   RHA data
3.   Seattle City Council Central Staff, Cost Analysis of proposed Charter Amendment 29, report by Jeff Simms et al, July 6, 2021.
4.   See RHA 5YP, pages 36 and 37.
5.   RHA data, page 36 in 5YP.
6.   RHA cost estimate on page 37 in 5YP.
7.   Survey completed by the Scofflaw Mitigation Team of the ITFH

Dear KCRHA Team,

On behalf of Youth and Young Adult Service Providers in King County, we would like to address the 5-year plan developed by the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA). This response represents a series of recommendations we hope will improve the plan's efforts to address youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness.

First, we would like to thank the KCRHA for a very thoughtful plan that includes efforts to address youth and young adult homelessness. The YYA provider group joins you in the challenge of advocating for changes in our approach and culture while understanding the need to deal with multiple but critical competing priorities. The provider group supports being a part of the community response to reduce youth and young adult homelessness in our region. We are glad to see the 7 goals and 91 initiatives addressed in the plan to stress a unified approach and shared road map; collaborative, evidence-based and data-driven process; with a focus on holding response systems accountable through equity and social justice principles; and engaging with a theory of change centered on people with lived experience. As direct service providers we wanted to share what we see from our viewpoint as "gaps" in the plan that can be addressed now to add significant value to the process and outcomes. One of our primary concerns is the broad but good goals that are headliners with little substance, especially on the overall goal of how to reduce youth and young adult homelessness.

As a result, we came together based on our collective knowledge, data lens and proven expertise in working on behalf of youth and young adults in our community to provide additional recommendations that we want KCRHA to consider as VALUE ADD to the 5-year plan. Our focus, based on the amount of time to respond, is on five key areas we strongly recommend KCRHA to include in the plan.

PREAMBLE:

In 2021, the KCYSP community partnered with CARDEA to create the Transforming Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County Report. A list of well-engineered and proven best practice recommendations were introduced. Highlighted are the following: creating a cross-systems YYA coordinating body in KCRHA that centers YYA experts, developing a YYA-specific dashboard for cross-systems monitoring and increased systems accountability, and fund providers and the workforce at appropriate levels. We believe adding/incorporating these items to KCHRA's 5-year plan, not only fills in some of the gaps we found, but also adds value, is collaborative, reduces the existing fragmentation, is an innovative process and increases our chances of success toward the overall goal of reducing homelessness. These recommendations are grounded in the work we do with young people and our constant focus on new and innovative strategies that are grounded in data and best practices.

PROVIDER PROPOSALS/RECOMMENDATIONS

I. **Youth Advisory Board (YAB)**

While we are excited about and fully support the creation of a YAB as one of the plan's top priorities, we ask you to consider other recommendations that will strengthen this section.

- Joint Committee – when King County was awarded the Round 1 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Funding in 2018, it established a joint committee that included: YAB members, service providers, and representatives from different youth-serving systems (juvenile justice, mental health, public school, child welfare, homelessness authority and more). This ensured that the systems were communicating with one another and involved a joint MOU which allowed for system redesign. We strongly recommend a version of the joint committee be re-instituted and incorporated with an oversight/accountability function that serves as a check and balance on the homelessness system.
- Provide Service Provider training around ageism to ensure that youth and young adult voices are heard.
- Have YAB participate with the Ombuds office to host information sessions for community participants to have a fuller understanding of their rights through navigating the system.
- Include YYA role in design and help with technical assistance to ensure that training and organizational development centers YYA perspective.

II. **Coordinated Entry Redesign**

There are national examples of communities that have found ways to reduce homelessness through the collaborative efforts of service providers and coordinated entry. In our current KC system, beds are sitting empty while young adults are experiencing homelessness. Whereas there may be many reasons for this, the ultimate result is an indictment of our failure to work together effectively and efficiently. In other communities, including Pierce County, beds are filled within 24-48 hours. We would like to see some accountability in place for service providers to have additional buy-in with coordinated entry. We recommend the KCRHA consider adding the following recommendations included here.

- Create more integration between programs by changing current practices to ensure Transitional Living Program (TLP) participants transition into Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Programs for YYA. Allowing this, which other communities across the nation successfully implement, will lead to a more effective transition from TLPs to permanent housing, more open beds in TLPs, more effective utilization of Rapid Rehousing funds, and establish a move-on strategy for many YYA in our community that supports greater independence for young people.

- Set a target goal of filling beds within 24-48 hours. Within coordinated entry, this is possible and will allow young adults to spend less time on the streets. Increase the frequency of case conferencing or create an active by-name list to speed up the process of housing young adults.
- Create a by-name list for under 18 youth. Immediately address the separate system for youth under 18, so that we can appropriately right-size the system for the under-18 population. This will include sending referrals to other under-18 programs and family reunification services, as well as the Youth and Family Connection Network and Youth Engagement Team.
- Create a pipeline for young adults aging out of services that prioritizes access to single adult housing and mobility requests.
- Adopt a definition of homelessness for our community to include "doubled-up and unstably housed individuals" for youth and young adults as homeless. Couch surfing is a survival strategy phenomenon that many youth and young adults experience, but resources are limited so we often don't consider this as a youth-centric approach to solving homelessness. We recommend consulting with the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) about their definitions to make them similar across the state.

III.   Fund Current Programs Fully

Currently, several programs remain unused because of not having an appropriate level of staffing or not being funded to capacity. In 2022, service providers reported 60 units that were taken offline because of a county-wide inability to fully staff our programs. One agency had to relinquish a 20-unit contract that provided master lease vouchers that did not provide the appropriate level of funding. Those 20 units are no longer dedicated to the YYA population. The Cardea report showed King County housing service providers experienced an estimated funding gap of between $20,000-$150,000 per program. We recommend fully funding the current programs that KCRHA has agreed to fund prior to funding new programming.

- Service providers would like the opportunity to tweak the programming to allow for dynamic services to be delivered. We would like youth-centric programming to remain the focus, by being fully funded, thereby maintaining the quality and safety in line with the 5-year theory of change.
- Create learning circles for specific interventions including Rapid Rehousing, Employment/Education, Diversion, Permanent Supportive Housing, Shelter, and other interventions that will coordinate with YAB members and service providers.
- Center research about programming that includes implementing a LEAN strategy (build, measure, learn, and do over again) to encourage innovative approaches to solving problems that service providers are finding within programming.
- Assess and fund the true cost of providing high-quality, comprehensive supportive services to YYA that recognizes that appropriate development support and wrap-around services are needed to thrive.

IV. System Redesign and Aiming for Functional Zero

As stated in the 5-year plan there is a lot of system redesign work that must be done. Service providers embrace the goal, intent, and believe we can get youth and young adult homelessness to a functional zero. Like the work A Way Home Washington is doing across our state, we can foster collaboration, activate innovation, and focus on prevention to support overall success in reaching functional zero.

- As a community, we must have a move-on strategy for young adults which includes reprioritizing rapid rehousing, diversion, and vouchers.
- Create wraparound services and multi-disciplinary teams solely focused on areas of their expertise (allow for opportunities where experts work with youth and young adults).
- Create a 2-year plan that includes workgroups focused on obtaining a functional zero for youth and young adults. Create a navigation system that prioritizes young adults experiencing homelessness.
- Integrate Partnership for Zero and fund providers that will be focused on youth and young adults as a population to serve through this intervention.

V. Work on Prevention and Innovation Strategies

Being funded as a community by YHDP has allowed new and innovative strategies to come into our community that are youth-focused, created in collaboration with service providers/YYA and system providers and allows for testing of new programs. During the pandemic over $11 million dollars were committed to prevent re-entry into the homelessness system through prevention services. We recommend KCRHA adopts the following strategies to support continued success in this area.

- Create funding for dynamic and different types of models like the community plan that was developed during YHDP.
- Prioritize funding for flexible diversion specifically for YYA to resolve their own homelessness experience and create a funding stream to prevent them from entering back into the system.
- Prioritize Direct Cash Transfer pilot for Young Adults that mirror the work that is being done nationally by Point Source Youth.

Thank you for this opportunity to present recommendations developed by the KCYSP Network. We look forward to a continued partnership in ensuring the success of every youth and young adult and that we work together to create pathways to safe, supportive, and sustainable housing. Centering youth and young adults in our collective efforts is a community strategy that takes all of us to successfully engage.

Sincerely,

King County Youth and Young Adult Service Provider Coalition

February 24, 2023

Dear Chief Executive Officer Dones and King County Regional Homelessness Authority:

On behalf of Plymouth Housing's more than 1,100 residents and 250 staff, thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the King County Regional Homelessness Authority's (KCRHA) proposed 5 year plan.

Our mission aligns with the goal of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority to dramatically reduce homelessness in our region. We do so by providing permanent supportive housing (PSH) including wrap-around services to chronically homeless single adults. While the plan emphasizes that PSH is outside of KCRHA's jurisdiction, providers like Plymouth rely on certain functions of the KCRHA. We are grateful for the ambition of the 5 year plan and write to highlight key areas of concern and of interest for our organization. We hope you will integrate our comments in future drafts of the plan to reflect the symbiotic relationship of PSH and emergency housing.

Coordinated Entry
We have great concern about the future of the Coordinated Entry (CE) system. We urge you to include a more detailed description in the 5 year plan of how it can be improved through stakeholder involvement. KCRHA's acknowledgement that the VI-SPDAT tool perpetuated inequity is important, and we are thankful that KCRHA is considering new approaches to CE methodology. We ask you to include in the plan a public process for furthering CE methodology and develop goals to ensure the CE system is effective for getting individuals housed equitably and efficiently. In the interim, we ask that KCRHA approach CE requirements like King County by including pathways for local referrals from community organizations to reflect community expectations.

Contracting
Plymouth recognizes that our region must do better to support the unsheltered and those moving into housing following periods of homelessness. We recognize the urge to redesign systems that are not working. Contracting is an area where improvements can be helpful. Plymouth has two contracts with KCRHA but has experienced challenges with the FLUXX system and delays related to contract approval. We ask that KCRHA enumerate strategies for contracting improvements in the 5 year plan.

Workforce
Plymouth applauds KCRHA's acknowledgement of the need to stabilize funding for housing workforces. In the 5 year plan, we request commitments from KCRHA to ensure this happens. Specifically, we ask that KCRHA include realistic inflationary adjustments to all future contracts and a detailed plan to move all housing workers closer to the wage needed to afford a one-bedroom apartment in our community. Providers rely on contracts from KCRHA to pay our workforce, so compensation growth is only possible if contracts include increases. Any inequities in pay across the sector—like higher pay for similar positions with government entities—result in turnover and challenges filling vacant positions at nonprofit providers.

PSH as part of the solution
We appreciate the ambition of the 5 year plan to bring online enormous amounts of shelter and temporary housing. We have learned from decades of working with individuals with lived experience that many of them desire permanent homes. We urge the 5 year plan to address the effects of spending disproportionately on shelter and temporary housing on the development of additional permanent housing. We also would like to see greater detail in the plan about the transition of individuals from emergency housing to permanent housing. We hope KCRHA agrees that we must pursue permanent solutions like PSH to make homelessness a temporary problem.

Plymouth Housing thanks KCRHA for its desire to find solutions for our region's most pressing challenge: homelessness. Thank you for considering adding these key areas into your 5 year plan.

Sincerely,

Karen Lee
Chief Executive Officer, Plymouth Housing

February 8, 2023

Marc Dones,
Chief Executive Officer
Simha Reddy,
Implementation Board Chair
King County Regional Homelessness Authority
400 Yesler Way, Suite 600
Seattle, Washington 98104

Subject: Comments to Draft Five-Year Homelessness Plan

Dear CEO Dones and Implementation Board Chair Reddy:

Eastside Community Development Fund ("ECDF") is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to ending homelessness on the Eastside by aligning the resources and talents of business, philanthropy, government, and service providers. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on King County Regional Homelessness Authority's ("KCRHA") draft Five-Year Homelessness Plan ("Plan").

Across the County, all of us must work together to develop the regional Plan, and strengthen our support for residents experiencing homelessness so they can access stable housing and the services they need to lead fulfilling lives. We are committed to supporting the great work already being done by KCRHA and across our communities by helping coordinate the resources and talents of the business and philanthropic sector, and working alongside our local government and non-profit partners, to develop and implement a community-driven Plan to address the issue of homelessness on the Eastside.

The success of the draft Five-Year Plan will depend on the support it gathers from the communities and areas of the County it is intended to serve, including the Eastside. Given that, it is imperative that KCRHA takes the time to ensure there is widespread public communication and education about the Five-Year Plan to the Eastside's residents, businesses and elected leaders. Such communication and outreach will be essential to build public support. This will be especially critical when the region, and our sub-region, deliberates over how we will adequately resource the needs articulated in the draft Plan.

The Eastside, like the rest of the region, has seen a significant increase in homelessness over the past few years, but we support a regional approach to tackling homelessness because the previous fragmented system was neither efficient nor effective. The proposed Plan is a step in the right direction, but there are a few areas that we would like to see emphasized and improved upon when applied to the Eastside sub-region.

Plan Feasibility and Practical Considerations

1

The analysis of the draft Five-Year Plan signals just how large a scale problem homelessness is in King County and that it would cost nearly $12 billion to address it. While it's important to set a marker, the public also needs to understand what KCRHA can and should accomplish based on more realistic or practical scenarios, particularly given the Five-Year Plan seems focused on action plans within a 24 month horizon. The Plan should identify and provide more detail on what resources will be needed for those action plans, and how KCRHA will prioritize certain programs over others as more resources may become available. Similarly, the Plan should address how certain benefits or outcomes can be scaled based on a correspondingly larger investment within the time horizon of the draft Five-Year Plan.

To achieve a practical, realistic Plan on the Eastside, the subregional plan must begin by resourcing and utilizing the facilities and service providers that are on the ground today. The Eastside is blessed with a number of government and nonprofit providers of services to the homeless, but when combined, the organizations and facilities are not currently congruent with the proposed Five-Year Plan. And a realistic Plan will recognize that we have an imminent need, while the ability to site, permit and construct new facilities will be anything but imminent.

A practical and realistic Plan will be particularly important as the public, whose support the Plan depends on, will need to be educated and convinced that significant additional new public resources and funding will be needed and effective towards achieving the Plan goals.

Sub-regional Planning & Programs

ECDF has a strong interest and is committed to working with our local governments, its elected representatives, and other funding and service partners to develop and support a strong Eastside sub-regional plan. We greatly appreciate and applaud the seriousness and focus with which the staff of the Eastside cities have organized themselves to engage with KCRHA during this process.

The private sector can be an important partner in this effort to help realize the kind of collective impact model envisioned by the draft Five-Year Plan. The ultimate strength of the Plan will be based on the critical coordination KCRHA will have with our local governments and service providers to address local needs as informed by the sub-regional plans.

Given this, the final draft ought to provide more information about how KCRHA will Plan for, operate and fund programs according to sub-regional needs across King County. For example, ECDF applauds the work and outcomes achieved in Seattle based on the Partnership for Zero. We support scaling the Partnership for Zero to other parts of King County. We look forward to this and believe the draft Five-Year Plan would benefit by providing more information on how this will occur and how the public can participate.

Another example where more information around sub-regional planning would be important to the public is tied to the issue of congregate housing. ECDF agrees and is supportive of KCRHA's goal to provide more non-congregate shelter or emergency housing in our system. However, on the Eastside and in places like the City of Bellevue, the City and private non-profits have successfully worked together to set up congregate shelters. The draft Plan is not clear how KCRHA will treat such programs and operate them going forward. It will be important for the agency to work with local governments on such issues ahead of the Interlocal Agreement that must be negotiated between the Eastside cities and KCRHA, so the public is clear how such services will exist and operate in the future.

The sub-regions, including the Eastside, should have a more prominent role in the development and implementation of the Plan. The Eastside has unique challenges and opportunities, and it is important that

our local communities have a voice in the planning and implementation process. To that end, it is critically important to communicate with the elected representatives of the Eastside cities, to receive their feedback and incorporate that feedback into the Five-Year Plan as it pertains to our sub-region.

Partnerships

We applaud the agency and its leadership for adopting a collective impact model to address homelessness. The scale of the issue is too large for any singular government agency to solve – we must work together. There are a growing number of examples that demonstrate the most successful regional approaches to addressing social and community needs involve the formation of strong partnerships and working relationships between government, business, philanthropy, and service providers. On the Eastside, it is sometimes challenging to coordinate the service delivery of multiple municipal governments, thereby creating risk of fragmentation, which can impede our sub-region's ability to achieve collective impact. The County and KCRHA can help the cities to solve this problem, but it is incumbent on the cities of the Eastside to create their own regional framework that enables them to work together and provide resources to address the Eastside's homelessness plan – simply relying on KCRHA is not going to work.

For a successful Eastside collaboration it will be important for the development of the Five-Year Plan and sub-regional plan to involve and engage with local community, business, philanthropic and civic groups in addition to local government partners to help develop, build support for, and implement the Five-Year Plan. It also will be important for KCRHA to share how input from these different sectors will be considered and included in finalizing this Plan as well as informing future adjustments to implementation so that all parties will know how to best to continue engaging in the process and work of the agency.

Data & Transparency

We applaud the Plan to implement better data collection and management practices to evaluate performance and inform decision-making. We also appreciate the complexity and challenge of integrating information systems across a decentralized network of governments, non-profit service providers and other contractors. We believe the agency should continue to work towards developing a data portal or platform that would allow policy makers, interested members of the public, and the media to easily track the progress of KCRHA's programs measured against the identified need or Plan metrics, both region-wide and within the sub-regions. This kind of data and information system will be particularly important as public decisionmakers will be evaluating which programs warrant greater public investment and prioritization given limited resources. In addition, ECDF also believes any adopted data portal be designed with the needs of the service providers in mind so that the data platform and dashboard help providers to serve clients more effectively and efficiently. This can further be enhanced if service providers can share information with each other to adopt best practices. Dramatic change inevitably uncovers fresh insight and points to other opportunities for growth. All too often, providers have duplicative data bases trying to serve different needs, making data collection, input, and use inefficient and taxing on program staff.

The draft Five-Year Plan should also provide additional information or clarification as to how KCRHA's data will inform tailoring approaches for different sub-regions in King County. The draft Plan is unclear about how such data (including the modeling work done by Cloudburst) informed the differentiation of approaches across the county and will inform decision-making by the agency and the Eastside going forward.

Improving the Homelessness Response System

We support and applaud the draft Five-Year Plan's overall efforts to reform and innovate the system. The Plan's aim of allowing latitude to explore impactful interventions while also working to bring more standardization to the field will be an important but necessary balancing act. We encourage approaches that allow service providers and those working in the field to experiment with new ways of engaging with clients to track their results and share this knowledge with the wider community. While standardizing best practices and achieving greater system efficiencies are laudable goals, there should also be enough latitude for experimentation and innovation, particularly in a field that is still very much evolving whether in the area of behavioral sciences or data collection and management.

It is also crucial that support is given to providers and their staff so they can successfully meet the goals set out by KCRHA and the wider community. Offering critical training sessions for all providers serving those experiencing homelessness, addressing trauma-informed care, de-escalation, substance use, behavioral health, diversity, equity and inclusion, healing based practices and motivational interviewing are key to helping providers provide high-quality services while learning from the latest research and experience. In addition, convening forums for connection and alignment of providers and funders, adequate funding to gather and maintain data, and adequate funding and pay that allows for a robust infrastructure are also critical for providers to achieve the Plan's goals.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We are committed to working with KCRHA to find effective solutions to homelessness for the Eastside and the region.

Sincerely,

David Bowling
David Bowling
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Mayor Angela Birney
        Mayor Kali Clark
        Mayor Mary Lou Pauly
        Mayor Lynne Robinson
        Mayor Penny Sweet

"Greetings Alexis,
I wanted to reach out briefly after reviewing very quickly the KCRHA 5-year plan. Gender Justice League is in the midst of one of the busiest legislative sessions in Olympia since the 2016-2017 attempts to bar transgender people from public accommodations; this email comes on the heels of what has to have been the most hateful and devastating public hearing for trans youth in Washington State yesterday against SB SB5599 - a homeless youth shield law. Our opposition turned out more than 600 hateful testifiers against the bill -- and the silence from the homeless services community was deafening. So if my tongue is sharp in this email; that is the context as my heart is heavy in reading this draft plan.

I will start with the positive and there is a lot: As a mixed white-passing Native person, I deeply appreciate the overall depth of work and the extent to which the plan includes a historical review of structural anti-Black and Anti-Native racism both nationally and in King County and the comprehensive approach to outlining the deep need for an equity lens approach. This is essential in ensuring we have a shared and collective analysis in the 24-month plans about the work going forward. It also reflects my experiences as a former adoptee and then foster youth, whose mother and grandfather were also foster-youths / boarding school survivors.

However, as a two-spirit person and trans woman there is a glaring deficit in this plan! I am deeply bothered by the short shrift given to the historical use of gender segregation within the homeless services community and its horrific and genocidal impact on trans/two-spirit and non-binary people who face homelessness at rates of nearly 38% in a lifetime according to the US Trans Survey. Additionally, I saw not attempts to discuss the linkages and over-reliance in King County on faith-based/religious providers and the impact it has had on transgender people and more broadly LGBTQIA2S+ communities who make up a substantially disproportionate amount of people experiencing houselessness. Without these acknowledgments - I feel your plan will fail at it's espoused goals by only further reifying these destructive systems.

According to estimates by the US Census Bureau PULSE survey over the last two years - nearly 3.3% of King County residents identify specifically as transgender, and another 4.3% identify as something "other" than male/female/transgender. In that very survey - Trans people ranked only second in King County for food insecurity and houselessness after Black folks in King County and had the highest rates of unemployment or underemployment. Certainly, my experience since 2006 of working in King County has been that Seattle/King County has one of the largest trans, two-spirit, and gender-diverse communities in the county -- and that these folks have been ignored, silenced, forced into boxes of "male" or "female" by shelters, or shut out of gender-specific and religious shelter spaces for decades! Failing to call out Transgender people as a specific population and failing to identify the harms of gender-segregated spaces is a massive failing in this plan.

I am grateful that staff at KCRHA reached out to GJL - and me specifically, however, GJL has gone through exceptionally rough times during the pandemic. The trans community has never

had structural guarantees, support, or income for our work and our time is extremely stretched putting out crisis after crisis. I had wrongly assumed that the other queer and trans people involved in the process would ensure strong representation in this document.

The plan falls far short of the mark when it comes to clarifying equity for queer and trans people. I know that choices needed to be made about the focus - however the resulting feeling is one that the plan fails to have an intersectional lens and has chosen to highlight my identity as a native person - at the expense of my identity as a two-spirit and trans person. We need to see, hear, and call out what the barriers are that are faced by our whole personhood.

Seeing trans people included in this plan is especially important in this year, where we are seeing renewed and increasingly genocidal calls from both "women's spaces" and 'The Right' for the destruction of trans people, for our utter exclusion from public life, and yes - even here in Washington State and King County for the banning of gender-affirming treatment.

Please, please, please. Include and expand upon the history of the failure of our county to address gender segregation and it's impact on two-spirit, trans, and gender-diverse people -- as well as how an over-reliance on religiously affiliated service providers has historically excluded LGBTQIA2S+ people and propelled the homelessness crisis. A failure to do this will just reproduce the same results - Zero LGBTQIA+ shelters, ZERO gender-neutral shelters, and a lack of addressing the vital needs of a huge population of LGBTQIA2S+ youth."

Appendix D: Survey Response Portal

Raw Survey Responses can be viewed through this online platform.