



Charter Review Commission

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Date: September 16, 2020

From: Clallam County Charter Review Recommendation

To: Clallam County Board of County Commissioners

**Subject: CLALLAM COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION TO MEET ALL HOUSING NEEDS BY CREATING
PERMANENT HOUSING**

Whereas: The Universal Declaration of human rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948 Article 25 states: ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of self and of family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.’ One in 588 Americans is homeless. Washington State is one of the ten states with the highest homelessness rate. Seven percent of homeless people are veterans, but seven percent also are unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age (HUD, 2018), and

Whereas: Homelessness in Clallam County is 0.38% of the population (approximately 285 individuals) and include families with children, as well as individuals across all age, health, income levels, racial and ethnic groups, and

Whereas: nearly all homeless people living locally have roots in Clallam County, and

Whereas: The Clallam County Housing Crisis Response Plan 2020-2024 (CCHCR) states the “the major causal factors for homelessness in Clallam are related to safe housing availability: “...low vacancy rates, high rental rates, available affordable housing stock” and also “assumes...no additional shelter or housing capacity” will be available, and

Whereas: Homeless citizens’ high rates of physical, psychological, emotional and behavioral problems result in higher usage of expensive public services (crime and law enforcement services, emergency medical and behavioral health services, food banks, etc.). The annual average cost to local government to meet these needs is estimated between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per person (Interagency Council on Homelessness), and

Whereas: Permanent housing and wrap-around services not only reduces the need for community services but allows homeless citizens and families to be able to become more stable, more reliably employable and more productive members of society.

Housed children are more able to learn academically, socially and emotionally. And housed families are usually less isolated, and

Whereas: Experiencing homelessness is a high-scoring Adverse Childhood Experience (current ACES national studies, acknowledged by the American Pediatric Academy as the most significant modern childhood health findings) for young children--effecting basic learning, neurological development, nutrition and school attendance. Additionally, the social sciences now, after 50 years of wide acceptance of a hierarchical “needs theory,” now recognize that human needs are fluid rather than hierarchical. This fluidity of basic needs increases the recidivism of those experiencing homelessness who may be in shelters, couch surfing and street life cyclically. Reliable basic permanent housing is proven to be the best solution to break this chain, and

Whereas: The CCCHCR plan was approved by the BOCC November 18, 2019 and is due for updating. Since then, several communities across the country have successfully significantly reduced their rate of homelessness and its concurrent problems, and

Whereas: Acceptance by the BOCC to the plan’s statement that there will be *no additional housing capacity in the next four years* does not move the community toward working actively to permanently shelter citizens experiencing homelessness, and

Whereas: Clallam County Ordinance 829 amending Section .280, Section .510, and Section .520 of Clallam County Code Chapter 31.02, Countywide Comprehensive Plan, as relates to housing was adopted in 2007 and needs to be updated. Nevertheless, it is as relevant today as it was when adopted. It provides the road map for BOCC to directly again address housing inequities in this county, and

Whereas: Section 3.31.02.520, of the above ordinance states affordable housing goals.

(1) Clallam County's affordable housing efforts should be directed at preserving and creating housing that is affordable to those with Very Low, Low, and Moderate income...

(2) Based on extensive local need for affordable housing as well as its unique local circumstances, the County shall encourage retention and creation of affordable housing, as defined in subsection (1) above, and

(3) Clallam County should consider the following strategies to encourage the retention and creation of affordable housing which:

Coordinates the reforms, supports with renewed participation in the Clallam County Affordable Housing Task Force (CCAHTF) to be comprised of representatives from local governments, the local agencies that work on homelessness and affordable housing issues, previously homeless individuals, financial institutions (lenders), major employers, developers, contractors, real estate professionals, chambers of commerce and economic development leaders. Their collective focused goal would be to move Clallam County forward to creatively build economic stability and decent housing options that move people in need toward self-sufficiency.

CCAHTF will be established and convened by the BOCC, with a county commissioner chairing the task force, giving pronounced emphasis to the importance of working to seriously solve local affordable permanent housing needs, and

Whereas: Monies flowing into the County resulting from HB1406 are designated for Affordable Housing, and

Whereas: Efforts to reduce community homelessness in other places vary but the element they commonly share is “leadership by elected community officials.”

Therefore, be it recommended:

The Clallam County Board of Commissioners immediately take active leadership to reclaim and renew their primary leadership role in engaging a group of public and private organizations and businesses to creatively increase affordable housing availability, apply forward thinking ideas proven to be successful in communities that have reduced the experience of homelessness effectively, and report progress back to the community every six months.

Sue Erzen
Chair, Clallam County CRC

Candace Pratt
Chair CRC Committee on Homelessness
Clallam County Charter Review Commissioner