



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2018-02-28 (1)

Date: February 28, 2018
To: THA Board of Commissioners
From: Michael Mirra
Executive Director
Re: Amendment 1 to THA's 2018 MTW Plan

Each year Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) submits an annual Moving to Work Plan. From time-to-time THA must amend these plans to account for changes that arise. This resolution would approve two amendments to THA's 2018 MTW Plan:

- (1) HUD has assigned to THA a baseline number of households THA is to serve as a MTW agency. THA will continue to plan to serve substantially this number. This change to THA's MTW acknowledges that, because of Tacoma's steeply rising rental market and THA's flat funding, THA expects to serve 95% of that number;*
- (2) In previous submissions to HUD, THA states its intention to sell Arlington Drive near Salishan. This change will state THA's intention to retain property at Arlington Drive and use it as a campus to house and serve homeless youth and young adults.*

Background

This resolution seeks approval to submit an amendment to THA's 2018 MTW Plan. The amendment addresses two topics outlined in the following sections 1 and 2:

1. LOWER THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS THA PLANS TO SERVE WITH ITS FEDERAL FUNDING

The first amendment to the MTW plan would lower THA's expected utilization rate from 100% to 95% of the baseline number of families that in 2010 HUD assigned to THA. HUD expects THA to serve this number every year. THA has been doing that up until last year. This year the rising costs of Tacoma's new, brutal rental market and

continued flat funding make this unsustainable. We come to this proposal after extensive analysis and community consultation. We also have had informal, though very helpful, consultation with our HUD staff. We understand from those discussions that this proposal will be acceptable to HUD as long as we are thoughtful and thorough about our approach and that we adequately explain our choices. This resolution, and the many supporting documents and documentation, do that. They include the 90-page staff analysis the Board received last month, and the record of an extensive community consultation.

Each year THA budgets for its upcoming fiscal year. THA's fiscal year aligns with the calendar year. On December 13, 2017, the THA Board adopted a THA budget for fiscal year 2018. The annual budget reflects an estimate of the expected revenues and expenditures for each of its departments and major programs. The budget denotes strategic choices.

To write a budget, THA must presume on the expenditures necessary for its rental assistance programs. These programs are THA's largest, measured by either persons served or money spent.

The calculation begins with a requirement of the MTW statute. That statute requires that each MTW agency plan to serve "substantially the same" number of families we would serve if we were not MTW. HUD and the MTW agencies have contended over the meaning of this requirement for the past several years. HUD assigns to each MTW agency a "baseline" number of families calculated from the number each agency was serving right before it became an MTW agency. For THA, which became an MTW agency in 2010, our baseline number for 2018 is 4,570.

HUD has recently clarified its view that the requirement to serve "substantially the same" as the baseline number means serving the baseline number. This is called 100% utilization. In the discussions with HUD over its interpretation, THA has offered its legal opinion that HUD's interpretation clashes with the statute. For example, we do not understand how under the statute and case law "substantially the same" can mean the same thing as "same". I attach a copy of my February 2, 2017 letter to HUD offering this view. But our view did not prevail with HUD.

Up to 2017, THA has been able to reach HUD's required 100% utilization rate easily enough. However, beginning in 2017, the steeply rising Tacoma rental market caught up to us. That market had been rising quickly since 2015. Tacoma's rental market is now among the fastest rising in the nation. That market presents two different and reinforcing challenges to our families, our budget and our utilization rate.

First, in response to this rising market, THA has been increasing the value of the rental subsidy for the same number of vouchers in use. This is THA's attempt to keep its voucher competitive in the market. This has direct budget consequences. THA has increased the aggregate amount it has spent on rent payments for the same number of families by \$600,000 each year for the past three years, for an accumulating total increase of \$1.8 million. We have done that by redirecting funds from reserves and other uses. We

do not see an end to the market's rise. For 2018, we expect the rising cost to THA of subsidizing same number of vouchers to be an additional \$625,000. This increase is not sustainable at 100% utilization.

The market has a **second** effect that also lowers utilization. As market vacancies diminish, landlords get fussier. Our families do not compete well against other tenants with stronger credit or rental histories or who have the cash to pay climbing application fees, security deposits or even to prepay rent for several months, all in the competition for apartments. The inability of our families to compete shows in their shopping failure rate. About 40% of our families who receive a new voucher from THA, after waiting years for it, cannot find a landlord willing to rent to them within the 3 months they have to use it. They require extensions of up to another 6 months, and more frequently longer. This keeps vouchers unused longer. As a result, our utilization rate declines.

At the same time, THA has received no increase in funding. Indeed, our funding has been essentially flat since 2013. We do not see any plausible prospect for notable funding increases in 2018 or beyond.

HUD does not adjust the baseline number to account for either these changes in our rental market since 2010 or flat congressional funding. In such a circumstance, the arithmetic tells us that we simply cannot serve the same number of families at such increasing costs with flat funding.

THA has **four** options. I describe them in the next section. The Board considered all of them when adopting the 2018 budget. At the Board's direction, THA's 2018 budget adopts the fourth option. Pursuant to that option, while the budget does fund efforts to try for 100% utilization rate, it presumes that we will end up with a 95% utilization rate. Here are the four options and the reasons why the Board chose the **fourth** one.

I continue to recommend that fourth option. This recommendation is based upon extensive staff analysis. That analysis shows in the 90-page report the Board received last month. This recommendation is also based upon extensive consultations. We have undertaken a wide-ranging consultation with our community: people presently receiving our services; people on out waiting; participating landlords; other housing and service organizations; advocates and legal services; public and elected officials; and foundations. A Section below, and a detailed attachment, recounts the details of who we consulted and what we learned. This proposal is also based on important, though informal, consultation with our HUD partners.

1.1 THA's Four Options and the One We Recommend: the Fourth One

1.1.1 First Option: Lower the Value of Vouchers: "Thin the Soup"

We could lower the value of our vouchers to spread the money over more families and perhaps raise our utilization rate. We did this in 2010 in response to that year's Congressional funding shortfalls. Doing that allowed THA to avoid removing anyone from our programs for lack of

funds. THA calls this option “thinning the soup”. This first option would have us thin the soup further and further reduce the value of our voucher. We judge that doing this in 2018 would be a mistake. Our market is much tighter now. Our present voucher values are having trouble competing in the market. Lowering their value further would make them even less competitive and instead may lower rather than raise our utilization rate.

1.1.2 Second Option: Favor Higher Income Households

We could purposefully redirect vouchers away from lower-income households to higher income households. Doing this may increase our utilization rate in two ways. **First**, those higher income households are probably more competitive in the market than lower-income households. **Second**, vouchers for those higher income households cost less because these households pay more of the rent. However, the Board did not favor this option because it would clash directly with THA’s strategic objective that directs us to “focus this assistance to meet the greatest need.”

1.1.3 Third Option: Redirect Money from Other Services and Purposes

THA money on other services and capacities. For example, THA spends \$3.4 million on supportive services, the Education Project, and administrative support. Doing that effectively reduces the number of vouchers we support. I attach a chart showing this. A third option would redirect funds from these other services, support and investments to pay for the increased cost of 100% utilization. We do not propose we do that. We do not propose it for **two** main reasons: (1) Those services are valuable and they increase utilization rates; (2) cannibalizing THA to pay for more vouchers would be sustainable. Here are some details:

(a) THA Should Not Defund Services That are Valuable and That Improve Utilization Rates

THA should not defund services that are valuable and that help to increase utilization rates. These services include the following:

- **THA’S PORTFOLIO OF HOUSING**
THA should not redirect expenditures used to maintain its portfolio. Congress does not fully fund the cost of maintaining our portfolio. Its funding levels has ranged from 80% to 90% of what HUD calculates to be necessary. THA spends dollars to backfill this underfunding. We do not recommend redirecting these dollars from the portfolio to vouchers, for three reasons:
- **RAD REFINANCING REQUIRES THIS FUNDING FOR THE PORTFOLIO**
In our RAD refinancing of the portfolio, the tax credit investors and lenders required THA to commit dollars as a

condition of their investment. While Congress may find underfunding of the portfolio acceptable, these investors and lenders did not. We cannot claw back these dollars without imperiling those investments;

- **THA NEEDS TO MAINTAIN THE PORTFOLIO BECAUSE IT SERVES THA NEEDIEST FAMILIES**
THA needs to maintain the portfolio in good shape because it serves our neediest families who do not do well in the private rental market even if they had a voucher. These include families who do not speak English, those with disabilities, those with weak credit or rental histories and those who face discriminatory rental practices that exclude them from the private market. To this extent, the portfolio increases the utilization rate more than an equivalent dollar amount spent on vouchers.
- **THA NEEDS TO MAINTAIN THE PORTFOLIO AS PART OF ITS GOOD STEWARDSHIP AND ITS OBLIGATION AS A LANDLORD AND NEIGHBOR.**
THA needs to maintain the portfolio as part of its obligations to be a good landlord and neighbor. In this way, the portfolio is different than vouchers. It is also not like food stamps, public assistance, Social Security, SSI or Medicaid. The government can provide those types of help until the money runs out and then tell people to go away. When the money runs out on the portfolio, it will still be on the ground the next morning filled with families and next to neighbors to whom THA owes important legal obligations and responsibilities of stewardship.
- **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES EXPENDITURES SHOULD CONTINUE**
THA should not redirect dollars from supportive services that help our families succeed as tenants. In that way, these services raise our utilization rate.

For example, and for the first time, we are budgeting a landlord-liaison function to help recruit landlords to the voucher program and to help voucher families shop for landlords. Our supportive services intervene when problems arise in a tenancy. This too will help recruit landlords. It will also save tenancies that may otherwise end and keep vouchers in use.

These services also are necessary to THA's mission to serve the neediest. Some families need help to stabilize

because they come to us from homelessness, domestic violence or other trauma. Services make their success as tenants a lot more likely. This also makes them more competitive as they shop for landlords and in that way increases utilization.

These services also drive our mission to help families succeed, not just as tenants, but also as “parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets.”

- (b) THA’s Education Project should continue
THA should not redirect funding from its Education Project. This project is a THA signature initiative. It seeks ways to help the people we house or pay to house succeed in school and help the success of Tacoma schools and colleges in educating low-income students. This project too is central to THA’s mission.
- (c) Real estate development expenditures should continue
THA should not redirect funds from its building and buying of properties. THA is buying or building housing to increase its portfolio of housing. It is urgent that THA do this as Tacoma gentrifies. In five years the only affordable housing in large parts of Tacoma and their only measure of racial and economic integration will be from housing we now succeed in building or buying. We judge that we have 3 to 5 years to do this before the land becomes too expensive. Critically, these purchases or developments will become the only housing in those neighborhoods that will accept THA’s vouchers. We will know that these properties will welcome vouchers because THA will own the properties. In that way, these expenditures are essential to sustain THA’s utilization rate in such a changing market.
- (d) Rapid rehousing expenditures should continue
THA contributes \$1.2 million to Pierce County’s Rapid Rehousing Program to house homeless families with children and homeless young adults without families. These dollars spend on voucher could probably serve a greater number of households. We do not recommend that THA defund this investment. This investment makes THA and its dollars relevant and accessible to people in crisis who otherwise fund our mainline voucher and portfolio programs irrelevant to them. If amid their crisis of homelessness they come to our door, we must tell them that we work off of long waiting lists, and that the lists are usually not accepting new applicants. Even if they got lucky and came to us during the rare times when we are accepting applications, we would let them apply but tell them that whether they get on the await list will

depend on them winning the lottery we would conduct. And then the wait would be years. Even if we gave them a voucher on the spot, they would still be months away from housing as they shopped for a landlord. Homeless young people do not even come to our door because they are young and inexperienced and disaffected. These rapid rehousing dollars help THA fulfill its mission to these households, “the neediest”.

- (e) Administrative services expenditures should continue
We spend the money it takes to administer THA and its programs at a good level of competency and customer service. These investments are necessary if we are to attract landlords to rent to voucher families. For this purpose, we are investing a lot of money to improve our IT and on-line services. We are also enhancing our services to voucher families and landlords. For example, THA has created a new position for “landlord liaison services”. We plan to offer subsidies to help voucher families pay application fees and security deposits. We are considering a plan to offer landlords limited damage guarantees.

We must always be mindful that these administrative services and the money they cost are efficient. We have some benchmarks to assure us that they are. **First**, Congress does not fund us at levels that HUD judges it takes to administer the Section 8 program and the portfolio. We use funds to backfill these shortfalls. But we do not backfill our operations to more than what 100% funding would give us. **Second**, we spend only 6 – 9% (depending on the year’s expenditure on real estate development and IT investments) on our back office functions of Finance, Administration, IT, HR and Executive functions. This is well within the normal range, especially for such a heavily regulated business like a housing authority. For example, when we receive or award grants or contract for services, the terms of the grant or contract commonly allow at least 10% and often much more for these administrative services.

- (f) Cannibalizing THA’s Other Services is Not Sustainable
THA should not redirect funds from these expenditures because doing so is not sustainable. Our rental market is increasing our voucher payment costs by \$625,000 a year. We do not see an end in sight. If we cannibalized our other services and capacities at that rate it quickly would so weaken THA that we would not be able to function at acceptable levels of competency and customer service.

1.1.4 Fourth Option: Face the Arithmetic

When the Board approved the 2018 budget, it chose the fourth option. This option would have THA face the arithmetic directly. And this MTW plan amendment would ask HUD to face this arithmetic with us.

That arithmetic tells us that it is impossible to serve the same number of families at such an increasing cost with flat funding. Therefore, while this budget provides services that we hope will get us to 100% utilization, for purposes of devising a balanced budget, THA's 2018 budget proposal presumes on a 95% utilization rate. That rate is about where THA's utilization currently is. If we can stay at that level we will not have to remove any family prematurely from the program.

PLEASE NOTE: THA serves other households that HUD does not count or credit toward our utilization rate. Yet, THA values them anyway and for critical purposes. For example, the budget provides approximately \$1.3 million for special program initiatives:-*E.g.*:

- Rapid rehousing for homeless families
- Housing for unaccompanied youth

Funding for special programs like this represents housing an equivalent of approximately 140 families per year that somehow does not count toward HUD's baseline. If we did count them toward HUD's baseline, it would increase our utilization rate by 3% or so. Also, we house still other families in our properties that receive no HUD funding. Somehow, they do not count either. Counting them would increase our utilization rate even further.

2. RETAIN PROPERTY AT THA's ARLINGTON DRIVE

THA owns a parcel of property on Tacoma's eastside. THA had planned to sell that land for future developments and it told this to HUD when THA redeveloped Salishan. THA now intends to retain property located at 38th and Portland Avenue to provide a Crisis Residential Center (CRC) for housing and social services to assist low-income homeless youth in Pierce County. On the balance of the property, we plan 40 to 60 apartments for rent to homeless young adults' ages 18 to 24 years. I attach a one-page description. The population is either homeless or near homeless; thus by no means exceeding 80% AMI. THA proposes to ask HUD for an exception to the requirement that would otherwise have THA compensate HUD for the retention of the property.

3. EXTENSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

THA consulted extensively in our community to seek advice and views on these two possible changes to its housing programs. A detailed memo describes who we consulted and how, and what we learned. The memo is included in the Board Packet. Here is a summary of that public consultation process.

3.1 Utilization Rate Issue Consultation

3.1.1 HOP Participants

THA held two public hearings for Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) participants. THA mailed postcard invitations to all 500 HOP households. 20 people attended. In addition to the meetings, three households provided comment via mail or email. 44% of participants recommended that THA further reduce the value of a voucher, 28% recommended adopting a 95% utilization rate and 22% suggested redirecting money from other areas to pay for rental assistance.

3.1.2 THA Participating Landlords

THA's landlord advisory committee met to advise THA on the possible program changes. THA invited over 500 landlords to this meeting; 12 landlords attended. In addition to the meeting, two landlords provided comments via email. 50% of landlords recommended that THA adopt a 95% utilization rate and the remaining landlords were evenly split among the options to reduce the value of voucher further, redirect money from other areas, and redirect vouchers to higher income households

3.1.3 Households on the Waitlist

THA held one public hearing for households currently on THA's waitlists. THA sent email invitations to 100 random waitlisted households and one household attended the hearing. The household is disabled, currently homeless, and has been waiting for housing since 2013. The waitlisted household favored THA serving 95% of its baseline even if it means waitlisted households will wait longer.

3.1.4 Community Consultation

THA met with more than 50 community organizations, housing and service providers, community partners, advocates, legal services, foundations, and public and elected officials. The great majority of them reported full support of the fourth option of adopting a 95% utilization rate as the best way forward to serve more households.

3.1.5 THA Staff

THA's Policy, Innovation & Evaluation team will host an all-staff meeting on February 21st to discuss the possible program changes. Staff will provide the Board with comments from this meeting at the February 28th board meeting.

3.2 Arlington Drive Youth Campus Consultation

THA undertook a very robust effort to consult with a wide array of community voices to elicit views on using Arlington Drive to house and serve homeless youth without families and homeless young adults. We engaged a highly capable communication firm to help us do this. We consulted with neighboring homeowners and renters; businesses, churches and service providers. We consulted with City and County and State public and elected officials, including the judiciary. Most notably, we consulted with formerly homeless youth, whose voices are generally absent from such discussions. We consulted individually and in groups. We also convened a very successful Advisory Group for the purpose. The community is supportive of THA retaining this property and using it to house and serve youth and young adults.

We received nearly unanimous support for the proposal. I also attach an October 23, 2017 letter of support from the Mayor of the City of Tacoma. The support from the public is most evident in the commitment from the City and County for at least \$1 million and from the state of at least \$3 million to help finance the construction.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board approve this resolution authorizing me to ask HUD to approve the following two amendments to THA's 2018 MTW Plan:

- Adopt a 95% Moving to Work baseline utilization target. This will require amending "Section II. B Leasing Information" of the 2018 MTW Plan; and
- Retain THA's property at Arlington Drive. This will require amending "Section II. A. Changes in Housing Stock" of the 2018 MTW Plan.

With this authorization I would submit an amendment to THA's 2018 MTW Plan.



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2018-02-28 (1) (2018 MTW Plan Amendment)

WHEREAS, The MTW Plan is required by HUD; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the MTW Plan is to establish local goals and objectives for the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, Rising rental costs in Tacoma's rental market and stagnant HUD funding make it hard for THA to serve the same number of families with flat funding; and

WHEREAS, THA owns property referred to as Arlington Drive. THA had planned to sell this land for future developments, and THA seeks to retain the property to provide a Crisis Residential Center (CRC) and rental housing for housing and social services to assist low income homeless youth without families and homeless young adults; and

WHEREAS, THA's Board of Commissioners must approve any changes proposed to HUD; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City Of Tacoma, Washington, that:

THA's Executive Director is authorized to submit proposals to HUD to amend THA 2018 MTW Plan in two ways:

- Adopt a 95% Moving to Work baseline utilization target. This will require amending "Section II. B Leasing Information" of the 2018 MTW Plan; and
- Retain THA's property at Arlington Drive. This will require amending "Section II. A. Changes in Housing Stock" of the 2018 MTW Plan.

Approved: February 28, 2018


Janis Flauding, Chair

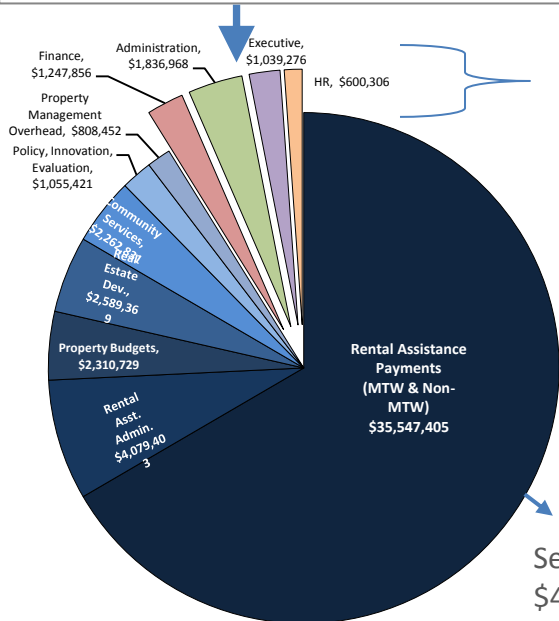
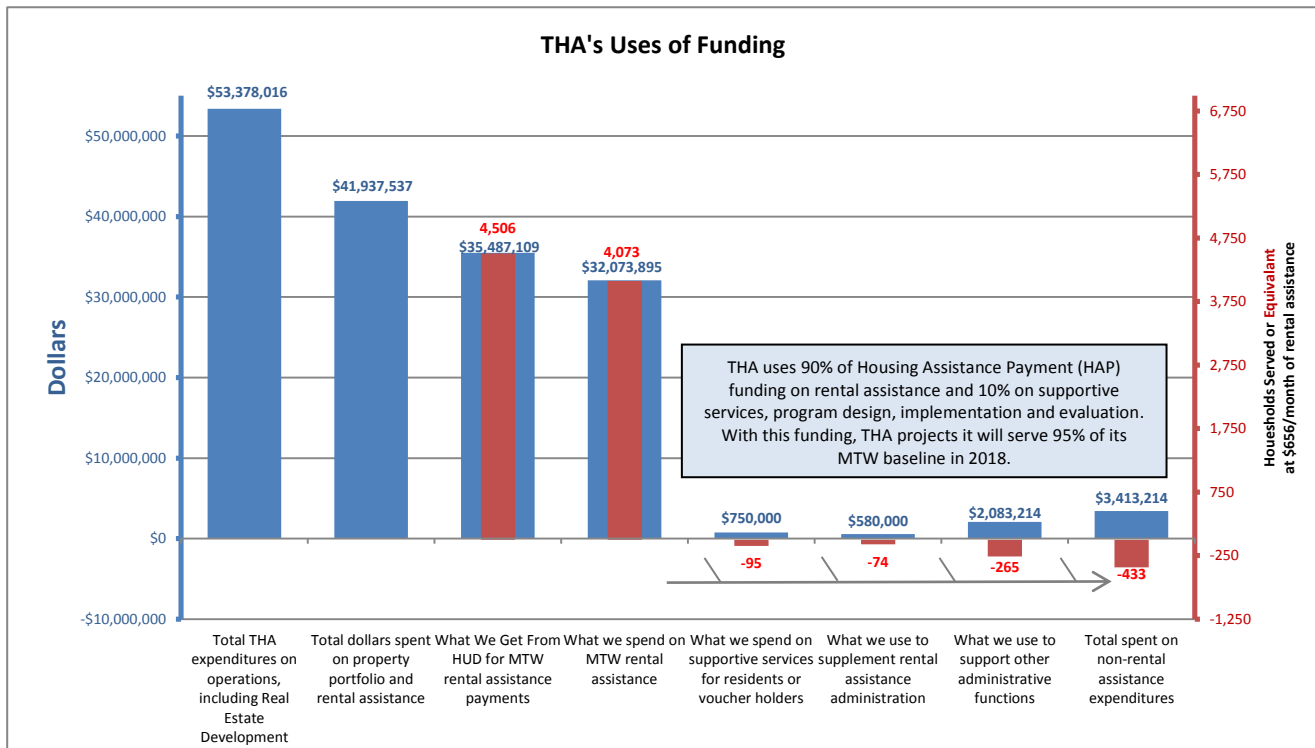


TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

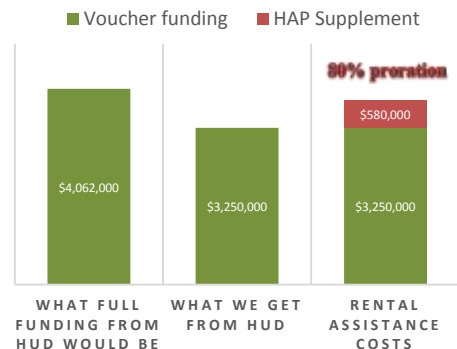
THA USES OF FUNDING

February 7, 2018

This document illustrates the choices THA faces when allocating its housing resources to housing and related purposes.



VOUCHER PROGRAM: DOES NOT RECEIVE FULL HUD FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS





TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Michael Mirra
Executive Director

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Dr. Arthur C. Banks, Chair
Janis Flauding, Vice Chair
Stanley Rumbaugh
Minh-Anh Hodge
Derek Young

February 21, 2017

By email: mtw-info@hud.gov

Moving to Work Office
Office of Public and Indian Housing
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW, Room 4130
Washington, DC 20410-0001

RE: Request for Comments and Recommendations on a Revised Methodology To Track the Extent to Which Moving to Work Agencies Continue To Serve Substantially the Same Number of Eligible Families

Docket No: FR-5958-N-01

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 20, 2016 your office invited comments and recommendations “on developing a revised methodology to be used to track the extent to which Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program are meeting the statutory requirement . . . to serve substantially the same [StS] number of families had they not combined their funds under the MTW Demonstration Program.” 81 Fed. Reg. 92836. Thank you for your invitation. The Steering Committee representing the 39 MTW agencies will be submitting comments on behalf of the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) and the other MTW agencies. For that reason, I will not repeat those comments. Instead, on THA’s behalf, I write to offer some more general observations and comments, and perhaps some emphasis. In particular, THA seeks to anchor the analysis firmly where it belongs: in the governing statutes and Congressional directives. I trust that this will be helpful to a federal executive department that is governed by those statutes and directives and beholden to take them very seriously. In these ways, please consider this letter as a supplement to the letter of the Steering Committee.

1. Congress Has Precluded Changes to the MTW Contract Without PHA Agreement

I first note that Congress in 2015 directed HUD to extend our MTW contracts “under the same terms and conditions . . . except for any changes . . . mutually agreed upon” by HUD and an MTW agency. Section 239 of the FY 2016 Appropriations Act. This provision expressly precludes HUD’s proposal to unilaterally change the contract with a new StS definition of its own devising. This means

that HUD should redirect this StS issue from a regulatory imposition to one to be negotiated with the MTW agencies. HUD should find this redirection congenial enough. It has repeatedly promised a meaningful consultation on this StS topic. A collaborative approach will also lead to a better resolution. Such a resolution would be fully informed by the local agencies, which know their communities best. This is especially important for an issue like StS that is so dependent for its meaning and effect on local markets and local needs. The redirection of this matter to a negotiation will also have the advantage of complying with this Congressional directive, thus avoiding any legal uncertainty that would otherwise arise from HUD's unilateral imposition. That legal advantage should be decisive.

2. HUD, By Statute, Must Accord PHAs “Maximum” Flexibility, Especially Those PHAs that are MTW and Particularly in the Interpretation of the “Substantially the Same” Provision

Congress has directed HUD to give PHAs “maximum” flexibility in the administration of the federal programs that PHAs are asked to administer. Congress did this on several occasions and in various ways for all PHAs, MTW or non-MTW. It fortified this expectation in the creation of the MTW program in particular, the signature feature of which is programmatic and financial flexibility. Congress also built local flexibility into the recent 10-year extension of the MTW contracts, which HUD cannot change without the consent of the MTW agency. Most pertinent to this StS discussion, Congress wrote this flexibility into the formulation of StS. These principles must govern, in process and content, any redefinition of the StS requirement.

2.1 Congressional General Mandate for Maximum Flexibility for PHAs

Congress has made clear that HUD must accord PHAs a “maximum amount of responsibility and flexibility” in the administration of federal programs. Congress has built this flexibility into the foundational statute that governs the nation’s public housing programs, the Section 8 program, the MTW Program, and most other programs PHAs are asked to administer. That statute reads in pertinent part as follows:

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to promote the general welfare of the Nation by employing the funds and credit of the Nation, as provided in this chapter—

(A) to assist States and political subdivisions of States to remedy the unsafe housing conditions and the acute shortage of decent and safe dwellings for low-income families;

(B) to assist States and political subdivisions of States to address the shortage of housing affordable to low-income families; and

(C) consistent with the objectives of this subchapter, to vest in public housing agencies that perform well, **the maximum amount of responsibility and flexibility in program**

administration, with appropriate accountability to public housing residents, localities, and the general public;
[42 U.S.C. § 1437(a)][emphasis added].

Subsections (A) and (B) further make clear that the focus of the work is for the “States and political subdivision of States” to undertake, and that HUD’s job is merely “to assist”. This state and local focus reinforces the imperative for “maximum” flexibility under subsection (C). A state and local focus would not be meaningful without “maximum” flexibility to allow States and PHAs to account for local markets and needs.

Congress has not been satisfied that HUD has taken this directive seriously. In 1998, for example, Congress found that HUD’s “method of overseeing every aspect of public housing by detailed and complex statutes and regulations has aggravated the problem and has placed excessive administrative burdens on [PHAs]”. Pub. L. 105-276, Title V, § 502.

2.2 Congress Created the MTW to Increase PHA Flexibility

When it created the MTW program, Congress included a more specific expectation that HUD would grant additional flexibility to participating PHAs. This supplements the “maximum” flexibility well-performing PHAs should already have under 42 U.S.C. § 1437(a). Congress imbedded separate, additional flexibility into the MTW program. This shows in several ways, starting with its purpose:

(a) Purpose. The purpose of this demonstration is to give public housing agencies and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development the **flexibility to design and test various approaches for providing and administering housing assistance** that: reduce cost and achieve greater cost effectiveness in Federal expenditures; give incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, seeking work, or is preparing for work by participating in job training, educational programs, or programs that assist people to obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient; and increase housing choices for low-income families.
[42 U.S.C. § 1437 note][emphasis added]

The intended flexibility for PHAs also shows in the very broad programmatic and financial flexibility an MTW agency has:

(b) Program authority. . . . Under the demonstration, . . . an agency may combine operating assistance provided under section 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 [42 USCS § 1437g], modernization assistance provided under section 14 of such Act [42 USCS § 1437l], and assistance provided under section 8 of such Act for the certificate and voucher programs, to provide housing assistance for low-income families, as defined in section 3(b)(2) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 [42 USCS § 1437a(b)(2)], and services to facilitate the transition to work on such terms and conditions as the agency may propose and the Secretary may approve.
[42 USCS § 1437 note]

Congress further strengthened the focus on local flexibility by requiring MTW agencies to consult locally when submitting their applications:

(c) Application. An application to participate in the demonstration--

. . .

(2) shall be submitted only after the public housing agency provides for **citizen participation** through a public hearing and, if appropriate, other means; [and]

(3) shall include a plan developed by the agency that takes into account comments from the **public hearing and any other public comments** on the proposed program, and **comments from current and prospective residents** who would be affected

[42 USCS § 1437 note.][emphasis added]

If this local consultation is to have a serious and substantive influence on local MTW initiatives, then HUD cannot impose national and wholesale directives. HUD is too remote from the locality. Its national responsibilities are too preoccupying. Its data is too far behind the local markets. Its information is too indirect. And even if its directives were correct in specific cases, their regulatory imposition would strip meaning and any collaborative quality from the local consultations.

2.3 Congress's StS Formulation Confers An Added Flexibility

Congress formulated the StS requirement to confer an added flexibility. This shows in the MTW statute in two ways.

First, Congress's use of the word "substantially" denotes an ample flexibility to serve a fewer number of families than a MTW agency would otherwise serve as a non-MTW agency, especially when doing so serves the purposes of the program.

To give a proper meaning to the term "substantially," its dictionary definition is instructive. "Substantial" means "considerable in quantity: significantly great", "not imaginary or illusory", "considerable in amount, value, or worth" or "being largely but not wholly that which is specified". Merriam-Webster, On-Line Dictionary (2015)(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>). This allows a flexible deviation from "the same" number of eligible families.

The courts have understood use of that the word "substantially" in the same way. *See In re Federated Dept. Stores, Inc.*, 170 B.R. 331, 342 (S.D. Ohio 1994) (noting activity was not required "to be conducted exactly the same after as before . . . or the word substantially would not have been used" (internal quotations omitted); *I.A.M. Nat'l Pension Fund Ben. Plan A v. Cooper Indus., Inc.*, 635 F. Supp. 335, 337-38, 340 (D.D.C. 1986) (noting the "folly of attempting to endow" some "precise meaning" to the "nebulous phraseology" of a provision that hinged on whether purchaser of business made "substantially the same number" of pension contributions as before), *rev'd on other grounds*, 825 F.2d 415 (D.C. Cir. 1987).

More informatively, federal courts and federal agencies have interpreted the phrase “substantially the same number” to allow deviations of **20 to 30 percent** when other purposes are being served. *See, e.g.*, 47 C.F.R. § 73.3571(k)(1) (allowing for modification of broadcast facilities so long as service is provided “to substantially the same number of persons,” meaning it “must not result in a decrease of more than 20 percent”); *I.A.M.*, 635 F. Supp. at 339-40 (affirming determination that purchase of business would need to result in a “70 percent contribution decline” before failing to maintain “substantially the same number” of contributions); *Federated Dept. Stores*, 170 B.R. at 342-43 (business was “substantially the same” as before acquisition notwithstanding, among other factors, 50 percent reduction in employees).

This interpretation of the word “substantially” also matches HUD’s use in related housing laws. For example, the Fair Housing Act defines “handicap”, in part, as “a physical or mental impairment which **substantially** limits one or more of such person’s major life activities. . . .” 42 U.S.C. § 3602(h)(i) (emphasis added). This law and HUD’s interpretation of this law do not require the impairment, in order to qualify as a “handicap”, to leave a person even mostly disabled. Conditions well short of full incapacity would count as a “substantial” limitation. As another example, under the Section 8 Substantial Rehabilitation program, HUD flexibly defines “substantial rehabilitation,” in part, as follows: “Substantial rehabilitation may vary in degree from gutting and extensive reconstruction to the cure of substantial accumulation of deferred maintenance Substantial rehabilitation may also include renovation, alteration or remodeling for the conversion or adaptation of structurally sound property to the design and condition required for use under this part or the repair or replacement of major building systems or components in danger of failure.” 24 C.F.R. § 881.201. In this way, HUD interprets “substantial” rehabilitation to mean something considerably less than an “entire” or “complete” rehabilitation.

The Congressional intention to confer flexibility by its use of the word “substantially” is further evident from the use of stronger words in the MTW statute when Congress meant to limit flexibility, including:

(E) **assuring** that housing assisted under the demonstration program meets housing quality standards established or approved by the Secretary.
[42 U.S.C. § 1437 note, section (c)(3)][emphasis added].

Likewise, when Congress intended a strict numerical requirement it said so:

(A) families to be assisted, which shall require that at least **75 percent** of the families assisted by participating demonstration public housing authorities shall be very low-income families, as defined in section 3(b)(2) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 [42 USCS § 1437a(b)(2)]
[42 U.S.C. § 1437 note, section (c)(3)][emphasis added].

In contrast, Congress defined the StS requirement in a way to require only a loose equivalence in a framework of flexibility that does not allow for the imposition of a national formulation.

The **second** way Congress infused the StS requirement with local flexibility is by making it, not a national numerical quota for HUD to define and impose by regulation, but instead only an initial planning requirement for the local MTW agency. Congress did this expressly:

(c) Application. An application to participate in the demonstration--

...

(3) shall include a **plan developed by the agency** that takes into account comments from the public hearing and any other public comments on the proposed program, and comments from current and prospective residents who would be affected, and that includes criteria for—

...

(C) continuing to assist substantially the same total number of eligible low-income families as would have been served had the amounts not been combined; ...
[42 U.S.C. § 1437 note][emphasis added]

HUD's role is limited to approving that plan. In this way, HUD's role in the matter is less direct. It is certainly not directive.

3. Any StS Methodology Must Allow for Local Flexibility to Make Some Hard Local Choices

All this is especially pertinent to the formulation suggested in the notice. In ways that the Steering Committee's letter recounts, that requirement, if it is to be meaningful, must be intimately related to local factors that HUD cannot judge or define nationally. These factors include the local cost of rental housing, the local cost of construction and management, and the local need for supportive services if people are to use the PHA's housing. Most importantly, the StS requirement must allow for the local judgment to make hard choices on how best to serve poor people in a brutal local housing market, especially in the face of the local effects of Congressional budget cuts and the need to manage them. The number of families served of course remains a fundamental metric. But it is not the only metric and it is not the only interest or value at stake. There are others. They are all as rooted in THA's MTW mission as the number of families we serve. And they are all in peril. Protecting them in hard markets and with inadequate funding requires some hard choices that a national StS requirement will not solve.

Here are some examples that illustrate how hard these choices can be and how necessary it is to make them locally.

- *The Challenge of a Brutal Rental Housing Market*

In Tacoma, voucher participants are having trouble using their voucher. The rental markets are very tight. THA can respond to this in a variety of ways that we are considering. Short of adequate Congressional funding, there is no one right response. All the possible responses inflict consequences on other important goals and values. For example, one problem is that Tacoma rents are rising fast. The relative value of our

vouchers and available housing choices are thus decreasing. In response, THA can increase the value of the vouchers so they can pay more in rent. That might help. Yet, if we did that we would serve fewer households because we get only so much money from HUD. Another problem is that when vacancy rates are low, as now, landlords can be very choosy. Our voucher families do not compete well with other families with stronger credit and rental histories. THA can respond in ways that may help but that also cost money and that reduce the number of families we serve. For example, we are thinking of offering landlords incentive bonuses or damage guarantees. We have created a Landlord Liaison staff position to recruit landlords. We also invest a lot of money in staff supportive services to help tenants, especially those with special needs or weak credit or rental histories, find and keep landlords. We have found that in our market, this increases the effectiveness of our program. The money all this costs means we serve fewer people than we would serve if we reserved the money for direct rental assistance, much of which would then go unused for lack of these supports.

- *The Value of Real Estate Development*

In another response to our market, THA seeks to build or buy apartment buildings. Doing this means that at least those apartments will be available choices for voucher holders. This is especially useful to do in parts of town where vouchers do not work. In this way, we would not only provide housing that would welcome the vouchers but do so in a way and in places that would bring a measure of racial and economic integration that the private rental market has kept segregated or is resegregating. Doing this entails a broad array of real estate development strategies that a rigid StS national formulation could not likely flex to allow: project basing vouchers; buying appropriate apartment buildings; building them; buying them and fixing them up; development partnerships with other available and suitable organizations. This may require us to amass section 8 dollars for the purpose. THA also seeks partnerships with nonprofits in the area. THA would contribute dollars necessary to get the property built or on-line and available and affordable long term to low-income families. THA would hope its contribution would be less than what it would cost to build new or less than the cost of a project based voucher. Yet if it results in 100 new such units, for example, the lowered contribution would make this a bargain for us. We need a StS formulation that gives us full credit for all 100 units and recognizes such deals as the successes they are.

- *The Cost of Voucher Administration and the Need to Do It Well*

HUD does not fully fund what it acknowledges to be the cost of administering the voucher program. It provides a proration that is usually closer to 80% of costs. THA backfills those losses with money that might otherwise be available to pay for rental assistance. Yet we do this for reasons that in other ways increase the number of families we serve or the services we provide, especially to high needs families. **First**, we have found that if we are to attract landlords, our level of customer service needs to meet their expectations. This is especially important in our tight rental markets.

Second, the participants in our programs present more than their share of special needs. This requires work to meet these needs in an effective and respectful way. All this takes money that a focus on numbers of households served does not capture.

- *Building, Buying and Maintaining the Rental Housing Portfolio, Either Public Housing or RAD; The Value of Place Based Investments*

Similarly, HUD does not fully fund what it acknowledges to be the full cost of building or managing a housing portfolio, whether public housing or public housing units converted to project based section 8 financing under HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD). The long term underfunding of these operating and capital costs is part of the national crisis. THA, like other MTW agencies, backfills these losses. We do that with money that could pay for rental assistance for an increased number of families. Some StS formulations would penalize these expenditures in the calculation of how many families we serve. That would be extremely shortsighted and would overlook the particular circumstances THA faces. It would also clash with HUD's other directives concerning the portfolio.

It would be shortsighted because the housing portfolio is valuable. **First**, the portfolio is different from vouchers, public assistance, food stamps, Medicaid or SSI. The government can distribute these forms of assistance until the money runs out and then tell people to go away. When the money runs out on the portfolio, it will still be on the ground the next morning full of families and next to neighbors to whom THA owes important legal responsibilities. **Second**, the portfolio is how THA serves its neediest households. These are households that do not do well on the private rental market even with a voucher. These include seniors, disabled persons, families coming from trauma like domestic violence or homelessness, families that do not speak English, and families of color who have learned that the rental market does not welcome them as it would if they were white. HUD should know this well since it is the source of much of the data on the lingering extent of unlawful discrimination in the nation's rental market.

Third, the portfolio is also how THA can bring cost-effective investment to particular neighborhoods in our area that need the investment. Part of our job is find ways to invest that serve the much greater number of poor households who will never even be able to get on our waiting list because we do not have the money to serve them directly. Instead, we seek to spend our money not only to house people but also to improve neighborhoods. THA's investments in these place-based strategies are important. Building, buying and rebuilding housing is how we invest in poor neighborhoods. In these ways, the portfolio is worth growing and preserving even at the cost of directly serving fewer families than otherwise.

HUD should recognize this imperative to invest adequately in the portfolio since it insists that we do so. This insistence shows in several ways. **First**, HUD requires

PHAs to comply with housing standards under the REAC program. It inspects us to make sure we do it. It lets us know when we fall short. It scores us. It penalizes PHAs that fall notably short. **Second**, HUD has encouraged PHAs to convert their public housing units under RAD. THA has done this. As part of that refinancing, THA was obliged to contractually commit extra section 8 dollars to supplement the inadequate appropriations from HUD. We could have used those extra dollars to serve more rental assistance families. If HUD now adopts a StS formulation that penalizes us for doing what RAD requires of us, we will need help to understand why.

These investments are important in the ways that I recount. As I also noted, they clash with the need to serve more families. But the clash is not direct and these investments ultimately increase the number of families served over the long term. The best way to understand this increase uses the concept of unit-years. Imagine a portfolio of 100 units. Imagine further that it is in poor shape so that each unit has a functional remaining life span of 5 years. That portfolio then has 500 unit-years. The PHA has some choices to make. It can forego any investment in maintenance, use the money instead to pay rental assistance to serve other families, and lose the units in 5 years (further burdening the neighborhood). Alternatively, the PHA can invest in the portfolio's capital needs and increase its life span to 30 years. This will increase the unit-years to 3,000. In this way, if HUD wants some numerical formulation to capture the number of families served it should include the concept of unit-years to recognize the value of these investments in the portfolio.

- *The Value of Supportive Services*

THA invests significant dollars in supportive services for people on our voucher program and who live in our housing. This investment costs money. This cost is especially inescapable in a service-poor community like Tacoma where THA must provide some services directly since no one else will. Yet, this investment means that THA serves fewer people than otherwise would be the case if we spent the money on rental assistance. We recognize the trade-off but value the investment in supportive services for two reasons. HUD should recognize both reasons since they coincide with other MTW objectives.

First, we provide supportive services because we house people who will not succeed as tenants or voucher holders unless they get help. These might be seniors or disabled persons who need help to remain independent. These might be parents coming to us from domestic violence, drug addiction, or homelessness. They need services to stabilize. Services make their stabilization a lot more likely. Doing this is part of our focus on the neediest populations. In this way, these services are a necessary companion to the housing we provide. It directly serves the MTW statutory objective to "increase housing choices for low-income families". See 42 U.S.C. § 1437 note, section (a).

Second, we provide supportive services to help people succeed not just as tenants but also, as THA's mission statement contemplates, as "parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets." We want our housing programs to be a transforming experience in these ways, and temporary. We want this certainly for grown-ups. We want it emphatically for children because we do not wish them to need our housing when they grow up. This explains THA's investment in its Education Project. This project is an experiment in how to spend housing dollars not just to house someone but to get two other things done: help their children succeed in school; and help the schools that serve low-income children. When it works, it is a very good use of a housing dollar. HUD has recognized THA's work in this way.

These are the services that make us more than a landlord and more than a paper shuffler that runs rental assistance programs. These are the services that make us a social justice agency and allow us to pursue the MTW statutory purposes of providing help and "incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, seeking work, or is preparing for work" and to "increase housing choices for low-income families." See 42 U.S.C. § 1437 note; section (a). We need a StS formulation that values these services as much as the MTW statute does. An inflexible focus on the number of families served will weaken the MTW statute's own mandate.

- *The Value of Non-Traditional Forms of Rental Assistance and Shallow Subsidies*

THA offers some non-traditional forms of rental assistance. We do this as part of the experimentation that the MTW program is designed to encourage. We do some of it in response to HUD's research and data. We also do it for important policy reasons. We would regret a StS formulation that penalizes us for it.

For example, we have programs that offer a shallower rental subsidy than a regular housing voucher would provide or that would have the household bear a higher rent burden measured as a percentage of their income. Yet some of HUD's possible StS formulations would penalize us for this by not giving us full credit for serving these households. This would be a serious mistake. Shallow subsidy programs can be good policy choices in a number of circumstances. **First**, we use them as part of a rapid rehousing program. HUD should recognize this since HUD is the source of much of the nation's research and design for such programs. We have relied on HUD's data to make our choices. **Second**, shallower subsidies may also be a way to account for extensive local need. One strategy in the face of such need is to "thin the soup" with shallower subsidies so we can serve more families. If HUD's proposed StS formulations would not give the PHA full credit for serving those families it would force us to pay full subsidy to a fewer number of lucky people who can get one of our vouchers. Yet it would sacrifice the interest of other families who presently get nothing but who would be pleased to get a voucher, even at shallower subsidy levels. **Third**, part of our rental formula uses fixed subsidies. We do that to reward work and remove the disincentive to increasing income. It may also mean that a person who does not

work will get a lower subsidy than he would get under the normal rules. This serves the MTW statutory purpose to give “incentives to . . . obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient.” 42 U.S.C. § 1437 note section (a). **Fourth**, some subsidies may appear shallow because a voucher holder has chosen to rent a higher priced home and to pay the extra costs from his or her own funds. THA does not preclude or discourage these individual choices. Allowing them furthers the MTW statutory purpose to “increase housing choices for low-income families.” 42 U.S.C. § 1437 note, section (a).

We must note that the MTW statute does not require HUD to discount credit for shallower subsidies. The statute asks only that we serve substantially the same number of families. It does not require that we serve them at a certain affordability or subsidy level. We also note that non-MTW housing authorities receive full credit for households paying well more than 30% of their income as rent. We do not know why MTW authorities should receive only partial credit. We have asked HUD to explain this.

Some of HUD’s proposed formulations would appear to give full credit for serving families whose rent burden is lower than some set percentage of income. There is an odd danger to such a formulation. It would encourage a PHA to serve higher income families whose rent burden would be less than the set percentage and who would take up fewer subsidy dollars. This would penalize THA for its focus on serving the neediest. We would be sorry to face a penalty for that reason.

If HUD’s StS formula discounts the value of a shallower subsidy or, more oddly, penalizes THA because the family has a higher rent burden, then it should give credit for the other ways that we serve families through supportive services, construction, and property maintenance.

Finally, some operational problems would result if HUD tried to discount the credit for households receiving shallower subsidies or paying a higher rent burden. It would be complicated to do. We must ask if HUD’s data systems are adequate for the task. Applying the formulation yearly to shifting data would prevent us from projecting year to year, making planning and budgeting harder than it already is.

I mention these examples only to point out that the policy choices they denote are hard. A choice determines not only how many people we serve, but how needy they are, where they live, and which of their service needs we can meet and whether we should try to meet them. We might not make some choices like fixed or shallow subsidies if we did not face an affordable housing crisis in Tacoma or if we were adequately funded to meet it. But we must make these choices with the money we have and the local need and the local market we face. We also note that a choice can be the right one and still not be an occasion to celebrate. We also know there is no choice that serves some purposes of the MTW program without costs to other important purposes and values also imbedded in the MTW program. HUD faces the same hard choices if it tries to formulate a StS requirement. The

appropriate answers for HUD and for the MTW agencies must arise from a local judgment about local needs and local markets. That too is an MTW value.

The local flexibility we need still leaves HUD with a meaningful oversight role. If HUD has informed objections to such policies, let us remember that HUD can withhold approval of the proposed activity. That ability to withhold approval would elicit the necessary policy discussion that considers the pertinent local factors. That oversight role conforms to the role envisioned for HUD under the Housing Act of 1937 “to assist” and under the MTW statute to “approve” local plans. That more limited role also conforms to the limits on HUD’s data and operational capacity. What should be clear to all of us is that HUD should not prejudice and preclude any initiative issue wholesale and in advance for all agencies nationwide.

4. Any Methodology Must Account for Funding Levels and Funding Cuts

Whatever the StS formulation, it must fully account for funding levels and funding cuts. For example, in 2017 Congress has funded PHAs at a 95% proration for the section 8 programs. This should show in a commensurate reduction in the baseline number of families we would serve in the denominator of the formulation that HUD seems to be envisioning.

On a related note, this seems like a very bad time to be contemplating such a notable change in the MTW program. We all – HUD and the MTW agencies - may be on the eve of more budget cuts and other program changes. HUD’s operational capacity to administer a new StS regime will likely diminish further as a result of those cuts and the current federal hiring freezes. HUD should at least wait until such matters are clearer.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Thank you for inviting them.

Cordially,

TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY



Michael Mirra
Executive Director

Cc: Steering Committee



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

ARLINGTON DRIVE CAMPUS for HOMELESS YOUTH WITHOUT FAMILIES and HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS

Last Revised March 1, 2017

NEED FOR HOUSING SERVICES

- In 2016, over 1,070 Pierce County youth were homeless without families.
- Pierce County exports them to other counties.
- These young people face high risks of drug abuse, sex trafficking, violence, and greatly diminished prospects for an education, an occupation and a successful adulthood.

Hey my names [REDACTED] & I'm looking for help asap I don't know what to do or where to turn. I have no place to stay and have no cash for a place to rent. I've tried asking everyone I know for help and I have noone,,, I'm 19 years old and I have a lil bit of mental health with anxiety attacks, being in a social group I get very closterfobic, I have PTSD I get bad flash backs, & I also have bad health ... So it don't help that I have no help at all and I'm staying in a [t]ent outside and the weather is very bad condition and I don't have very many things no clothes or stuff to clean up and shower with . I'm very in a bad state of mind with this whole homeless thing. I hope to hear from you with maybe some sort of good news.

Thank you & god bless.
- email to THA [November 5, 2015]

PROPOSED PROJECT

- 12 bed Crisis Residential Center/HOPE beds for ages 12 to 17 (will serve >500 youth a year)
- 40 apartments to rent for homeless young adults age 18 to 24
- Supportive services
- Employment and training, with social enterprises and entrepreneurial training space
- Administrative offices for Community Youth Services
- Walking distance to a middle school, East Tacoma Community Center (in development), a regional health clinic and the prospective site of Bates East Tacoma Campus.



COST AND FINANCING: Cost: \$23 million; Likely Financing Sources:

City of Tacoma	Pierce County	Tax Credit Investor Equity
Tacoma Housing Authority	State of Washington	Commercial Debt

PARTNERS



City of Tacoma
WASHINGTON



Contact:

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TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

THA's Utilization Rate & Changes to THA's Rental Assistance Programs

RECORD OF THA's PUBLIC CONSULTATION

February 22, 2018

BACKGROUND

The Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) sought comments and suggestions about changes it is considering to its housing programs. **The main change** would help THA with its continuing and increasingly hard struggle to serve the same number of needy households at rising rental costs in one of the hardest rental markets in the nation and to do so with flat funding from HUD.

As Tacoma's rental market increases, THA has tried to keep up by increasing what it pays in rent on behalf of families in its rental assistance programs. THA has increased the total amount it pays in rental subsidies by an accumulating additional \$600,000 per year for the past three years. THA judges that these costs will continue to increase for the foreseeable future. This increase is not sustainable. The arithmetic does not allow us to serve the same number of families at increasing costs with the same amount of funding.

The other changes would apply to the THA's two main rental assistance programs. One is its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV). Nearly five years ago, THA ended this program for households newly receiving rental assistance. These new households instead joined the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP). Both programs help low-income families pay rent on the private market. HOP differs from the HCV program in two main ways:

- **Fixed Subsidy**
The HCV rental subsidy amount depends on the household income. The lower the income the more the subsidy. The greater the income, the lower the subsidy. In contrast, the HOP subsidy is fixed. It depends on family size and not family income. In most cases, HOP subsidies are lower than HCV subsidies.
- **5-Year Time Limit for Work-Able Households**
The HCV subsidy has no time limit. It lasts as long as a household remains eligible and as long as THA's funding holds out. In contrast, HOP imposes a 5-year time limit on all households with a work-able adult. HOP offers these households supportive services to help them increase earned income. HOP extends the subsidy beyond 5 years in two situations. **First**, to meet an unexpected hardship, it offers up to 3 more months of subsidy. **Second**, it offers up to a 1-year extension if the household enrolls in a qualified program to increase earned income. The time limit does not apply to seniors or disabled participants.

THA completed a thorough review of the agency's options to continue to serve the same number of households at rising rental costs. THA also completed an analysis of HOP. The HOP analysis and possible program changes can be found here www.tacomahousing.org/programchanges.

THA consulted widely through its community to seek advice and views on these possible changes. The purpose of this memo is to provide describe this consultation effort and to report on what we heard.

POSSIBLE PROGRAM CHANGES

THA presented the following possible program changes to voucher holders, landlords, THA staff, community leaders and partners:

THA Is Considering Changes to its Housing Opportunity Program (HOP): It Seeks Advice

THA seeks advice. Tacoma's rents are rising. The number of households who need THA's help is growing. Serving them is costing THA more. Yet, THA's funding is flat. In response, THA is considering changes to its programs. THA has written full and summary reports on what we are considering. See them at www.tacomahousing.net/programchanges. A shorter summary shows below. We welcome your advice. If you have some for us, we need it by **February 15, 2018**. When deciding how you would advise us, please consider at least the following four facts:

1. THA can serve only a small fraction of those in need; 20,000 needy Tacoma households need a turn at the assistance.
2. The present lowered HOP subsidy allows THA to serve 20% more households; the 5-year time limit gives others a turn.
3. In 4 years, HOP work-able households increased their earned income by 45%, but this is not enough to keep up with Tacoma's rising rental market; 68% of them set to exit HOP in 2018 will have a severe shelter burden (>50%).
4. THA's funding for rental assistance has been flat and will likely remain so. Yet Tacoma's rising rental market is costing THA \$600,000 more each year to serve the same number of households. This is not sustainable for THA.

Here is a color clue to the general effect of the proposals that show below

Green	The proposal will maintain or increase the number of households served but the service will be somewhat less.
Blue	The proposal will decrease the number of households served but the service will be more or will last longer.

IN TACOMA'S NEW RISING RENTAL MARKET, THA'S RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS CANNOT SERVE THE SAME NUMBER OF FAMILIES AT SUCH INCREASING COSTS BECAUSE THA'S FUNDING REMAINS FLAT. WHAT SHOULD THA DO?	
1.	Reduce the value of the rental subsidy further to serve more households.
2.	Redirect vouchers to higher income households who cost less to serve, and so serve more of them.
3.	Redirect money from other programs to pay for rental assistance (<i>e.g., reduce building or buying properties, maintaining the portfolio, supportive services, Education Project, Rapid Rehousing, and administrative services</i>)
4.	Maintain rental subsidy levels but serve fewer households (<i>from 100% to 95%</i>). (THA is presently at 95%).

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (HOP)	
1.	<p>The Fixed Subsidy (THA pays 50% of the payment standard based on bedroom size). The HOP subsidy is fixed based upon household size, not income. This fixed subsidy generally lowers the amount of the rental subsidy. This usually means households pay more in rent; yet it gives them an incentive to increase income because they keep all of any increase in wages; and doing this allows THA to serve 20% more households.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the fixed subsidy and serve more households. Remove it for elderly/disabled households since they cannot increase their income; they would receive an income-based subsidy; work-able households would keep the fixed subsidy. Remove it for all households who would then receive a subsidy based on household income. Offer struggling work-able households a THA apartment, if available, whose rent is based upon income.
2.	<p>The Five-Year Time Limit for Work-Able Households, with Extensions A 5-year time limit gives households a reason to strive; it gives other needy households a turn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the time limit and keep the present extensions of up to 3 months for hardship and up to one year if a family engages in a qualified job training or education programs. Remove the time limit. Shorten it (<i>e.g., 3 years</i>). Keep the time limit but offer more generous extensions for hardship (<i>e.g., up to another 3 years if rent burdened & engaged with support services</i>).
POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (HOP) (<i>continued</i>)	
3.	<p>Expand Definition of Disability to Exempt More Households From the 5-Year Time Limit Presently THA exempts from the 5 year time limit only seniors and persons receiving benefits from a program that has determined they are disabled, i.e. Social Security, SSI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand this exemption to those whom DSHS excuses from the TANF work requirement. These would include an adult (55+) caretaker relative providing care for a child, an adult required in the home to care for a child with special needs, and an adult required to be in the home to care for another adult with disabilities. Doing this will increase the number of people without a time limit; that will mean fewer chances for others to have a turn.
4.	<p>More Aggressively Encourage or Require Work-Able Households to Engage in Supportive Services to Increase Their Earned Income. THA presently offers these services to all work-able households. Few accept them. Encouraging or requiring them to do so means THA will have to provide or find these services in Tacoma and find the money for staff to provide or monitor the services. That will mean less money to pay rent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve THA's identification of struggling households and more aggressively encourage their participation in supportive services. Require all work-able households to engage in supportive services.

5.	Expand HOP to the Current Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Expanding HOP would allow THA to serve 20% more households because the rental subsidy is lower; the rent burden will be higher for most households unless they increase their income; the fixed-subsidy and the time limit will give them an incentive to do that; the time limit will also give more needy households a turn.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition all (~2,000) HCV households at once; their time on the HCV program would not count toward the 5-year time limit for work-able households, who would then have another 5 years of assistance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition all HCV households; their time on the HCV program would count toward the 5-year time limit. Workable households above the time limit will lose their subsidy after reasonable notice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition all HCV households and if this change would result in severe rent burden stagger the transition over time or allow for a hardship exception for a limited period of time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition only work-able HCV households to HOP.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not transition HCV households to HOP. At the current rate of natural transition it will take 10 years for all households to be in the HOP program.
6.	When a Work-able Adult Joins a Senior/Disabled Household Presently, when this happens, the 5-year time limit applies retroactively. When a child turns 18 years of age present rules consider this to be a work-able adult joining the household.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start the 5-year time limit anew.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the existing policy: the 5-year time limit applies retroactively
7.	Limit a Household's Ability to Reapply for HOP Presently a household leaving the program after its 5-year time limits expires may reapply.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disqualify households who leave the program after the expiration of its 5-year term.
8.	Prepare Wait List Households to be "Ready to Rent"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer tenants financial assistance to pay application fees, security deposits or utility deposits. This will redirect dollars presently available to pay the rent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide meaningful training on how to be a good tenant.
9.	Strengthen the Program's Relationship with Landlords
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve marketing to landlords.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer limited damage guarantees.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

THA consulted widely about these proposed changes. The people we consulted and what we heard shows below.

1. HOP PARTICIPANTS PUBLIC HEARING

In February of 2018, THA held two public hearings for HOP participants, one during the day and one in the evening. THA mailed postcard invitations to all 500 HOP households; 20 households attended. In addition to the meetings, three households provided comments via mail or e-mail. HOP participants recommended:

1.1 Serve more households

HOP participants were eager to hear what options would allow THA to serve more households. 44% of participants recommended that THA should further reduce the value of a voucher to serve more households. 28% recommended adopting a 95% utilization rate. 22% suggested redirecting money from other areas to pay for rental assistance.

1.2 Keep the fixed subsidy

67% of HOP participants recommended that THA keep the fixed subsidy and serve more households. 27% recommended that it remain in place for work-able households only (elderly/disabled households would receive an income-based subsidy). HOP participants asked where the funding would come from if they chose an option that was more expensive. Participants also wanted to know what the costs were in terms of number of people served for each possible option.

1.3 Keep the five year time limit

Nearly 80% of participants recommended that THA keep the five year time limit. Only 20% recommended THA offer more generous extensions. When asked about easing the requirements of the current hardship policy for households engaged in an activity or program likely to increase income, 80% were in favor of doing so. One participant thought that the 90 day unforeseen loss of income hardship extension was too short of a time period if someone lost a job. Zero HOP participants recommended removing the time limit.

1.4 Expand the definition of disability

HOP households were nearly split on the issue of expanding the definition of disability with 53% supporting the proposed change. Participants questioned if other resources were available for this population.

1.5 Require supportive services

73% of HOP participants recommended that THA require supportive services because it motivates work-able households to increase their earned income. One participant suggested that THA require households to participate but have consequences other than termination for noncompliance.

1.6 Transition HCV households to HOP

84% of HOP participants recommended that THA transition the legacy HCV population to the HOP. One participant questioned how HCV participants would feel going from no time limits to time limited. Another participant suggested that the transition time to HOP should be based on the individual family's needs.

1.7 Start the time limit anew when a work-able adult joins an elderly/disabled household

80% of HOP participants recommended that the time limit should start anew when a work-able person joins an elderly/disabled household and that it should be removed if they exit.

1.8 Allow HOP participants to reapply after they exit the program

85% of HOP participants recommended that HOP participants be permitted to reapply for the program after they exit. The group cited the wait time and the slim odds of being readmitted to the program as their reason for supporting this option.

1.9 Do not spend resources preparing households to be ready to rent

86% of HOP participants recommended that THA should not spend resources providing funding for application fees, security deposits assistance etc. They favored using the funding to provide more rental assistance.

1.10 THA should take action to improve relationships with landlords

58% of HOP participants recommended that THA should improve its marketing to landlords and offer limited damage guarantees. 42% recommended that THA not spend these resources and favored using the funding to provide more rental assistance.

2. 2015 HOP AND HCV SURVEY

In January of 2015, THA conducted a live telephone survey of active HOP and HCV participants. The survey asked similar questions as those we posed in 2018.

2.1 Serve more households

87% of HOP participants recommended that THA should make cuts to the program to serve more households. 65% of HCV households recommended cuts.

2.2 Differing views on time limits

53% of HOP participants supported time limits, but only 33% of HCV participants supported them. Both HOP and HCV participants recommended that time limits should not apply to seniors or people with disabilities.

2.3 Require supportive services

75% of HOP participants recommended that THA require participants to engage in supportive services; this aligns with the findings from 2018. 80% of HCV households supported mandatory supportive services.

2.4 Differing views on subsidy type

The telephone survey asked participants if rental assistance should be based on income or family size. 67% of HOP households recommended a subsidy based on family size, but only 18% of HCV households made that recommendation. 82% of HCV households preferred an income based subsidy.

3. THA PARTICIPATING LANDLORDS

In February of 2018, THA's landlord advisory committee met to advise THA on the possible program changes. THA invited over 500 landlords to this meeting and 12 landlords attended. In addition to the meeting, two landlords provided comments via email. Landlords recommended:

3.1 Serve more households

50% of landlords recommended that THA adopt a 95% utilization rate. The remaining landlords were evenly split among the options to reduce the value of voucher further, redirect money from other areas, and redirect vouchers to higher income households. Landlords provided THA with recommendations about improving or cutting operations that might save money. These ideas included: bi-annual inspections, self-certifying repairs, eliminating supportive services, eliminating staff and permitting random compliance checks. One landlord mentioned raising the payment standard to 110% of FMRs to reflect 2018 rents.

3.2 Keep the fixed subsidy, but remove it for elderly/disabled households

75% of landlords recommended that THA keep the fixed subsidy but remove it for elderly/disabled households. The remaining 25% recommended keeping the fixed subsidy as it stands today for all households. One landlord suggested that the fixed subsidy should be stepped meaning that the tenant should increase their portion of the rent each year.

3.3 Shorten the five year time limit

67% of landlords recommended that THA shorten the time limit and 33% recommended keeping it and offering more generous extensions. A number of landlords recommended offering hardship extensions if THA were to shorten the time limit. One landlord recommended a 3 year time limit with extensions for households who increase their earned income. 57% of landlords recommended easing the hardship extension requirements for households participating in a program or activity that will likely increase income.

3.4 Expand the definition of disability

60% of landlords recommended that THA should expand the definition of disability and so exempt more households from the time limit.

3.5 Do not require supportive services

75% of landlords recommended that THA improve its identification of struggling households and encourage, but not require, households to participate in supportive services. 17% were in favor of requiring households to participate. One landlord recommended eliminating supportive services; another recommended extending THA's hours to accommodate working families.

3.6 Transition HCV households to HOP

55% of landlords recommended transitioning the legacy HCV population to HOP and 33% of those in favor of the transition recommended a hardship policy for households

that may be extremely rent burdened as a result. 44% of landlords were opposed to the transition. One landlord indicated that it is not fair to change the rules about a program with families already on the program, "families and landlords should have what they signed up for."

3.7 Start the time limit anew when a work-able adult joins an elderly/disabled household

100% of landlords recommended that the time limit should start anew when a work-able person joins an elderly/disabled household and that it should be removed if they exit.

3.8 Do not allow HOP participants to reapply after they exit the program:

100% of landlords recommended that THA prevent HOP participants from reapplying for the program after they exit. One landlord suggested that THA might allow a household to reapply much later in life when they are elderly or disabled.

3.9 Do not spend resources helping households pay fees or deposits

86% of landlords recommended that THA should not spend resources providing funding for application fees, security deposits assistance etc. They favored using the funding to provide more rental assistance.

3.10 THA should take action to improve relationships with landlords

100% of landlord recommended that THA should offer limited damage guarantees. Landlords commented that offering damage guarantees could help attract landlords. Other landlords suggested providing landlord/tenant matching and improving the screening process. A number of landlords suggested that if THA offers security deposit funds they should stay with the unit as it transitions from one tenant to the next.

4. HOUSEHOLDS ON THE WAITLIST

THA held one public hearing for households currently on THA's waitlists. THA sent e-mail invitations to 100 random waitlisted households and one household attended the hearing. The household member is disabled, currently homeless, and has been waiting for housing since 2013. The household is on the waitlist for THA's elderly/disabled properties but "would take the HOP voucher if given the opportunity."

4.1 Serve more households

The waitlisted household was supportive of THA serving 95% of its baseline even if it means waitlisted households will wait longer.

4.2 Keep the fixed subsidy

The household recommended that the fixed subsidy remain in place for work-able households only (elderly/disabled households would receive an income-based subsidy). They noted that elderly/disabled households have fixed incomes.

4.3 Shorten the five year time limit

The household recommended shortening the time limit to three years and offering an additional two years to households who have increased their earned income or those who are enrolled in a program or activity to increase their earned income. "If a household is still working at Wendy's after three years, another family should be given a chance." The household recommended that THA remove the hardship extension policy requiring a household member to complete their activity or program within one year in order to qualify for an extension. The household would like THA to keep the requirement that households must be enrolled 6 months prior to exit. "You can't just sign up for a program at the end of your time on the program and expect more time."

4.4 Expand the definition of disability

The household was very supportive of expanding the definition of disability to include those who are exempt from TANF work requirements.

4.5 Require supportive services

Similar to most program participants, the waitlisted household was very supportive of requiring supportive services for work-able households.

4.6 Transition HCV households to HOP

The household was supportive of transitioning work-able HCV households to HOP.

4.7 Start the time limit anew when a work-able adult joins an elderly/disabled household

The household recommended that the time limit should start anew when a work-able person joins an elderly/disabled household and that it should be removed if they exit.

4.8 Allow HOP participants to reapply after they exit the program

The household recommended that HOP participants be permitted to reapply for the program after they exit.

4.9 Do spend resources helping households pay fees

The household was supportive of THA helping households prepare to be ready to rent. They remarked that they will need assistance with a security deposit and that it is hard for families to come up with that money.

4.10 THA should take action to improve relationships with landlords

The household recommended that THA provide damage guarantees to landlords because Section 8 and HOP have a bad reputation.

5. THA STAFF

THA's Policy, Innovation & Evaluation team will host an all-staff meeting to discuss the possible program changes on February 21, 2018. PIE staff conferred with THA's Cabinet to seek their recommendations.

5.1 All Staff Meeting

- **Serve more households:** The majority of staff (88%) recommended adopting a lower utilization rate to serve more households. 70% recommended adopting 95%. Adopting 90% was an alternative idea presented by a staff member and this idea gained the support of 18% of staff.
- **Keep the fixed subsidy, but remove it for elderly/disabled households.** 44% of staff recommended keeping the fixed subsidy. 16% of staff recommended further reducing the value of a voucher except for elderly/disabled households. Another 16% recommended removing the fixed subsidy for all households.
- **Shorten the time limit to 3 years but offer generous extensions** if households will have a shelter burden greater than 50% upon exit. These extensions could be 3 to 4 years.
- **Do not expand the definition of disability:** 62% of staff recommended not expanding the definition of disability. The primary reason for this was the potential administrative burden falling on staff to obtain the verification paperwork to indicate a household is exempt from TANF work requirements.
- **Do not assume a one size fits all approach with supportive services.** Staff recommended a hybrid idea, suggesting that THA require services for some but not all. The determination could be based on where the household falls on the Bridge Assessment.
- **Transition HCV households to HOP, only if they are work-able.** 76% of staff were supportive of transitioning work-able households to HOP. Staff recommended beginning the transition at annual review time.
- **Start the time limit anew when a minor becomes 18 in an elderly/disabled household or redefine work-able to exclude minors attending school up to 24 or 26 years old.** Staff recommended that the time limit should start anew when a minor becomes 18 in an elderly/disabled household. Staff also recommended redefining the definition of work-able to consider youth attending school.
- **Allow HOP participants to reapply after they exit the program.** Staff recommended that HOP participants be permitted to reapply for the program after they exit.

- **Do not spend resources helping households pay fees.** 38% of staff recommended that THA should not spending resources to pay for application fees, security deposits etc. 29% recommended THA offering some sort of assistance that requires repayment to keep resources replenished. 21% of staff recommended reaching out to households on the waitlist to train them to be prepared for renting.
- **THA should take action to improve relationships with landlords.** Staff recommended that THA should improve marking to landlords but also educate renters to be ready to rent. The ready to rent training could include a certificate indicating that the household completed training. Some staff suggested requiring households to complete the training prior to leasing up and again if they relocate.
- **Staff recommended easing the current hardship policy.** Remove the stipulation that the program or activity (likely to increase income) must be completed in 1 year. Remove the requirement that households must be enrolled 6 months in advance of exit.

5.2 THA's Sub-Cabinet favors the following options:

- **Keep the fixed subsidy but consider and study the impacts of transitioning elderly/disabled households to an income-based subsidy.**
- **Keep the time limit but offer generous extensions** because most households will experience a shelter burden greater than 50% upon exit.
- **Expand the definition of disability** to include those exempt from TANF work requirements.
- **Encourage, but do not mandate supportive services.**
- **Transition work-able HCV households to HOP after a long notice period.** The time limits should begin after the notice period. One sub-cabinet member suggested staggering the transition based on when the household joined the HCV program. Another sub-cabinet member suggested transitioning households at review time to reduce administrative burden.
- Sub-cabinet recommended conducting a financial analysis to study the HOP transition and the fixed subsidy generally. THA should study the impacts of different subsidy amounts such as 50% for work-able households and an array of subsidy amounts for elderly/disabled households (including an income-based subsidy).

- **Start the five-year time limit anew when an elderly/disabled household adds a work-able household member.** Sub-cabinet recommended monitoring this closely for abuse.
- **Permit HOP households to reapply** to the program after an exit.
- **THA should provide some measure of good tenant or ready to rent training** for households nearing the top of the waitlist. The sub-cabinet did not support financial assistance to pay application fees etc.
- THA should wait for the decision on the State level about source of income discrimination prior to enacting any sort of damage mitigation fund. Sub-cabinet also noted that THA is in the process of hiring a Landlord Liaison to guide some of this work.
- **Revise the current hardship policy** to change the stipulation that the program or activity (likely to increase income) must be completed in 1 year to completion within 3 years. This would align with an up to 3 year hardship extension. Sub-cabinet recommended shortening the amount of time a household must be enrolled in the program prior to exit to be eligible for an extension from 6 months to 3 months.

6. BROADER COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

THA met with more than 50 community organizations, community partners and elected officials to seek advice and views. Tacoma community leaders and THA partners fully support THA's adoption of a 95% utilization rate as the best way forward to serve more households. These community members were willing to provide letters of support to help THA explain and defend its decision. The letters are attached.

Regarding possible changes to the HOP, community members were supportive of program policies that permit THA to serve more households. For this purpose, on the whole, they supported maintaining the time limits and the fixed subsidy. A number of community members were supportive of expanding the income-based subsidy to the elderly/disabled HOP households. They also expressed support for THA to transition the legacy HCV population to HOP. They advised that this transition must be well thought out and clearly communicated. There were differing views regarding mandating supportive services and revising the hardship policy. Most were predicated on questions about how those choices would impact THA's ability to serve more households.

Comments from the meetings are on the pages that follow.

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
<p>Coalition for Homeless Youth</p>	<p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is THA attempting to access other funding sources to fill gaps? • Is THA considering redirecting our funds to help people purchase instead of rent? • What types of services did people have access to? • What programs did you have in place to incentivize people to increase their earned income or disincentive people from staying on housing subsidies? 	<p>THA is always looking for funding and resources to fill gaps. We rely on foundations and philanthropic resources to support work that is not funded, or underfunded, by HUD. There are very limited resources outside of HUD funding that will fund housing assistance or case management. Typically foundation and philanthropic resources are interested in specific projects or programs. This is especially true for any sustainable funding gaps. They usually only want to fund a project or program just once.</p> <p>THA is not currently considering redirecting our funds to help people purchase instead of rent.</p> <p>HOP families have access to THA caseworkers who work to connect participating households with an array of services. Households may participate in an assessment to examine a family's economic stability in five areas including family stability, well-being, education and training, financial management, and employment and career management. This assessment leads to a connection with services provided by THA and/or its partners including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program • Employment Supports through partnerships with Goodwill, Workforce Central, The Center For Strong Families, Sound Outreach • Employment supports include but are not limited to: financial literacy credit counseling

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
City of Tacoma – Mayor Victoria Woodards	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THA should persist with both the time limit and the fixed subsidy • THA should require HOP work-able families to engage with supportive services as a condition of receiving rental assistance. • THA should expand the definition of elderly/disabled to include parents who cannot work for a good reason that may not include a diagnosis • THA should permit generous extensions, especially the extra year if the household is not ready for the private rental market and the household commits to job training or education 	
Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium	<p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are other Housing Authorities not meeting their HUD imposed baseline? • How close are HUD's Fair Market Rents (FMRs) to current rents? • Why are households not engaging with supportive services? • Has THA found evidence that mandating supportive services will improve client outcomes? • Could THA explore incentivizing supportive services (for example increasing voucher HAP amounts for households who engage)? <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households should find time for supportive services. THA should not fear that they do not have time to engage. THA should not fear sanctioning households for noncompliance. • Maybe THA could learn from Habitat's "sweat equity" requirements. • THA should give young adults who turn 18 years old (in elderly/disabled households) time before they are considered work-able. • Perhaps THA should consider cutting back from other places for example the investment in Rapid Rehousing (RRH). <p>Group Consensus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group consensus (minus 1 person, see above comment regarding cutting RRH): Support adopting a lower utilization rate as the best way forward. • Group consensus: Continue with the time limits. • Group consensus: Expand the definition of disabled. • Group consensus: Expand HOP to HCV participants. All elderly/disabled households (including HOP) should have an income based subsidy. • Group consensus: The transition of HCV to HOP must be phased in very carefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THA is currently conferring with other Housing Authorities to learn more, other HA's facing similar rental markets may have more favorable MTW contracts. Vancouver HA received approval from HUD to adopt a 90% utilization rate and the Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo has completed two corrective action plans for not meeting their baseline. • Tacoma's FMRs are in line with THA's market analysis. They are regularly reviewed. • THA cannot say for certain why households do not engage with services, but the vast majority of work-able HOP families are working and have children. • THA has not found evidence that mandating supportive services increases self-sufficiency outcomes. Other Housing Authorities have experimented with mandates, but the results have been mixed. • THA's Family Self Sufficiency Program rewards households for each milestone they achieve with a financial incentive that is place in an escrow account for the household.

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation (GTCF) and others	<p>GTCF convened 40 community leaders including - Metro Parks, Pierce County Council, Pierce County Executive, Goodwill, Sequoia and Forest Foundations, Metropolitan Development Council, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Bamford Foundation, Health Department, Korean Women's Association, Hope Sparks, Forterra, Gordon Thomas Honeywell, Sound Outreach, University of Washington, Amara, Mayor of Tacoma, City of Tacoma, YWCA, Shared Housing Services, Reach Tacoma, Safe Street Campaign, Oasis Youth Center, Pierce County Human Services, Degrees of Change, Pierce County ACH</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you conferred with other Housing Authorities facing similar utilization issues? • Is there a waiver THA can receive from HUD to be under 100% utilization • What are the penalties for not meeting 100% utilization? <p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THA needs the support of this group if HUD seeks to punish them • There are big costing to shifting people around from one program to another, the larger issue is a lack of affordable housing <p>The GTCF audience was as a whole supportive of THA adopting a utilization rate of 95%. Although some had mixed views on the time limit and fixed subsidy, most were supportive if it means THA can serve more households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THA is currently conferring with other Housing Authorities to learn more, other HA's facing similar rental markets may have more favorable MTW contracts. Vancouver HA received approval from HUD to adopt a 90% utilization rate and the Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo has completed two corrective action plans for not meeting their baseline. • THA is exploring the options taken by Vancouver HA. • THA is uncertain what the penalties are for falling below 100% utilization.
City of Tacoma Councilmember Chris Beale	Councilmember Beale expressed support for the 5 year time limit and the fixed subsidy. He also favored expanding HOP to the rest of the voucher program to allow THA to serve more people.	
City of Tacoma Councilmember Catherine Ushka	Councilmember Ushka readily understood the problem THA faces with overwhelming need in the rising rental market, yet with flat funding. She was prepared to be supportive of THA's choices. She liked that we were consulting widely.	

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
Sound Outreach	<p>Jeff Klein, the Executive Director of Sound Outreach, supports the following options:</p> <p>THA should serve 95% of its baseline. Jeff does not recommend any of the other options especially removing funding from the Education Project.</p> <p>Stick with the fixed subsidy for work-able households and do more to provide a strong nudge for supportive services. Jeff does not support mandated services. He would like us to consider requiring or softly requiring the Bridge assessment if we believe it is a useful tool (perhaps test this with a pilot group). Those shown to be better prepared to receive the services offered by the Center For Strong Families should be immediately referred. Jeff thinks the co-locating of services offered through the CSF may help improve engagement with supportive services. THA must consider when to target households for engagement with services.</p> <p>Jeff supports THA expanding HOP to the legacy HCV population (carefully)</p> <p>Jeff favors an income-based subsidy for all elderly/disabled households (he may get back to us with more comments on this)</p> <p>Jeff is prepared with a letter of support.</p>	
Northwest Justice Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% Utilization rate - NJP supports this as the best option for THA to face Tacoma's rising rents without cutting folks off the program in the future. NJP does not think we should further reduce the value of our vouchers, nor do they think we should cut from other areas including supportive services. They also do not think we should redirect assistance to higher income households. • Fixed Subsidy - NJP supports keeping the fixed subsidy for work-able households. They support an income-based subsidy for elderly/disabled households who cannot increase their earned income. 	

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Hardship Policy - NJP likes this as is. They do not think we should remove the rule that mandates enrollment in an income earning activity or program at least 6 months prior to exit. They remarked that THA has made an investment in the household. The household should not be automatically entitled to an extension without showing some effort. They were in favor of permitting a 1 year extension for households engaged in an activity that would last longer than 1 year. • Time limit - NJP indicated that they believe three years to be too short. They were initially split on whether to keep the 5 year limit as is or keep it and offer generous extensions. After consideration for those on the waitlist, NJP recommended keeping the 5 year time limit as is. • Expansion of the definition of disability - NJP likes this proposal. They want us to be aware that the DSHS status may change, so households may become work-able. NJP would like us to consider including those who receive state disability benefits. THA will conduct further research on this matter. NJP followed up with an email and encouraged us to look into folks who are receiving ABD cash benefits. • For elderly/disabled households who may become work-able either by adding a member or by having a child in the household who turns 18 - NJP favors permitting the time limit to start at the time the work-able person joins the household. They urge us to not apply the time limit retroactively. • NJP supports THA transitioning the HCV population to HOP because it will allow THA to serve more households and it will prevent THA from cutting households off the program due to rising costs. NJP recommended a tiered decrease in subsidy to prevent immediate hardship. After a discussion about administering this, they decided it may be better and easier to just have a long notice period of the transition. • NJP recognizes that THA may not have the capacity to require supportive services. They questioned if we could partner with an agency that could help us better engage families in these services. However, they were not supportive of a "mandate" of supportive services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THA presently accepts the State designations of disability and omits ABD recipients from the time limit. • THA explained our partnership with the Center For Strong Families.

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding a household's ability to reapply. NJP thought it may support a rule preventing a household from receiving assistance through the next upcoming waitlist opening. This would give at least 2-3 years if the household was lucky enough to win the lottery again. NJP does not like the idea of a lifetime ban. 	
Comprehensive Life Resources – Homeless Outreach Team Member	<p>(Via e-mail)</p> <p>“Although you made the point that THA does not plan to implement the second option [favoring higher income households] you laid out in the document, I believe this to be the best option at the present time. I am humbled that THA's mission statement is to serve the neediest individuals, but I think pursuing this mission is an ideal that cannot be obtained at this time. I know it is difficult to make a decision that seems so against THA's mission statement, but allow me to offer my perspective—a perspective which you may not have considered.</p> <p>“When I am working with homeless individuals one-on-one, I have noticed a troubling situation continuously occurring. People who are on the verge of homelessness, or have less need than other individuals, are not getting their needs met because they are not the 'target population'. I can refer them to resources which may help, but these resources are generally, like THA, focused on the neediest individuals. As such, there is an overwhelming amount of neglect for the at-risk population, who eventually become the most at risk population. Typically, months go by and they will seek out our services again, now being in a dire situation like many of the homeless individuals we serve. I think it is worth considering that all of the neediest individuals once started from a place of less need.</p> <p>Why I am ultimately encouraging you to proceed with the second option, is for the prevention of homeless situations worsening. It is far easier to help these individuals when they are still in a stable environment, or at least have some sort of stability (whether it be work, home, etc.)—not to mention they have yet to be betrayed by the system. In my opinion, you would still be keeping in accordance with your mission statement, but are taking more of a preventive role, which I believe in time, will show a greater efficacy in combatting Tacoma's homeless situation.</p> <p>Touching upon the other handout we received, I think the burden of rent should fall on both THA and the individual receiving those services. To</p>	<p>(Michael Mirra's Response)</p> <p>1. I readily see and appreciate the benefit you describe in redirecting dollars to the higher income families in need as a way to prevent their descent into crisis, and thereby saving money in the long term by the lesser cost of prevention. I believe you are right to note that the risk of homelessness can extend pretty far upward in the income ranges. However, we do not know of a way to determine which of such families would become homeless without assistance and which would not. That is hard to determine even with the lower income families. It would be harder still with the higher income families. One way we try to make our dollars relevant to such families at risk might be through the money we give to the county's Rapid Rehousing Program, and its diversion efforts. The main way we do this, however, is through our mainline programs of hard units and vouchers which serves families well before they become homeless and keeps them stable.</p> <p>2. I very much like your ethic that families need to share the burden of their own assistance. I think the fixed subsidy we implemented for the HOP program does that. It has the benefit you describe. It also, by costing us less, allows us to serve 20% more households. The 5 year time limit serves a similar purpose. It gives people a reason to strive. It also allows us to serve more people by giving them a turn.</p>

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
	<p>clarify, I am not advocating a 50/50 split, but rather, that the person being given assistance should work towards self-sufficiency and empower themselves. I believe they should be expected to pay what they can—what is deemed 'reasonable' by whatever standards that are created—so they have a sense of ownership of their life and well-being.</p> <p>I have recently become certified as a peer counselor, and our goal is to empower the people we serve to reach their full potential. A great way we achieve this is by having our clients identify attributes about themselves, and how those attributes can positively or negatively impact their environment and life. "The burden of life" if you will, is placed upon the client. A mantra which helps me remember this philosophy is: "I will do nothing for you, but I will help you with everything". I think if THA adopts that mantra, it would be beneficial to your organization, as well as your clients.</p> <p>I hope this information is useful to you. If you have any questions, need to clarify anything I spoke of, or want to talk to me, please use my contact information below, and I will be more than happy to do what I can to help THA create a better community. Additionally, thank you for being open to my feedback, it means a lot to me that I work in a field where my opinion is both valued and seen as necessary. Whether or not my perspective can be utilized, I am appreciative you sought my opinion.</p>	

PUBLIC CONSULTATION: THA's Utilization Rate & Changes to the HOP

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
United Way of Pierce County	<p>THA consulted with Corey Mosesly. He is the Manager of Family Stability Initiatives for United Way of Pierce County. He has led THA through the planning for the Center for Strong Families that THA will host. Corey has studied and thought extensively about what it takes to help poor families prosper. He is very familiar with THA and its work. Over a 2-1/2 hour discussion about that work, covering many topics, Corey offered the following views in response to my questions:</p> <p>THA should target a utilization rate of 95%. He did not favor any of the alternatives: reducing the value of the vouchers further, redirecting them to higher income families or redirecting spending from other services and capacities.</p> <p>He did not see THA being able to sustain even 95% in Tacoma's rental market unless we retained the fixed subsidy and extended it to the Section 8 legal population. He likes that a fixed subsidy removes the disincentive to work.</p> <p>He favored the 5 year time limit. He likes that a time limit gives families another reason to increase their earned income. He also favors it because it gives other people a turn at the assistance.</p> <p>He favored conditioning assistance on a family's engagement with the Centers for Strong Families. He thinks this would require careful training of staff to make that engagement a positive experience for the families. He thinks that is possible. Corey also thinks it is possible to arrangement this such that THA need only consult the Centers for a defensible yes or no answer on whether a family is fulfilling such a requirement.</p> <p>Corey recounted how when he was in graduate school at Evergreen several years ago he did a research paper that had him survey HOP families. He will send me a copy. He remembered that the respondents to the survey favored the 5 year time limit.</p>	

PUBLIC CONSULTATION: THA's Utilization Rate & Changes to the HOP

February 22, 2018

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
The REACH Center	<p>Nick Bayard, Director of the REACH Center provided these comments via email following the GTCF convening.</p> <p>Hi Michael and Jeff,</p> <p>I wanted to boil down the essence of what I was trying to say yesterday morning. The most important influence on client behavior in our program has been the way we communicate about timelines. Communicating that we could provide two years of rental subsidy led to many client failures because it did not incentivize a rapid course of action toward employment and education. The end of two years would sneak up on people. When we started setting a three-month timeline for a review and mobilizing around job placement goals aimed at supporting successful graduation after three months, it sparked greater action on finding gainful full-time employment. We could still extend program time, but overall this changed the behavior dynamics in our program.</p> <p>Given that experience, and in a world of options ranging from bad to worse, it seems to me that more households served with shorter timelines and clear communication about timelines would be a smart choice. If there are ways to emphasize very short-term emergency assistance (3-6 months) for folks who are work-ready, I can see those being effective, too.</p>	
Tacoma News Tribune (TNT)	<p>Matt Driscoll from the TNT interviewed THA's Executive Director and staff. TNT published an article detailing the challenges THA faces. "This is not sustainable. With skyrocketing rents, Tacoma Housing Authority is forced to adjust"</p> <p>http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article199406144.html</p>	
City of Tacoma – City Council	<p>THA presented to the Mayor and City Council on 2/20/2018. The Mayor offered a letter of support.</p>	

PUBLIC CONSULTATION: THA's Utilization Rate & Changes to the HOP

February 22, 2018

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Organization(s)	Questions / Comments	THA Response
<p>Tacoma's Congressional Delegation Offices: Senator Patty Murray</p> <p>Senator Maria Cantwell</p> <p>Congressman Derek Kilmer</p> <p>Congressman Denny Heck</p> <p>Congressman Adam Smith: Offices of</p>	<p>THA consulted with the staff of all its Congressional delegation. We explained the choices we faced including the difficulty in meeting HUD's baseline number of families served when rent costs are rising and THA's funding remains flat. We outlined the choices pertaining to the fixed subsidy and the 5 year time limit.</p> <p>All the offices expressed confidence in THA and support. They invited THA to let them know if we needed assistance in explaining these choices to HUD.</p>	
HUD Staff	THA's executive director consulted informally with HUD senior staff about the challenge of meeting HUD's baseline with Tacoma's rising rental market and with flat funding. He expressed his concern that failing to hit that baseline would get THA into difficulty with HUD. HUD staff was reassuring. They advised THA to mainly to work with HUD staff and to show our thought process and analysis.	
HUD – Regional Director Jeff McMorris	THA's executive and deputy executive director fully briefed the HUD Regional Director about the hard choices facing THA concerning the utilization rate and changes to the rental assistance programs.	
Hilltop Business Association	THA presented to 16 people on 2/1/2018.	
Tacoma Pierce County Black Collective	THA presented to the group on 11/25/2017.	
Human Services Coalition	TBD – Consultation to be scheduled.	

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

THA received letters of support following the public consultation process. The letters are included on the following pages.

- **City of Tacoma**
- **Greater Tacoma Community Foundation**
- **Pierce County Executive**
- **Shared Housing Services**
- **Sound Outreach**
- **Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium**
- **The Bamford Foundation**
- **United Way of Pierce County**
- **University of Washington Tacoma**



City of Tacoma

Mayor Victoria R. Woodards

February 21, 2018

Mr. Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael:

Thank you for presenting to the City Council in its February 20, 2018 Study Session. That presentation along with our other discussions has helped the City understand the difficult choices that the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) faces. The City is well aware of our rising rental market. Its effects show in the public health emergency that the City declared because of the rising number of homeless persons. The effects show in the increasing rent burden placed on households and on those organizations that attempt to serve them with rental assistance. The City appreciates all of THA's efforts to address this problem.

The City understands THA's dilemma. It cannot continue to serve the same number of households at the increasing costs necessary to keep up with our rental market when your federal funding remains flat. We also understand the related choices THA faces to design its programs to account for these increasing costs but also to consider the many more people who are waiting a turn to receive your assistance. These present hard choices.

We appreciate THA's efforts to consult with a wide array of community voices to inform its choices. Of the choices that we understand THA faces we support the following:

1. THA should acknowledge that what our rental market is telling us: that THA cannot adequately serve the same number of families without additional funding. I understand this number to be a HUD assigned baseline. But THA should budget to a lower number. Your proposal to target 95% of the HUD baseline seems reasonable. I urge you to choose a number or consider other program changes that would make the new baseline reasonably stable in a way that does not require THA periodically to terminate households from its programs as our rental market continues to rise.

The City does not favor the alternatives you mentioned. It does not favor redirecting dollars from other THA's programs, such as its real estate development work, its Education Project, or its supportive services. All of these

are critical. It does not favor weakening THA's administrative capacity to manage its programs. We have full confidence that the money THA spends on its administrative capacity is both necessary and efficient. We also realize that any such redirection to these alternatives would only be a temporary solution in the face of continuing rental increases. Such a temporary solution is not worth weakening THA's other programs or its administrative capacity.

2. To make this 95% target sustainable, we recommend that THA continue with its fixed subsidy for HOP participants and that it move the legacy Section 8 Voucher population to fixed subsidies. This would serve two purposes. First, since the flat subsidy is a lower subsidy it will allow THA to serve more families. This appears to be a good companion step to the lowered baseline to make that lowered baseline more stable and sustainable. Second, we favor the fixed subsidy for the incentive it offers to a family to increase its earned income.
3. The City supports THA in its enforcement of the current 5-year time limit for work-able households. This time limit gives those households another incentive to increase their earned income. Importantly, it also gives other households a turn at receiving the assistance. For the same reason, we support transitioning the work-able households on the legacy Section 8 program to the 5-year time limit.

The City of Tacoma has full confidence in THA's work and in its judgment as it faces the difficult choices in this hard rental market. THA has the City's full support.

Cordially,



Victoria R. Woodards
Mayor



RECEIVED

OCT 30 2017

Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
www.tacomahousing.org

City of Tacoma

Mayor Marilyn Strickland

October 23, 2017

Mr. Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Mr. Mirra,

I am pleased to extend this letter of support for the New Directions Crisis Residential Center planned for the Salishan neighborhood. The center will serve one of the most vulnerable populations in Tacoma, youth aged 12 to 17 years old, who are experiencing crisis or conflicts in their home environment or have no place to stay. Family crisis is one of the top contributing factors to homelessness in Pierce County, and six percent of our homeless population is unaccompanied youth and young adults. The time is now to expand youth crisis services in our community so we can help those young people most at risk.

The planned New Directions Crisis Residential Center will be a modern, 12-bed facility operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide shelter, meals, case management, counseling, education assistance, transportation, service referrals and other activities for up to 15 days. Staff will work with the youth toward family reconciliation or transfer to safe, stable housing. This facility provides an innovative service model that will be a tremendous benefit to our community.

I am proud of the outstanding work of the Tacoma Housing Authority throughout the city, but especially for the Salishan neighborhood. This housing development on the east side of Tacoma is a shining example of top quality housing that has attracted families with a wide range of incomes. This partnership between THA, the City of Tacoma and Pierce County, with support from Housing and Urban Development for the new crisis center will add a valuable service in the Salishan community that will complement the existing programs.

I look forward to further collaboration with THA and to the opening of the New Directions Crisis Residential Center.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Strickland
Mayor, City of Tacoma



621 Tacoma Ave. S. #313
Tacoma, WA 98402
253-627-0949

January 30, 2018

mmirra@tacomahousing.org

Michael Mirra
Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

RE: THA's Budget and Policy Choices

Dear Michael:

Thank you for your presentation on January 25th to the Board of the Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium. We understand the difficult choices that THA faces in trying to manage Tacoma's increasing rental market with flat funding. We also understand that the situation and the available choices challenge THA to find a reasonable balance among competing interests and values.

I write to express the Board's preference and support for some of the choices you explained. In stating our preferences, we also wish to express our confidence in THA and its Board of Commissioners. We are confident that you know this community well. We appreciate your focus on the needs of not only the people you serve but the needs of the much greater number you are not able to serve. Consortium members see those people every day in our own work. We are also confident in the competence and efficiency of your administration. But most importantly, we are confident in THA's commitment to its social justice mission.

With that confidence, we favor the following approaches for THA:

- We favor THA's adoption of a 95% utilization rate. We do not support trying to serve more families by further lowering the value of your rental subsidy, redirecting your assistance to higher income families, or redirecting dollars from your other valuable programs. We also have confidence that THA is prudent and efficient in its administration.
- We support THA continuing with its fixed subsidy of its Housing Opportunity Program but only for work-able households. We favor the fixed subsidy because, while it offers a somewhat lower subsidy, doing this allows THA to serve more families. We think of this as spreading the limited dollars more widely while still providing a valuable rental assistance. We also like how a fixed subsidy removes the disincentive to work. We do favor switching elderly and disabled households back to the income based rent because those households cannot work.

- We support THA's continuing with its 5 year time limits for work-able households. We recognize that most households may not be ready to return to the unsubsidized rental market. But a 5-year time limit serves the two purposes THA sought to serve when it instituted them: The 5-year limit gives these families an incentive to increase their earned income. The main value, however, that we see in a 5-year time limit is that it gives other families a turn to receive your assistance. That is only fair.

- We ask THA to examine how it can provide more effective supportive services to these families to help them increase their earned income. You may wish to require them to engage in such services.

- We also favor THA shifting the households on the old Section 8 Voucher program to your HOP program. The main value for doing this is that it will increase the number of families THA can serve.

We understand that these choices are difficult. We very much appreciate that you would share the burden of the choice with us by asking for our advice. If you need further help explaining your choices to HUD or to others, please call on us.

Respectfully,

TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING
CONSORTIUM



LUA PRITCHARD
Board Chair

The Bamford Foundation

February 21, 2018

Attn: Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael,

Thank you for sharing with community members the situation that Tacoma Housing Authority is facing that requires you to make a difficult decision regarding the inequity between the value of rental housing vouchers and the rising number of people needing rental assistance. A number of systemic issues are contributing to an environment that negatively impacts a great number of people living in our city, and we appreciate THA reaching out to the larger community to seek input on a decision that THA is taking very seriously.

On behalf of the Bamford Foundation, a family foundation who lends support to local organizations – including Tacoma Housing Authority education programs - and initiatives who use the power of education to help individuals and families transform their lives and contribute to the quality of life in Tacoma, I am writing to offer our support to Tacoma Housing Authority in making the decision they feel best serves the needs of our community, knowing that they are truly dedicated to supporting individuals, families and communities impacted by poverty in our city. The proposed option to pursue a 95% utilization rate in order to maintain a balanced budget for the organization is reasonable and is based on thoughtful planning.

It is our hope that despite the very challenging conditions of our current housing and rental market, that Tacoma Housing Authority and all of its community partners can continue to build support for sustainable and effective change and access to high quality housing, education and living wage employment for people and families in our community.

Thank you,

Holly Bamford Hunt
Bamford Foundation

The purpose of the Bamford Foundation is to improve the quality of life of individuals and to strengthen their communities, primarily in Tacoma, Washington and the South Puget Sound area of the Pacific Northwest.

P.O. Box 2274, Tacoma WA 98401-2274 253-620-4743 info@bamfordfoundation.org

Michael Mirra
Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405



Dear Michael:

Thank you for providing a comprehensive and fact-filled overview of Tacoma Housing Authority's upcoming decision regarding the inequity between the value of rental vouchers and the rising numbers of people needing housing assistance. We appreciate your commitment to including community voice and input.

Greater Tacoma Community Foundation supports THA in making the decision that best serves our community. We understand the challenges facing THA are complex. Your proposal to pursue a 95% utilization rate for the purposes of devising a balanced budget is reasonable and thoughtful.

Sincerely,

Kathi Littmann
President & CEO
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation



Pierce County

Office of the County Executive

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 737
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2100

(253) 798-7477 • FAX (253) 798-6628
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CONNIE LADENBURG

County Council
(253) 798-7590
Connie.Ladenburg@co.pierce.wa.us

February 26, 2018

Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael:

We appreciate the invitation to hear the presentation on the funding situation the Tacoma Housing Authority is facing. It was a comprehensive and fact-filled overview of Tacoma Housing Authority's upcoming decision regarding the inequity between the value of rental vouchers and the rising numbers of people needing housing assistance. We appreciate your commitment to including community voice and input.

As the presentation pointed out, the choices are difficult. THA can reduce the value of the rent subsidy further, they can redirect voucher to higher income households who cost less to serve, they can redirect money from other programs to pay for rental assistance (reduce development projects, supportive services, and education efforts), or they can maintain rental subsidy levels but serve fewer households. All of these will result in harm to those in need and undoubtedly will result in more families moving into homelessness.

This is a difficult decision for all involved. There is much need in our community and limited resources. We appreciate that THA is attempting to make a decision that best serves our community. We support the proposal to pursue a 95% utilization rate for the purposes of devising a balanced budget as reasonable and thoughtful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Dammeier".

Bruce F. Dammeier,
Pierce County Executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Connie Ladenburg".

Connie Ladenburg, Council Member
Chair of Select Committee on Human Services



Connecting people and fostering independence through innovative and affordable housing, because everyone needs a place to call home.

February 12, 2018

Michael Mirra, Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South 'L' Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael:

Thank you, to you and your team, for the detailed presentation at the Tacoma/Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium's Board meeting on January 25th, 2018. The materials you provided were comprehensive, inclusive and presented in a manner that allowed us to fully comprehend what the Tacoma Housing Authority has been accomplishing, the current environment of the rental and housing market, and the challenges facing your organization. The Tacoma Housing Authority staff members who worked on gathering the extensive data and statistics for this packet should be commended for their hard work and attention to detail.

Michael, thank you for patiently taking us through the data and the scenarios facing the Tacoma Housing Authority and for providing clarification for any questions that were asked. As a small nonprofit serving low-income clients experiencing homelessness in Tacoma and Greater Pierce County, all of us at Shared Housing Services recognizes an increasing inequity between median household income and current rental prices. Adding in historically low inventories of available rental units only compounds the situation of the shrinking availability of affordable housing in our area.

This letter is to show support for the Tacoma Housing Authority's proposal to adopt a 95% utilization rate as a plan towards attaining a balanced budget. We feel the other avenues discussed at the meeting such as redirecting dollars from other programs and resources is unwise and unsustainable and will only weaken the Tacoma Housing Authority's ability to serve community members needing affordable housing in the future. We also support continuing the current 5-year time limit for workable households as well as for transitioning workable households currently receiving Section 8 vouchers to the Housing Opportunity Program's fixed-subsidy with a 5-year time limit.

Please let your Board of Commissioners know our deep level of appreciation for the commitment, innovation, and inclusiveness of community partners by the Tacoma Housing Authority in this process as well as in the organization's service to low-income households in our community.

Sincerely,

Mark Merrill
Executive Director



Michael Mirra
Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael:

Your February 14 presentation at the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation struck feels all too familiar. Rising rents and stagnant wages is the key challenge for our team at Sound Outreach, but framed in terms of flat funding from HUD for THA clients puts it into perspective in terms of scale, and how it affects our low income neighbors.

Sound Outreach provides high-quality financial counseling, employment coaching to high-wage employment pathways. We maintain a strong partnership with a CDFI credit union to connect our program participants to beneficial financial products that make it less expensive to be poor. We see our efforts to align well with housing support, and as such are proud to be strengthening our partnership with THA. We are working closely to help recipients of its rental assistance identify career pathways and find employment so that they are ready when their assistance ends after 5 years.

I really appreciate the effort THA is taking to consult widely in the community and to seek advice on the choices it faces. The scope of your consultation was evident in the meeting. Present were the Tacoma Mayor, the Pierce County Executive, a Pierce County Councilmember, senior directors and managers of the area's major service providers, philanthropic organizations, educational institutions, and other leading voices. We also appreciate the close study THA has made of the many factors in this complicated situation and your willingness to open up and share your approach and thinking. It was illuminating to sit with you and Aley personally to go through the challenges you are facing.

Of the choices that we understand THA faces we support the following:

1. THA should plan on serving 95% of its baseline number of households. We do not favor redirecting dollars from other vital purposes to try and increase this number. As we see it, any increase from such a redirection would only be temporary until the rising rental market overwhelmed it. Such a temporary increase is not worth weakening THA's other services or capacities. We think this 95% target is a reasonable acknowledgement of your basic problem: THA cannot serve the same number of families at increasing cost with flat funding.
2. We think the next question is how THA can maintain even the 95% utilization level. To allow for this THA should continue with its fixed subsidy for HOP participants and should transition the legacy Section 8 Voucher population to fixed subsidies. We support this for two main reasons. First, the flat subsidy is a lower subsidy and will allow THA to serve more families. This seems a necessary step if THA is to have a plausible chance to maintain the 95% utilization level. Second, we favor the fixed

subsidy because it provides an incentive to a family to increase its earned income. It does this by removing the disincentive built into the income based subsidy of the regular Section 8 program.

At the same time, we ask THA to carefully consider keeping elderly and disabled persons on the income based subsidy or at least a fixed subsidy level that recognizes that they will not be able to increase their earned income.

3. We support THA enforcing its current 5-year time limit for work-able households. This time limit gives those households another incentive to increase their earned income. It also gives other households a turn at receiving the assistance. For the same reason, we support transitioning the work-able households on the legacy Section 8 program to the 5-year time limit. Sound Outreach is ready to assist with employment coaching and Financial Counseling to help as many of these clients to be able to succeed beyond the life-span of their vouchers.

It is clear THA enjoys widespread community support. It has a track record of innovative approaches to disrupting poverty and must maintain funding for these approaches. It is lean and effective in its use of limited resources and there is pretty clearly nowhere else to cut. We have confidence in its expertise and values, and desire that THA always serve the client demographic that aligns with your mission.

These are difficult choices facing the THA Board. Please let your Commissioners know that THA has a strong partner in Sound Outreach, and that we are committed to seeing your clients grow their financial assets to move from stability to prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Klein", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Jeff Klein, Executive Director



RECEIVED

February 22, 2018

FEB 26 2018

Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
www.tacomahousing.org

Michael Mirra
Executive Director
Tacoma Housing Authority
902 South L Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

Dear Michael:

Thank you for providing such a thoughtful, clear, and comprehensive overview of Tacoma Housing Authority's upcoming decision regarding the inequity between the value of rental vouchers and the rising numbers of people needing housing assistance. I think the entire audience in attendance was sympathetic to the tough choices that lie before you and your agency. We, as a community, are firmly behind your thinking and possible strategies moving forward. I wanted to document my personal support for your work in our community and ensure you that UW Tacoma will also be pleased to continue to partner with you in this important effort. We appreciate your willingness to involve the community by gathering input for these important decision points approaching.

The proposal you outlined that would pursue a 95% utilization rate for the purposes of balancing the annual budget seemed both reasonable and thoughtful.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Pagano
Chancellor

Arlington Drive Consultation Notes

Eastside Residents and Community Groups

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Fab-5
Contact Name	Kenji Stoll
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Chair of Peace & Justice Ministry
Date Met	July 3, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	No
Population Served	Youth
MMC Staff Name	
City	Tacoma, Washington
Interest in further participation	Yes – Assistance in serving as a bridge between arts community in Tacoma and homeless youth
Organization Notes:	<p>Fab-5 created the L.I.F.E. program — an intensive series of urban arts workshops designed to allow youth to develop and explore their unique voices through a variety of different mediums via music (DJ-ing/music production) movement (breakdancing) and visual arts (legal graffiti art) workshops.</p> <p>Working on community engagement project through arts with youth for the new Eastside Community Center.</p>
Programming/Events/Offerings/Initiatives related to youth	

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- Youth homelessness in Tacoma is a longstanding issue
- The city is late in addressing youth homelessness
- Couch surfing is not counted as homelessness any more

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- A lot of creative energy on the East Side
- The East Side is the most diverse community in the city

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- Little support for the creative energy. People are mostly doing things on their own without any resources to do so.
- More access to food/grocery store.

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That the resources that youth need will be there
- That this place will not fall down and be successful
- That the leader will be receptive to change
- That the community will be receptive to the project
- Culturally sensitive activation
- POC representing and engaging communities

What are some concerns about this project:

- Poor public transportation in the area.
- How will transportation affect youth ability to get jobs etc?
- 7-11 the only option for kinds of food that youth eat

What are some programs you believe youth could benefit from?

- Job development
- Mental health support
- Positive social relationship support
- Creative expression
- Library

Interest in being part of the project:

- "This is the first time our voice is being solicited with a project."
- Our input has not been sought in the past

What does THA need to consider?

- Cultural relevancy
- Amenities do not equate to "community owned."
- Show up as partners and not representatives of the power structure
- Regulations on housing are too restrictive: Guests...smoking...etc
- Listen, be engaged and interested in learning
- People are perceptive about lip service
- Be mindful about top-down approach

What should Tacoma Housing Authority's top priority when implementing this project?

- More "authentic" outreach to young artists should happen
-

- In the past organizations have solicited “community voice” only to go off and do what they intend to do anyway.
- Work to eliminate stigma by not isolating youth

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Available to support youth

Recommendations for THA:

- Discontinue cookie-cutter programs
- Community engagement team needs to ensure that community voice is present
- For community meetings, consider reducing barriers in ways such as providing transportation
- People who feel valued will be more engaged.
- Let people know that their time is valued
- Solicit approval: do not use people’s ideas without their consent
- Coffee shop feels repetitive and cookie-cutter (Kids do not really drink coffee)
- Is the coffee shop more about income generation than engagement?
- Activate space for external service providers
- Focus on integrity of work and not just checking boxes
- Translation services during meetings
- Signage at campus should be in different languages
- Consider eco art

Concerns about the project:

- Community inclusion
- Attentiveness to needs of youth
- Are undocumented youth being provided equal opportunities?

Recommendations for interviews:

- Bethlehem Church Boys & Girls
- El Camino
- Stand for Children

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name N/A
Contact Name Kristy J.
Contact Position E.S. Resident

Staff Conducting Interview Nissana
Date Met 7/24/2017

Staff/Youth Present N/A
Population Served N/A

City E.S Tacoma

Interest in further participation Would like to learn more about the project as it gets implemented

Organization Notes: N/A

Programming/Events/Offerings/ N/A

Themes and Takeaways

- Teacher at Northeast Tacoma
- Eastside resident for several years.
- Resources – need more information

Areas of Concern

- Conflict-safety for kids in the area, making sure the environment remains safe, elementary schools close by; kids approached by homeless youth
 - Marijuana – location of Arlington, access to drugs
- Has kids and it is important that this campus is safe
- Community's response – not many people have heard of it, plans are always in communities with minorities, example of shelter for sex offenders, no information for the community, decisions are being made without community's input.
- Business community's response – not sure

What do you know about homelessness in Tacoma?

- Don't really see it too much but know it's a problem
- Church – hosting families for a week and they move, with children

ES neighborhood – perceptions

- Change – poverty, many living in poverty; getting more people more aware of what's going on in the community
- Bright spots – people generally know their neighbors, sense of community, could be better.

Challenges to be considered

- Need to that it is safe for people that being served and surrounding folks
- That this campus must be safe
- What makes it safe – must be staffed adequately and security, knowing who should be there and who shouldn't

Hopes

- To have faith based orgs to have access to provide services
- Youth have access to education and opportunities to get job skills

How should THA involve the community?

- Get big orgs and businesses in there to donate their services and products
 - Ex: Salon or barbershop to offer free haircuts

How to be involved

- Once it is established, volunteer time – teaching, music

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	First Creek Neighbors Group
Contact Name	Stephanie Smith
Contact Position	President/organizer of the First Creek Neighbors
Staff Conducting Briefing	Brian Scott, Kathy McCormick, Gabriel Silberblatt
Date Met	11/1/17
Staff/Youth Present	N/A
Population Served	Neighborhood residents (outside Salishan)
City	Tacoma

Themes and Takeaways

Kathy and Brian provided an overview of the Arlington campus plans and talked about the populations to be served on the site.

Approximately 15 neighborhood residents listened to the presentation.

Brian facilitated a conversation revolving around residents' questions, fears, and hopes for the Arlington campus.

Questions

- How long will a typical youth stay at the CRC? Versus at the apartment units?
- Where are kids coming from? Only Tacoma or County-wide?
- What are the screening requirements for these youth?
- Will the rental housing units be furnished?

Fears

- Some concern that this campus will be bad for the First Creek neighborhood and Eastside's reputation within the City.
- One individual expressed concern about criminal behavior on this campus.
- Several participants fear that the campus will get a bad reputation because of corrupting outside influences that will be drawn to the populations being served.

- One resident mentioned that there are already some people living informally on the site and worried that this will continue

Hopes

- Several residents noted that Arlington seems like a unique opportunity to get kids “out of the pipeline” on the way toward homelessness. Seems to be addressing a root cause of adult homelessness.
- Residents agreed that it would be critical for THA/CYS to be providing job training and GED certificate counseling on site so that these young people can become more self-sufficient.
- Several members voiced the hope that Arlington residents find some way to utilize the Portland Ave Community Center, which is just down the road and could use more community involvement.

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	n/a
Contact Name	Taiana T.
Contact Position	E.S Resident
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	7/30/17
Staff/Youth Present	n/a
Population Served	ES Tacoma Residents
City	E.S Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes, wants to volunteer on campus
Organization Notes:	n/a
Programming/Events/Offerings/	n/a

Themes and Takeaways

Project Awareness

- Never heard of this project before but excited to hear more

Expectations

- Keep programs going
- That we continue to use the state's (THA) money and do good for our kids. "Kids are the future of our country." (Resident)
- For community groups to mobilize and come together around community issues. Cultural groups are too isolated and tend to come together around their own issues. Need to step out of their own community

Resources To Bring To Project

- Will do anything to help with the project as a volunteer

Areas of Conflict

- People in the neighborhood might not like the idea

Knowledge and Perceptions of Homelessness In Tacoma

- “bad”, see teenagers walking near Emerald Queen Casino, providing them with resources is a good start
- See homeless students at school she volunteers at; students get angry and it isn’t their fault; kids are supposed to be happy

Bright Spots of the Eastside

- The casino bringing people to the area
- New Salishan development and the beautiful buildings; now neat
- Was part of a walking tour with another community leader and see the difference from what it was to what it is now

Challenges of the Eastside

- Want a new grocery store
- Families need variety of food options; the one across from Arlington is good but need a regular store

Implementation Considerations

- Open campus to other community groups and community kids such as have programming that includes high school kids in the area; don’t make Arlington too special and exclusive to specific youth if it is intended to be a community space for all
- Reach out to all churches and faith based convening spaces because that is where you’ll reach different cultural groups

Services, Resources, Activities to Provide

- Church service should take place there
- Sports activities, tutoring
- Different companies engaging with the youth and the mission i.e, Safeway Store
- College students engaging with youth through programming and tutoring

Hopes

- That it will work for ALL community members, that we all support and are proud of this project
- That THA will continue to reach out to churches to get them involved with the community

YMCA Back To School Parade & Resource Fair Summary

Date of Fair: September 5, 2017

Location: First Creek Middle School

BDS/THA Representatives: Nissana Nov & Jackie St. Louis

Visitors to Booth: 39

Why do you love the East Side?

- "It's warm and sunny."
- "The diversity."
- "It's beautiful"
- "It's a nice place."
- "Because we love families."
- "Because you can make friends here."
- "It's like an ordinary neighborhood."
- "It's perfect."

What would you like to see changed about the East Side?

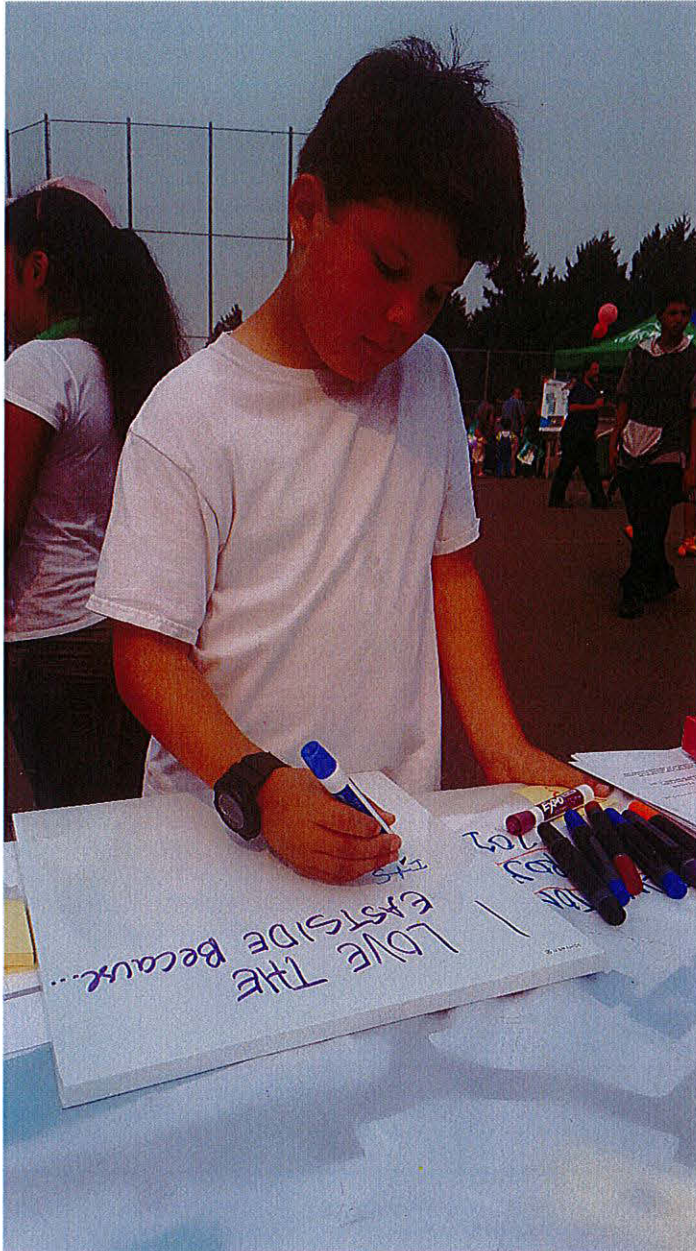
- "It's too ghetto."
- We need a pool, skate park and public football fields

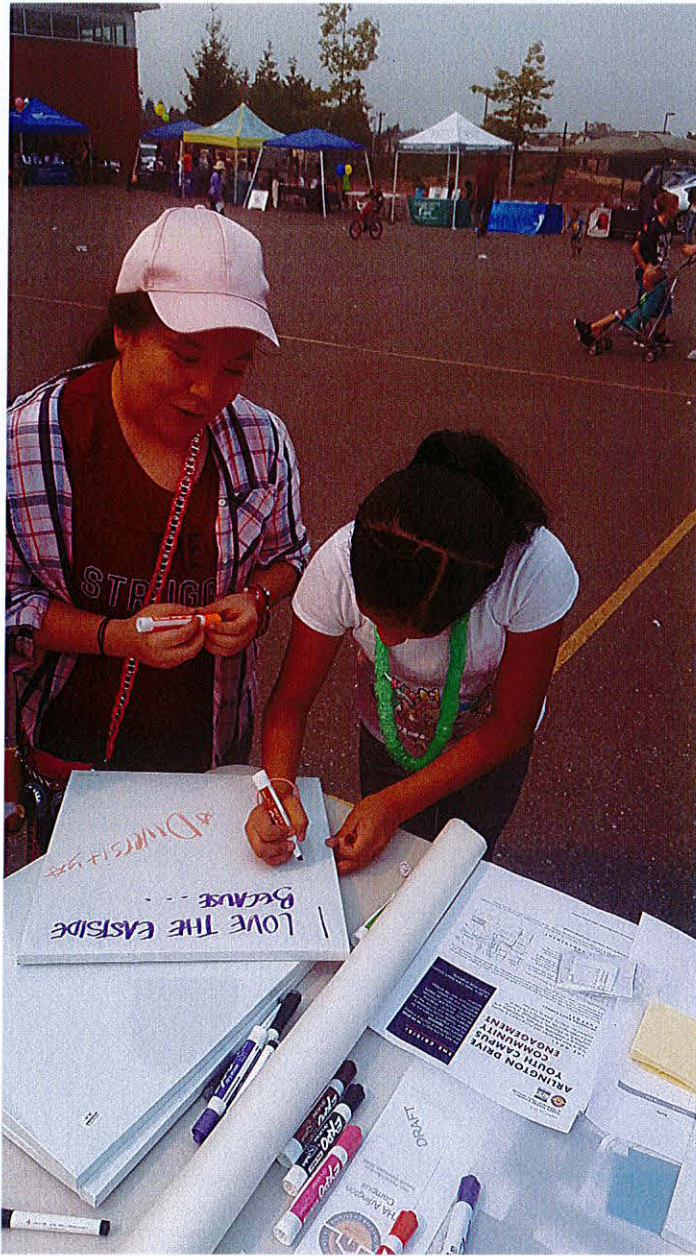
What are your recommendations for the developers of the Arlington Drive Campus?

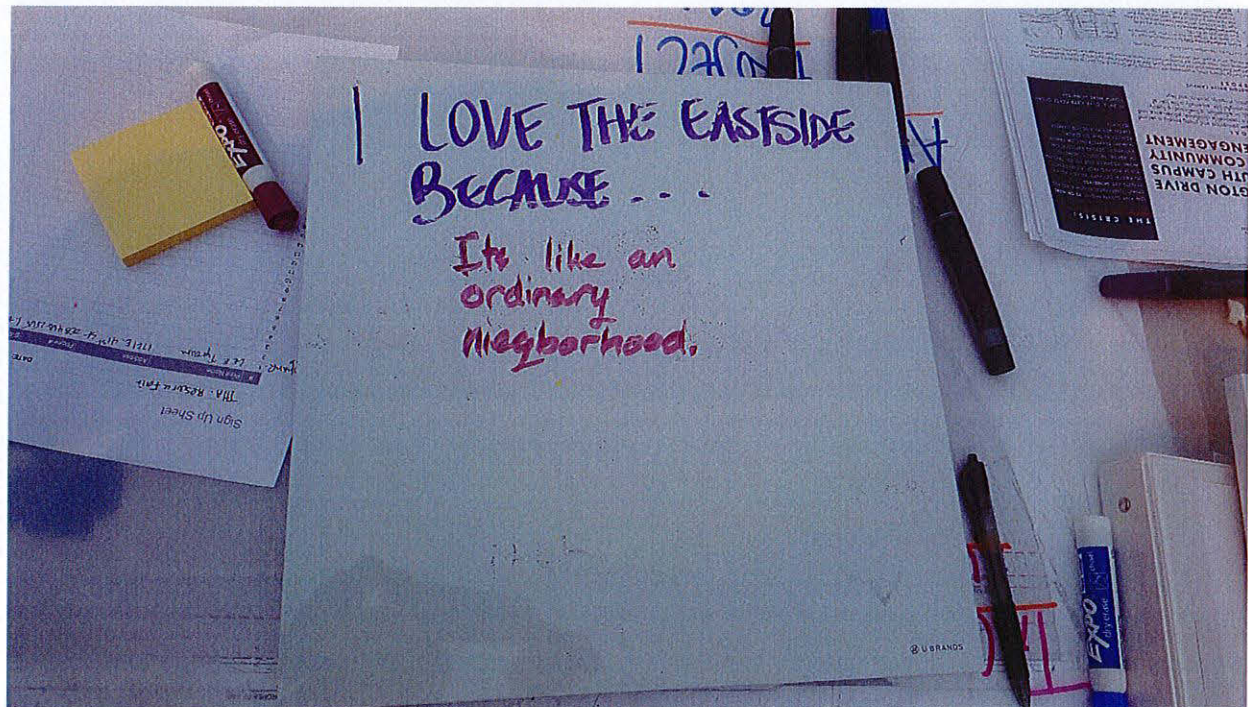
- "It needs to have some kind of gaming tournament."
- Have lots of activities that the community can get involved in

Questions:

- "How can job seekers find out about opportunities at the Arlington Drive campus?"







Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Salishan Association HOA
Contact Name	Kathleen Olsen
Contact Position	Community Relations Manager- Salishan Association
Staff Conducting Interview	Gabriel Silberblatt
Date Met	9/12/17 4-hour drop-in session at the Salishan Association
Staff/Youth Present	N/A
Population Served	Salishan Residents
City	Tacoma

Themes and Takeaways

- A woman (and her husband) who works as a guidance counselor at a local middle school came in to learn more. She was very supportive of the campus concept and asked if I would keep her informed so she can be helpful.
- I had a long, productive conversation with Janet Petersen about the campus and her desire to stay involved in the ongoing engagement.
- Stephanie Smith ([First Creek Neighbors Group](#)) came in to express some of her concerns about the campus, most notably the introduction of what she referred to as "high-density housing" to the neighborhood (referring to the rental housing component), her group has been instrumental in advocating for single family homes in Eastside. After a long conversation about the campus plans, we agreed that she would relay the campus information to her group and collect their questions for us. We agreed that it would be good to have myself and someone from THA eventually come to one of their meetings to have a conversation about these questions so we can make sure that this campus is good for everyone in Eastside. Overall the conversation had a productive and positive tone.

Faith Based Groups

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Eastside Baptist Youth Group
Contact Name	Reverend Arthur Banks
Contact Position	Reverend
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	7/30/17
Staff/Youth Present	Five Youth ages 12-13
Population Served	n/a
City	E.S Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Reverend is the chair on this project
Organization Notes:	n/a
Programming/Events/Offerings/	Community Fairs coming up – will get dates to NN when he gets it from staff

Themes and Takeaways

Knowledge and Perceptions of Homelessness In Tacoma

- Homeless youth experience bullying, hunger, and peer pressure
- Concerned about the health of the homeless youth; them using drugs and joining gangs
- Want to help homeless youth because they experience sadness (youth)
- Homeless youth are not just poor, they need stable place to live and have jobs; not cheap to live (youth)
- Homeless shelters are full, understand the challenges (youth)

Resources To Bring To Project

- Photography, sports, music, and technology skills (youth) - "I want to help homeless youth to follow their dreams". (youth)

Challenges of the Eastside

- Outside of the church, not much engagement; parents won't allow youth to walk around because it isn't safe
- More security because of gang activities
- Need more tutors, tutors available in the community
- ES needs more connections to colleges, more richer communities have this, not like in the E.S.; need to see more colleges recruiting and actively working with young people in the eastside
- More crosswalks; Arlington Drive area crosswalk lines are not visible, youth might get hit by traffic and cars in that area
- Police brutality
- Not safe to walk around streets because it is dangerous especially for black individuals

Project Concerns

- Not allowing animals and pets; homeless have connection to pets, "that's the only thing they have" (youth, age 12, 13)
- Project might make homeless youth continue to be labeled as "homeless"; find ways for them to have an identity and purpose, a sense of importance.. "make them feel equal to everyone else on campus." (youth, age 12)

Implementation Considerations

- Make youth feel comfortable
- Put art on walls and "make it cozy" (youth)
- Some youth might have a disability so make sure to have resources to help

Services, Resources, Activities to Provide

- Help them build a savings account, partner with local banks
- Partner with job recruiters and advocate for homeless youth by securing spots for them (youth)
 - Provide hygiene products and clothes for their jobs
- Garden, bible classes, private spaces, pool, exercise room
- Library rooms
- Sports activities
- Take youth on fieldtrips
- Speaking engagements on campus to inspire youth
- "Wall of Fame" for youth (youth, age 12)
- Classes to teach young people how to pay bills, "I don't know how my parents pay their bills." Homeless youth should have financial literacy skills.
- Partner with Bethlehem, Mt. Calvary, and Boys and Girls Clubs
- Holidays- have churches engage with youth on campus ie. Toy drives, Thanksgiving dinners, etc.
- Gated parks
- Alarm system
- Service animals for homeless youth who are blind
- Healthcare
- Be able to wash their hair, makeovers for jobs
- Bus to take them to find jobs

THA's Top Priorities – Make them feel secure

- Make sure that homeless youth are treated equal to everyone else
- That they have someone they can relate to and be able to go counseling

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Gathering Church
Contact Name	Pastor Anthony Martin
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Pastor
Date Met	August 13, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	n/a
Population Served	Eastside Community
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes ; will attend next advisory board meeting
Organization Notes:	n/a
Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious/Spiritual activities • Advocacy

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- More community education about McKinney Vento is needed
- There is not support in schools for homeless youth
- Youth homelessness is due to poverty. Poverty has to be addressed through empowerment such as creating jobs.

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- The location of the campus is perfect
- A lot of young talent in the community

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- There is still no voice on the East Side
- There are qualified people in the community who need jobs that are not being given an opportunity
- No library in the neighborhood
- Young people not engaging in community organizing and development

- Lack of fresh food options

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That it addresses the greater need

Interest in being part of the project:

- Interest in being part of Advisory Board

What does THA need to consider?

- The campus could potentially ease the burden on schools

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Participation in Advisory Board meetings
- Partnership for food forest (has land available)

Recommendations for THA:

- Seek out voices that represent the people of the community
- Do not approach the project just off data, you need community to reinforce the data and make the project a viable one.
- Each level of the project should include local builders. (These projects have always been outsourced).
- Hiring young people from the community will inspire the youth at the campus
- The campus should be a community hub
- Develop a Food Forest rather than a community garden
- Build permaculture as part of your infrastructure

Concerns about the project:

- That there will not be a sense of community within the campus

Questions:

- Will there be opportunities for employment for community residents?
- How well does THA work with other groups on the East Side?

Recommendations for interviews:

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Christ Embassy Church International
Contact Name	Pastor Mose
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Pastor
Date Met	August 13, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	Yes - Staff
Population Served	Community – Adult & Youth (Majority Pacific Islander – Samoan)
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes
Organization Notes:	

Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding of homeless • Mentorship • Religious activities
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Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- It is a real issue. There is a lot of need.

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- People who want to help
- The community supports one another

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That it really supports homeless youth on the East side

Interest in being part of the project:

- Interest in attending meetings (not an East Side resident)

What does THA need to consider?

- That there are many people homeless along Portland Avenue
- That you have to help the youth to change their thinking

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Willing to offer spiritual activities to youth at campus
- Church doors open to those in need

Recommendations for THA:

- Provide mental health support
- Provide activities that help the youth change their thinking

Concerns about the project:

- That you will neglect the importance of a changing the thinking

Questions:

- Is there need for spiritual support?

Recommendations for interviews:

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Samoan Congregational Christian Church 3717 E. Portland Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404 Asian Cultural Services Center 4851 South Tacoma Way
Contact Name	Rev. Mo'o Ale (253) 282-0984 ulumooale@yahoo.com Lua Pritchard Executive Director lua.apcc@gmail.com (253) 590-7457
Staff Conducting Interview	Michael Mirra
Contact Position	Pastor
Date Met	November 13, 2017
	?
Population Served	Samoan community
MMC Staff Name	I don't know what this field name means,.
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes. 1.
Organization Notes:	I don't know what this means.
Programming/ Events/Offerings/ Initiatives related to youth	See below.

Themes and Takeaways

I met with Rev. Ale at his Church adjacent to Arlington Drive on Portland. I met with him and Lua Pritchard. Lua is the executive director of the Asian Pacific Cultural Services Center. They requested the meeting to discuss whether THA can help the church with its need for overflow parking during events. I explained our plans for the Arlington Drive Youth Campus. I gave them each the one page description of the project and the site map.

1. I explained that THA cannot sell or give any land to the church. I noted that the strip of land next to the church property has city easements that would preclude any building other than the parking we are planning. Rev. Ale explained that they needed only overflow parking on weekends for events. I proposed that we wait until Arlington Drive is built and in use. That will allow us to judge whether we can make its parking next to the church property available to the church on those occasions. Rev. Ale agreed.
2. Rev. Ale and Lui Pritchard expressed strong support for the youth campus. They both are interested in eliciting the support of the church's congregation to support the young people, especially with activities and mentors that would be culturally appropriate.
3. Rev. Ale will be inviting me to address his congregation. I told him I would like that very much.

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Sacred Heart Church
Contact Name	Christian Lopez-Moreno
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Chair of Peace & Justice Ministry
Date Met	July 3, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	No
Population Served	Immigrant Youth & Families (Hispanic)

MMC Staff Name

City Tacoma, Washington

Interest in further participation Yes – Assistance in serving as a bridge between the project and Sacred Heart Church

Organization Notes: Peace & Justice Ministry was born 4 years ago to address policies that can impact immigrant communities, to create awareness about immigrant rights and bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community. Christian is in the process of launching a web-based broadcast in Spanish to teach on various topics including: Hispanic Culture, Politics and general information.

**Programming/
Events/Offerings/
Initiatives related
to youth**

Themes and Takeaways

Youth Experiencing Homelessness
And
Agencies Supporting These Youth

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Mockingbird Society / REACH

Name

Contact Name Karolynn Tom

Contact Position Youth Engagement Specialist

Staff Conducting Interview Nissana

Date Met 8/2/17

Staff/Youth Present Two Youth

Population Served Homeless, Foster Care

City Tacoma

Interest in further participation Karolynn is part of advisory board; youth interested in being at advisory meetings

Organization Notes: Mockingbird Society works with homeless and fostercare youth and provides them with leadership development skills to address policies affecting homeless/foster care population

Programming/Events/Offerings/ n/a

Themes and Takeaways

Project – Have you heard? What is your interest in part of the project?

- Heard from staff and think it is a great idea
- Used computers at center to do some research before interview to prepare for this interview 😊

Homeless – what do you know about it?

- Stopped living with parents at age 12 or 13, smoking weed; hanging with bad people
- Hard to be alone in the streets and confiding in others because they have their own problems
- Would stay with friends
- Don't trust therapists
- Dream is to work for Boeing to be an aviation technician or go into the military (Youth 1)
- Dropped out of school at age 18; getting GED now
- Became homeless when dad lost his home; stayed in car doing drugs and going house to house
- Hard to be a woman in the streets

- Stressful experience being in the streets – Where do I go to sleep? Where to clean clothes? Where to hang out?
- Dream is to business management degree and own bakery, go into interior design or become an astronaut

Perceptions – how others perceive homeless youth?

- As lazy, drug addicts, unwilling people

What resources have helped you become more resilient?

- Mockingbird Society has helped; before joining lack of awareness of resources
- Reach Center makes me feel good, to feel you have self-worth and confidence
- Youth can talk to center staff about positive things; outside in the streets, you don't have much positive conversations or dialogue
- ResCare provided real job and lets you use computer labs to do homework and take classes
- Director and other staff actually care
- Mockingbird helps with transition
- When sharing story, it makes you feel drained and reflect on the bad – center helps because they care about me

Eastside – What are bright spots?

- Good shopping variety

Challenges in the Eastside

- Gang activity, drug deals, easy to get drugs on every block
- Getting jumped walking home
- Not well taken cared of, want to lower crime and violence
- Fix the roads

Concerns – What are your concerns as it pertains to service delivery and youth?

- Project might bring in drugs and promote drug activities; more crime in the community

Resources and activities – what should be available to the youth?

- Swimming pool
- Garden with seating and covered because homeless youth need covered area to draw and journal
- Resource rooms with postings of opportunities
- Physical training rooms or gyms to keep young people healthy
- Track around campus
- People use drugs to lose weight and walking the streets should not be the only way
- Sports teams such as baseball and group intramurals

Priorities – what should be THA's top priority?

- Make decisions knowing that there are many homeless youth

- Make informed decisions about how to manage youth coming in and out of campus

How to Involve Youth

- Join the advisory board meetings or meetings where decisions are made
- Put youth who are interested in construction to work with the developers or construction workers to gain job skills and experience. "Wouldn't it be cool to say that we built that?"

What makes you feel secure?

- People – caring people
- Safe environment
- Being able to speak up
- 1:1 time with adults, adults to reassure that there is stability here

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	REACH
Contact Name	Karolynn Tom
Contact Position	Youth Engagement Specialist
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	8/2/17
Staff/Youth Present	Three Youth
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care, Youth Resident
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Karolynn is part of advisory board; youth interested in being at advisory meetings
Organization Notes:	REACH supports marginalized youth support in a variety of ways and provides GED classes, basic needs, training programs, etc.
Programming/Events/Offerings/	GED Program, Barista Training Program, VADIS, MDC, Team Child, etc.

Themes and Takeaways

Project – Have you heard? What is your interest in part of the project?

- Never heard about it

Homeless – what do you know about it?

- Challenges being homeless but getting support from the center is great
- Received job counselor to help with job training
- Resource such as charging phones has been helpful
- Being homeless – not sure where to go for resources if you have never received support from anywhere else
- Rampant, seems to be more homeless youth ages 16-17 years old
- Need to do more for homeless such as getting housing
- Harder for youth to get jobs; need job fairs targeting homeless youth
- HUB like REACH Center with a variety of resources is a good idea for the campus

Ways to improve service delivery?

- Adults can reach out to more youth and engage them more in programming. Programs signed up for have been shut down due to low attendance. That affects me because I can't take classes because no one shows up.

Perceptions – how others perceive homeless youth?

- As lazy, drug addicts, unwilling people

What resources have helped you become more resilient?

- REACH Center provided me with job training and skills building resources
- Likes the fact that resources are free no charge
- "Center helps me get farther in life. It's a door-opener."
- Getting my GED so I can get a job in electronics because I enjoy fixing things (youth resident from ES)

Challenges in the Eastside

- Not much involvement from youth
- Nothing interests youth for them to be outside in programming

Concerns – What are your concerns as it pertains to service delivery and youth?

- The name Arlington is confusing
- Fear of programs starting and shutting down
- Management and coordination of youth not part of the campus hanging out and using space; how to handle youth from different backgrounds and needs; must check bags and have drug policy because youth takes drugs

Resources and activities – what should be available to the youth?

- More programs like BRIDGE for youth – focused on skills and fun activities
- Music programs
- Filmmaking program (all excited about this)
- Cafeteria or lunchroom to eat – "gathering room" "gathering lounge"
- Sports activities, group activities

Priorities – what should be THA's top priority?

- Make decisions knowing that there are many homeless youth
- Make informed decisions about how to manage youth coming in and out of campus

Hopes

- Successful programs
- That it actually helps youth and is effective
- Community – that people will have a positive response and "remember its prosperity."

How to Involve Youth

- THA should ask for youth input on all aspects

What makes you feel secure?

- Having support
- Having good leaders in organization –that they will lead in the right direction
- Approachable adults

“Excited to see what it turns into”

Youth Focus Group Summary

Organization Name	REACH Center
Contact Name	Karolynn Tom - Karolynn@mockingbirdsociety.org
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Engagement Specialist
Date Met	January 17, 2018
Staff/Youth Present	Youth: 4 Males, 1 Female. 1 Staff Member
Population Served	Youth – Young Adults
Staff Name	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov – BDS Team Kate Smith – SMR Architects
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes – Youth expressed interest in possible work on project. One youth currently works in construction as is a member of a local union.
Organization Notes:	<i>The REACH Center is a one-stop youth service center for young people 16-24 seeking to advance their educational, career, and life goals.</i>
Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Employment • Housing • Advocacy • Counseling

Themes and Takeaways

What did you like about the design

- It feels like the youth are going to be taken care of
- *It has a nice mix of being secluded and being part of community*
- *That it is wheelchair accessible*
- *Large entrances*
- *That the living area is in one section with bedrooms, bathrooms and laundry*
- *Option for single bedrooms*
- *Parking lot with ample spots*
- *Table where everyone can eat as a family*
- *Ability to use outside space*

What are some things that you would recommend?

- Physical activity is necessary for youth to stay out of trouble.
- The color is depressing: brighter colors help with mood
- Use brighter colors inside, such as maroon
- Washington state is already green on the outside, you do not need to use green inside
- Basketball court
- Have a cover for the basketball court
- File cabinet for youth
- A shack in the back to store equipment etc.
- Bulletin boards
- Places to put up pictures and make the space feel like your own
- Group time with staff
- More patio spaces
- Bigger television (than 40")
- Better chairs in lounge areas

What are some things that need to be considered?

- Some youth may want to be alone at times and they need space to be able to do that
- Have floors that are easy to clean
- "Runaway" is usually a cover. Some people run away to get alone time to think. Do not judge these youth by their cover or a label. Most youth do not want to run away. Get to know them for who they are.
- Nobody gets to where they are by themselves
- Staff need to be supportive and have lived experience. The support should not be superficial.

Interest in being part of the project:

- Employment opportunities
- Continue to serve as advisors and strategic resource

Engagement Format

Process:

Co-leadership between community engagement team and youth.

Semi-structured format

Youth allowed autonomy to engage as they felt comfortable

Youth were oriented to the project and had opportunity to interface with and pose questions to the architect.

Clarifying questions were invited throughout the process

Youth were provided gold and silver stars: love and like; and orange stickers which denoted "bright ideas".

Youth placed stickers and stars on printout of plans, indicating what they loved, liked and locations which they had recommendations for.

Group engaged in discussion and arrived at consensus.

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	New Directions Crisis Residential Center
Contact Name	Chuck Taylor
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Executive Director, Community Youth Services
Date Met	August 24, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	Youth & Staff
Population Served	Focus Group – 3 displaced youth
	Youth ages 12-17
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes
Organization Notes:	Serving youth ages 12-17 who are experiencing crisis in the home, displacement, homelessness, family conflict, domestic violence, foster respite, abandonment, and more. Youth may self-refer or may be referred by a Social Worker, social service provider, JR, law enforcement, Youth Advocate, teacher, hospital, or other caring community member.
Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Recreation/Excursions • Counseling

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- A lot of youth are dealing with tough situations

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- Places like New Horizons
- People that genuinely care about youth

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- The YMCA is too expensive
- Not enough being done to address youth homelessness

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That the youth residents will learn skills that they can take with them when they leave
- That the staff will care about the youth and not just about their jobs
- It would be cool if the first thing you saw when you went it was a garden
- That there will be opportunities to give back
- That there will be clothes and shoes for youth
- That there will be job opportunities on campus
- That any youth who may be bullied or abused could report it immediately and be helped

Interest in being part of the project:

- Interested in advocacy opportunities

What does THA need to consider?

- Youth sometimes prefer to talk with someone who is not labelled a counselor

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Would like to get involved in mentoring

Recommendations for THA:

- There should be calming, peaceful paintings on the walls
 - There should be lots of books
 - The youth should have the opportunity to go on outings
 - The residents should form a choir
 - There should be opportunity for art, music and poetry
 - Provide counseling opportunities for youth
 - Have a Mind Your Own Business (MYOB) rule. Youth do not to know about each other's past.
 - Keep younger and older kids in separate area
 - Have a lot of staff and security
 - Staff need to be kind, respectful, helpful and positive
 - Do not use red colors: they can be triggering
 - Touch can also be triggering
 - Do not force residents to do things that they do not want to do. Everything does not have to be mandatory.
 - Cleaning supplies should be supervised. They can be used for negative purposes.
 - Have a walk-in shower for disabled youth
 - Coffee shops can be a challenge because people are so demanding when ordering their coffee.
 - Instead of a coffee shop: Pastry shop/Gift shop
-

Concerns about the project:

- That the staff will treat the youth poorly
- That there will be bullying
- The wrong visitors getting on to the campus

Questions:

- Will pets be allowed?

Recommendations for interviews:

Youth Focus Group Summary

Organization Name	REACH Center
Contact Name	Karolynn Tom - Karolynn@mockingbirdsociety.org
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Engagement Specialist
Date Met	January 17, 2018
Staff/Youth Present	Youth: 4 Males, 1 Female. 1 Staff Member
Population Served	Youth – Young Adults
Staff Name	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov – BDS Team Kate Smith – SMR Architects
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes – Youth expressed interest in possible work on project. One youth currently works in construction as is a member of a local union.
Organization Notes:	<i>The REACH Center is a one-stop youth service center for young people 16-24 seeking to advance their educational, career, and life goals.</i>
Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Employment • Housing • Advocacy • Counseling

Themes and Takeaways

What did you like about the design

- It feels like the youth are going to be taken care of
- *It has a nice mix of being secluded and being part of community*
- *That it is wheelchair accessible*
- *Large entrances*
- *That the living area is in one section with bedrooms, bathrooms and laundry*
- *Option for single bedrooms*
- *Parking lot with ample spots*
- *Table where everyone can eat as a family*
- *Ability to use outside space*

What are some things that you would recommend?

- Physical activity is necessary for youth to stay out of trouble.
- The color is depressing: brighter colors help with mood
- Use brighter colors inside, such as maroon
- Washington state is already green on the outside, you do not need to use green inside
- Basketball court
- Have a cover for the basketball court
- File cabinet for youth
- A shack in the back to store equipment etc.
- Bulletin boards
- Places to put up pictures and make the space feel like your own
- Group time with staff
- More patio spaces
- Bigger television (than 40")
- Better chairs in lounge areas

What are some things that need to be considered?

- Some youth may want to be alone at times and they need space to be able to do that
- Have floors that are easy to clean
- "Runaway" is usually a cover. Some people run away to get alone time to think. Do not judge these youth by their cover or a label. Most youth do not want to run away. Get to know them for who they are.
- Nobody gets to where they are by themselves
- Staff need to be supportive and have lived experience. The support should not be superficial.

Interest in being part of the project:

- Employment opportunities
- Continue to serve as advisors and strategic resource

Engagement Format

Process:

Co-leadership between community engagement team and youth.

Semi-structured format

Youth allowed autonomy to engage as they felt comfortable

Youth were oriented to the project and had opportunity to interface with and pose questions to the architect.

Clarifying questions were invited throughout the process

Youth were provided gold and silver stars: love and like; and orange stickers which denoted "bright ideas".

Youth placed stickers and stars on printout of plans, indicating what they loved, liked and locations which they had recommendations for.

Group engaged in discussion and arrived at consensus.

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Team Child – Youth
Contact Name	Kimberly W.
Contact Position	Attorney
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	8/3/17
Staff/Youth Present	Three Youth
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Kimberly is part of the advisory board; youth wants to engage in project implementation
Organization Notes:	Team Child offers legal support and advocacy services to youth experiencing homelessness and navigating foster care system
Programming/Events/Offerings/	n/a

Themes and Takeaways

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Puyallup Tribe of Indians (Children's Services)
Contact Name	Jill LaPointe, Executive Director/Mandy Morlin CPA Program Manager
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	
Date Met	September 7, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	Yes - Staff
Population Served	Youth (Up to age 18)
MMC Staff Name	
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes
Organization Notes:	

Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve exclusively Puyallup Tribe Children • Primarily work with youth engaged in Foster Care system • Offer support for those struggling to get into foster care or near aging out of foster care • Focus on placement with Tribe members or relatives • Services available from birth to 18th birthday • Tribal Code does not allow children to remain in foster care past the age of 18 • Prepare 17-year-olds for transition to adulthood/aging out of foster care system
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Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- Homelessness and substance use are major issues for Native American youth
- More options are needed

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- Puyallup Tribe is working to serve the people

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- A lack of hang-out paces is a significant issue for those in recovery.
- There need to be more sober meeting spaces for youth
- The East side is changing as more people relocate from the north the cultural makeup of the community is changing.
- Homelessness is increasing as people are buying property and flipping them. A lot of those properties are not being rented.

What are your hopes about this community development?

- The process has been inclusive thus far and should continue in this regard. ("First time our voice has been solicited in this manner.")

Interest in being part of the project:

- Collaboration for shared independent living skills classes

What does THA need to consider?

- That there are many people homeless along Portland Avenue
- That you have to help the youth to change their thinking
- For Native youth, being connected to culture is important
- It is very difficult for Native teens in the CPA program to get placement. They need additional options.
- Native youth are dealing with generational trauma
- **The groundbreaking event should be done in collaboration with the Puyallup Tribe**

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Potentially involving youth committee
- Serve as a liaison to tribal groups that could offer services at equity center

Recommendations for THA:

- Equity center can be a great resource for the community. Consider programming such as vocational prep.
- Provide activities that help the youth change their thinking
- Be attentive to cultural sensitivity: incorporate Native American traditions such as tribal art, language, and water catchment for the community garden.
- Invite tribal groups to get involved
- Incorporate spiritual healing practices: drum group, traditional coastal songs, sweat lodge
- Plant traditional medicinal herbs and plants in community garden
- The coffee shop could be a huge success, but consider that for many people who work in the area, there are few food options. A sandwich shop would attract a lot of customers.
- THA should attend community events and solicit input from tribal community. "I would have never known had I not been contacted directly."

- A FAQ page on the website would be very helpful

Concerns about the project:

- There is a sense that there is little known about the project throughout the community
- That Native youth will be excluded for reasons such as income requirement
- Concern that this will be another project that generates excitement but does not materialize

Questions:

- What will be the length of stay at the CRC?
- Will there be a groundbreaking event and if so, when?
- Will there be income restrictions for residents?

Recommendations for interviews:

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	REACH
Contact Name	Karolynn Tom
Contact Position	Youth Engagement Specialist
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	8/2/17
Staff/Youth Present	Three Youth
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care, Youth Resident
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Karolynn is part of advisory board; youth interested in being at advisory meetings
Organization Notes:	REACH supports marginalized youth support in a variety of ways and provides GED classes, basic needs, training programs, etc.
Programming/Events/Offerings/	GED Program, Barista Training Program, VADIS, MDC, Team Child, etc.

Themes and Takeaways

Project – Have you heard? What is your interest in part of the project?

- Never heard about it

Homeless – what do you know about it?

- Challenges being homeless but getting support from the center is great
- Received job counselor to help with job training
- Resource such as charging phones has been helpful
- Being homeless – not sure where to go for resources if you have never received support from anywhere else
- Rampant, seems to be more homeless youth ages 16-17 years old
- Need to do more for homeless such as getting housing
- Harder for youth to get jobs; need job fairs targeting homeless youth
- HUB like REACH Center with a variety of resources is a good idea for the campus

Ways to improve service delivery?

- Adults can reach out to more youth and engage them more in programming. Programs signed up for have been shut down due to low attendance. That affects me because I can't take classes because no one shows up.

Perceptions – how others perceive homeless youth?

- As lazy, drug addicts, unwilling people

What resources have helped you become more resilient?

- REACH Center provided me with job training and skills building resources
- Likes the fact that resources are free no charge
- "Center helps me get farther in life. It's a door-opener."
- Getting my GED so I can get a job in electronics because I enjoy fixing things (youth resident from ES)

Challenges in the Eastside

- Not much involvement from youth
- Nothing interests youth for them to be outside in programming

Concerns – What are your concerns as it pertains to service delivery and youth?

- The name Arlington is confusing
- Fear of programs starting and shutting down
- Management and coordination of youth not part of the campus hanging out and using space; how to handle youth from different backgrounds and needs; must check bags and have drug policy because youth takes drugs

Resources and activities – what should be available to the youth?

- More programs like BRIDGE for youth – focused on skills and fun activities
- Music programs
- Filmmaking program (all excited about this)
- Cafeteria or lunchroom to eat – "gathering room" "gathering lounge"
- Sports activities, group activities

Priorities – what should be THA's top priority?

- Make decisions knowing that there are many homeless youth
- Make informed decisions about how to manage youth coming in and out of campus

Hopes

- Successful programs
- That it actually helps youth and is effective
- Community – that people will have a positive response and "remember its prosperity."

How to Involve Youth

- THA should ask for youth input on all aspects

What makes you feel secure?

- Having support
- Having good leaders in organization –that they will lead in the right direction
- Approachable adults

“Excited to see what it turns into”

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Vadis at Reach Center
Contact Name	Sandra Iverson
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Caseworker
Date Met	August 24, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	Youth / Homeless Youth
Population Served	Youth – Young Adults
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes
Organization Notes:	Vadis – Vadis' FLASH program provides employment and life skills services to youth and young adults, ages 13-24 who are experiencing homelessness. Youth program focuses on developing skills which our youth may have missed during periods of homelessness by delivering training sessions on financial literacy, preparing to be a renter, leadership, nutrition, becoming employable and communication skills to ensure youth develop the skills they need to be successful.
Programming/Events/Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Employment • Housing • Advocacy • Counseling

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- Youth homelessness is not a new problem
- This campus was needed 20-years ago
- Youth do not choose to be homeless
- People judge homeless youth all day
- Most homeless youth once had a home and some even had jobs
- All homeless youth are not drug users
- Bullying and racism are prevalent among homeless youth

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- Youth are very creative and resilient

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- The YMCA is too expensive
- Not enough being done to address youth homelessness

What are your hopes about this community development?

- This should be a place to hold youth accountable and prepare them for the real world
- That youth will find a safe place to be

Interest in being part of the project:

- Interested in advocacy opportunities

What does THA need to consider?

- Homeless youth are dealing with issues related to past trauma and can at times be antisocial because of this
- The location must be a safe haven for those who have lived in fear
- After staying in the safe haven for some time the youth may then become more comfortable with going out

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Support in development and providing insight

Recommendations for THA:

- Ensure that the food is good quality and tastes good
- Make it a one-stop-shop
- The campus should be a safe haven
- There should be a lot of resources on site
- The space should be well lighted and welcoming
- Use peer support models
- Utilize Animal/Pet Therapy
- Use art: a lot of people find it easier to express themselves through art
- Include Substance use and mental health support
- Have hangout spaces and spaces to be productive activities
- Instead of a coffee shop: Culinary Arts/Trade Skills Center/Barber Training & Shop

Concerns about the project:

- That youth will not get the support that they need
 - That the interests of youth will be neglected
-

Questions:

- How are you going to prepare youth for the outside world?

Recommendations for interviews:

- Salvation Army on 6th Avenue

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Mockingbird Society
Contact Name	Liz Trautman, Karolynn Tom, Paula
Contact Position	Direct of Youth Programming
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	8/3/17
Staff/Youth Present	N/A
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care Youth
City	Seattle / Olympia
Interest in further participation	Karolynn and Jamie (youth and staff) on advisory board
Organization Notes:	Mockingbird Society works with homeless and fostercare youth and provides them with leadership skills to transform foster care and youth homelessness
Programming/Events/Offerings/	Benefit Luncheon in September 27, 2017 Youth Summit recently ended

Themes and Takeaways

Agenda

- Overview of TMS (Paula)
- Overview of BDS role in THA projects: goals for engaging youth and families in THA projects
- Opportunities for TMS Involvement- fit with existing projects? Opportunity for Family Programs?

- Want to explore future collaboration and learn more about sustainability efforts post October
- Other focus groups to consider: pregnant mothers who are homeless (Sandra from Vadis)
- More youth at advisory board meetings; share notes with youth so youth can be coached and prepped for meetings
- Ongoing meetings with youth
 - Cabinet meetings – youth advises adults and policy makers on funding moving forward; read RFPs with OHY – increases and furthers connections with adults

- CYS – will partner with so that Mockingbird will fill the role of providing youth leadership and carry out youth advisory group
- Is THA naming partners –RFP? Michael Mirra question

Law Enforcement

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Pierce County Juvenile Court
Contact Name	T.J. Bohl, Administrator, Pierce County Juvenile Court Tisdell LaTasha, Administrative Assistant
Staff Conducting Interview	Michael Mirra, THA
Contact Position	Administrator, Pierce County Juvenile Court
Date Met	August 21, 2017
Population Served	Children and Youth in Foster Care Youth facing criminal charges Youth abandoned by family
MMC Staff Name	What does MMC mean?
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes. T.J. Bohl would like to participate in (i) design discussions; (ii) choice of service provider; (iii_) ongoing advisory group
Organization Notes:	What does this mean?
Programming/Events/Offerings/Initiatives related to youth	

Themes and Takeaways

T.J. Bohl administers Pierce County's Juvenile Court. He is on the front lines that confront the county's unserved and underserved populations of homeless teens. He sees them in the foster care system and the juvenile justice system. He has led Pierce County's efforts to reduce their stays at Remann Hall

I described THA's plans for Arlington Drive. T.J. Bohl replied as follows:

1. He expressed strong support for the campus. It will address a serious unmet need for CRC/Hope facility beds and for housing for the young adults.
2. He hopes that THA can keep its 6 bed CRC going at the home on South Bismark. Even with the 12 new beds at Arlington the county needs all these beds. Moreover, he asks THA to dedicate some of those beds, perhaps the 6 bed home, for youth referred by the police or the Juvenile Court. He says otherwise he expects that DSHS will fill up the beds with its own referrals.
3. T.J. Bohl would like to participate in discussions about design of the campus, the design of the services and the choice of the service providers.

T.J. was very supportive!

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Tacoma Police Department
Contact Name	Police Chief Don Ramsdell
Staff Conducting Interview	Michael Mirra, THA
Contact Position	Chief of Police, Tacoma Police Department
Date Met	October 10, 2017
Population Served	City of Tacoma
MMC Staff Name	
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Very interested in learning more as Arlington develops. The Chief would like to participate in the design of services and choice of service provider
Organization Notes:	What does this mean?
Programming/ Events/Offerings/ Initiatives related to youth	

Themes and Takeaways

Michael Mirra met with Chief Ramsdell and five of his senior managers. Michael explained THA's plans for Arlington Drive Youth Campus. He expressed THA's expectations for the positive effect it would have on the lives of the young people the campus will serve. He expressed the companion expectation that the campus would be a valuable resource to the police. He asked for the TPS views.

1. The Chief and staff expressed strong support. They posed good questions about the size of the facilities and the services to be provided. They showed a particular interest in the housing for homeless young adults. They noted that it would not be governed by the same licensing structure as the CRC. This means that THA will have to provide its own structure or services.
2. They thought the campus would offer another resource for police officers who find homeless youth on the street.
3. The Chief or a designee is willing to participate in the design of the services for the young adults in the rental housing and in the choice of service provider. He or a designee would also be willing to serve on an advisory group.
4. The Chief and others asked THA to keep open the present 6 bed CRC on South Bismark because it will still be necessary even with the 12 new beds at Arlington. In addition, they asked if THA could dedicate some of those beds for Tacoma youth that the police need to drop off. Otherwise, they expected, that DSHS will continue to fill up the beds with its own referrals. The Chief thought that the city might be willing to contribute to the cost.

Pierce County

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Pierce County Superior Court
Contact Name	Judge John Hickman et al
Staff Conducting Interview	Michael Mirra, THA
Contact Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge John Hickman, Pierce County Superior Court • Judge Phil Sorensen, Pierce County Superior Court psoren1@co.pierce.wa.us (253) 798-7725 • Mary Ward, Attorney General's Office maryw1@atg.wa.gov (253) 597-4118 • Curtis Huff Dept. of Assigned Counsel chuff@co.pierce.wa.us (253) 798-7868Recovery • Terree Schmidt-Whelan Pierce County Alliance drterree@p-c-a.org (253) 572-4750 • John Felleisen Dept. of Assigned Counsel jfellei@co.pierce.wa.us (253) 798-7864 • Eric Pickett CASA epicket@co.pierce.wa.us • Bobbi Brinkman Family Recovery Unit bobbi.brinkman@dshs.wa.gov • Sally Mednansky Court Improvement Program smednan@co.pierce.wa.us • Paula Strickland, DCFS Service Provider gharbor@aol.com • Lisa Daheim Pierce County Alliance daheimlm@p-c-a.org
Date Met	September 28, 2017
Population Served	Children and Youth in Foster Care Youth facing criminal charges
MMC Staff Name	What does MMC mean?
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Very interested in learning more as Arlington develops.

Themes and Takeaways

Judge Hickman invited Michael Mirra to visit with him and others in the Juvenile Court system. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss whether THA can dedicate housing resources to persons who are participating in the Family Recovery Court and Drug Court.

Michael took that chance to also inform the group of the Arlington Drive Youth Campus. The group expressed strong interest and support. They saw it fit the same general need for housing for the various populations that the court attempts to serve.

Service Providers

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Dream Music Project
Contact Name	Michael Chansavang
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Executive Director
Date Met	July 8, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	No
Population Served	Youth

MMC Staff Name

City Tacoma

Interest in further participation Yes

Organization

Notes: DREAM Music Project was created to *Provide a Creative and Supportive Space for Young Musicians*. DREAM Music Project assists youth in developing and sharing music with the greater community.

Programming/ Events/Offerings

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- There are many homeless youth on the East Side
- Many of these youth want to be involved in something

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- There is a lot of opportunity on the Eastside
- There is a lot of potential on the East Side
- The YMCA has played a huge role in providing after-school programming

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- Few people are interested in the East Side
- There are not many opportunities for youth to explore on the East Side
- The Community Center being shut down had a negative effect on youth
- Too many programs are closing their doors due to lack of funding
- Too many programs are being housed in buildings that are not their own space and it is difficult to create identity and ownership in a space that is not yours
- Absence of grocery options (no supermarkets)

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That more programs come back into the community
- Access to medical care (for undocumented immigrants as well)
- On-demand medical care
- Birth control education
- Library as the one left in the community is very small
- Fitness opportunities (outdoor play)
- Mental health support – “the real problem is the mental issues that kids are dealing with.”
- A place where youth can see specialists and get counseling that the schools cannot provide
- Efficient building/Green building: Solar Panels etc.
- Ability to wash clothes on campus
- Opportunity for youth to explore the world of law enforcement. (Eg: Youth/Police Program in Puyallup)

Interest in being part of the project:

- Opportunity for youth in housing project to get involved in DREAM Music Project

What does THA need to consider?

- Consider the demographics of the people being selected for this opportunity. Think about the criteria for those you take in.
- Youth who are from the East Side should get high consideration
- The youth need to be kept engaged and motivated
- Staff should be qualified and equipped to deal with this population; they should have experience and a level of comfort working with homeless youth
- Remember that with youth it is more about what you do than what you say: once you win their trust, you have them.
- Evaluate the project and processes regularly

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Willing to continue being part of the conversation
- Open to participating in meetings

Recommendations for THA:

- Activate the space with the Arts
- Provide outlets for the youth to explore their creativity
- Provide opportunities to explore technology, photography
- Provide opportunity for tutoring
- Make sure there is a library in that space
- Explore outdoor activities: biking, hiking, rock climbing...etc.
- Provide opportunity to get involved in music: music is a good way for youth to cope
- It needs to be about relationship
- Give youth ownership in making decisions about the space and encourage that they bring their whole selves
- Have projects that bring youth together to do team work
- Provide appropriate mental health, addiction and trauma support

Concerns about the project:

- That youth from the East Side will be overlooked
- That it will be a money-making venture
- That the activation will not be relevant to the youth living there
- That it stops at intake and youth do not get the appropriate support they need once they get in
- That it will be a program and not a project: a project is evolving and dynamic whereas a program is rigid and restrictive
- That the background of the youth be neglected and as such the right support not be present

Recommendations for interviews:

- Jared Gile – YMCA
- TJ Gile – Tacoma School District
- DREAM Project Youth

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Community Health Care
Contact Name	Joshua Kresbsback
Contact Position	Community Impact Specialist
Staff Conducting Interview	Noel
Date Met	8/15/17 (by phone)
Staff/Youth Present	No
Population Served	Low income folks; sliding scale fee; accept all Apple Health Medicaid Plans (pregnant moms, kid, etc.). We also have middle and high income folks too. Folks from Tacoma, Parkland, and Spanaway. Diverse set of patients. Mostly in the Hilltop area and also Salishan, and Parkland by PLU, Spanaway.
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes
Organization Notes:	n/a
Programming/Events/Offerings/	We attend 7-10 events in the Pierce County area every month. I think there is a really great opportunity to break some outreach ground. Event: Project Homeless Connect, at Tacoma Dome. Part of grant with Pierce County; Sound Outreach does events 4 times/year. Expect several thousand people. The amount of engagement is huge. I think THA has been there several times. Wednesday, October 25, 2017.

Themes and Takeaways

Project Awareness

- When I was at the National Night Out Celebration, Michael Mirra mentioned there would be a community center and connection to Bates college. Talking about community center and connections to Salishan. Hoping to talk to you.
- Aside from what you just briefed me on, I don't know much about it. (Noel explained more)

Expectations

- With the strategic goals of the campus, making an impact on the number of homeless youth in Tacoma. Helping kids aging out of foster care. Helping them to get employment and move on to the next phase of their lives.
- If we come on in a partnership, we'd want to connect our team of operational folks to you guys directly. There are a lot of restrictions we have for providing services on site. We'll need to get you guys plugged in directly on those services. If that is something we feel like we can do.
- Our location in the Eastside, the Tanbara Clinic, would be great to provide referrals. Want to make sure we have a close relationship know that we are only 2 blocks away and get a warm hand-off of those kids.

Resources To Bring To Project

- I will talk to David, the CEO, and see if he is interested in doing on-site service rotation. He and Michael have a great relationship, he likes new projects. There is a substantial set of requirements. Would be cool to do something on site to close even those two little blocks.
- We actually have a substantial outreach team. Our three main direct services we can provide are 1) insurance enrollment assistance, working on getting them enrolled in Apple Health, Medicaid, or WA Health Plan Finder; 2) Community Health Workers, and can help connect folks to our resources and other resources in the Tacoma area; and 3) Patient Education Specialist to work with people with chronic conditions. Her (instructor's) understanding of healthcare and teaching good behavior to take good care of your body; she's interested in doing more education in the future.
- Also can do education presentations. Available for events on the campus. We're already able to show up on site. We can do dental screenings, blood pressure checks.

Areas of Conflict

- Community opinion. It's hit or miss sometimes. A lot of the times...you're going to get both support from the Salishan Community. Expect you'll get unanimous support from a lot of community organizations around Tacoma. But also other folks...opinions run strong. Certain people have strong views about helping vulnerable populations. But you can negate that with education and outreach to those folks. Share about the challenges faced by this population. Always a fear, not in my backyard. Can negate it by reaching out to the Salishan Community.

Knowledge and Perceptions of Homelessness In Tacoma

- I've spent a lot of time attending food banks around Tacoma area. Breaks my heart to see really young people. I'm only 22. When I see someone my age getting by day to day on donated food and don't know there are resources available to them. Or when they do reach out to resources and get told they are maxed out and don't have room for them. You guys will really be able to help out this population.

- Overall I think Tacoma is a supportive community. The general feeling for everyone in this City feels that everyone here needs to be supported. I've seen that in Hilltop, Eastside, South Tacoma. Lots of non-profits, coalitions, community members consistently saying "what are we doing about our homeless and in crisis?" Lakewood as well.

Bright Spots of the Eastside

- Salishan itself is a tight community, especially connecting into the First Creek Elementary area. Lots of events that occur. There are some coalitions. The school district is the strongest community center...the schools. Strong focus to provide after school opportunities and develop a sense of community with the parents.

Challenges of the Eastside

- Transportation. Portland Avenue is the only way in/out of the Eastside.
- Availability of quality food. South Tacoma area...something we were addressing in another coalition. Food desert, not easily accessible.
- If there was a way to get a bus stop at the Arlington Drive campus, that would be a really awesome thing on site.

Implementation Considerations

- I work in outreach. One of my first focuses for sure is making sure the entire Tacoma community is being communicated to about this new site. Reach out the press, coalition meetings, raising awareness that you are doing this and bring a benefit to the area.

Services, Resources, Activities to Provide

- Reach out to Sound Outreach. They offer a wide variety of outreach services to our whole community here. Soundoutreach.org They have financial counseling. They are astounding. The demographic you are serving really need financial counseling. Great about getting out to locations, really great products that would be really beneficial. Happy to connect us to the CEO and the Deputy Director of that organization when you're ready
- Transportation assistance. Focus on the bus stop there. If there is any way to get bus waivers. Available through Apple Health, we can provide bus pass so they can get to their appointment.
- Food services. Food banks: 1) St. Leo's Food Connection; and 2) Fish Food Bank.
- We'd love to be on site and help with at least enrollment services, and working toward warm hand-off to our clinic.

Hopes

- I'd like to see new capacity for this group of people. I think it has consistently occurred that youth are underserved, particularly kids aging out of foster care. It could create the capacity that is needed. A lot of places are maxed out. The room for expansion is necessary.

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Mockingbird Society
Contact Name	Liz Trautman, Karolynn Tom, Paula
Contact Position	Direct of Youth Programming
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	8/3/17
Staff/Youth Present	N/A
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care Youth
City	Seattle / Olympia
Interest in further participation	Karolynn and Jamie (youth and staff) on advisory board
Organization Notes:	Mockingbird Society works with homeless and fostercare youth and provides them with leadership skills to transform foster care and youth homelessness
Programming/Events/Offerings/	Benefit Luncheon in September 27, 2017 Youth Summit recently ended

Themes and Takeaways

Agenda

- Overview of TMS (Paula)
- Overview of BDS role in THA projects: goals for engaging youth and families in THA projects
- Opportunities for TMS Involvement- fit with existing projects? Opportunity for Family Programs?

- Want to explore future collaboration and learn more about sustainability efforts post October
- Other focus groups to consider: pregnant mothers who are homeless (Sandra from Vadis)
- More youth at advisory board meetings; share notes with youth so youth can be coached and prepped for meetings
- Ongoing meetings with youth
 - Cabinet meetings – youth advises adults and policy makers on funding moving forward; read RFPs with OHY – increases and furthers connections with adults

- CYS – will partner with so that Mockingbird will fill the role of providing youth leadership and carry out youth advisory group
- Is THA naming partners –RFP? Michael Mirra question

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Associated Ministries / Coordinated Entry
Contact Name	Tammy Boros, Valorie Crout, Klarissa Monteros
Staff Conducting Interview	Jackie St. Louis & Nissana Nov
Contact Position	Housing Program Manager, Chief Program Officer, Housing Program Manager
Date Met	August 9, 2017
Staff/Youth Present	Yes - Staff
Population Served	Youth / Homeless
City	Tacoma

Interest in further participation Yes

Organization

Notes: As a crossroad for communication and cooperation, we engage and equip congregations and others to address the many needs in Pierce County through advocacy, education and service.

As part of the strategic plan to end homelessness in Pierce County and to design a "best practice" model to serve homeless households, Associated Ministries, in partnership with Catholic Community Services, Greater Lakes Mental Health Care and Comprehensive Life Resources, has contracted with Pierce County to provide coordinated entry for homeless households.

As part of Coordinated Entry, a Coordinated Entry Specialist will work one-on-one with individuals to enable stability. Services will include, but are not limited to, referrals to housing programs or independent housing and assistance/referrals in securing benefits.

Programming/ Events/Offerings

- Housing, Payee Services, Mail Services, Family Emergency Funds, Resource Center, Medical Assistance, Childcare Subsidies, Benefit Activation, Referrals....
- Coordinated entry is the first point of contact for all homeless individuals in Pierce County.
- Associated Ministries holds quarterly meetings at Bethlehem and St. Andrews to educate the larger community on homelessness.

- Associated Ministries is seeking out people of Faith and Goodwill to support homeless youth by opening rooms in their home.
- Associated Ministries held a focus group to help improve equity in the homeless system.
- Associated Ministries is trying to serve as a bridge between people of Faith & Goodwill and shared housing.
- Became an interfaith center in 2016. Previously were a faith-based center and it was mandatory that a pastor lead the organization.
- Have resources to support 1/4th of the people seeking support.

Themes and Takeaways

What do you know about displaced youth and youth homelessness in Tacoma?

- The perception is that youth do not readily or frequently engage with services
- There are not enough youth on waitlist (housing – coordinated entry) to make referrals
- The definition (exclusion of couch surfers) of youth homelessness is problematic
- Some youth may be too embarrassed to disclose that they are couch surfing
- Some youth may be bartering/trading for places to sleep
- A lot of youth homelessness can be attributed to general poverty: “we served the parents of some of the youth that we now serve.”
- A lot of homeless youth are getting caught up in gangs, drugs, and violence
- They feel a sense of loyalty to their community
- Attempted suicides are common among homeless youth
- There is a need to be more proactive about addressing youth homelessness, especially those aging out of the foster care system into homelessness.
- Intervention needs to happen much earlier (before 13)

What are some bright spots about the East Side?

- There is a shift in culture happening toward creativity and innovation
- A better job needs to be done marketing support to undocumented youth. Programs do not feel like welcoming doors for undocumented youth.
- Community is resilient

What are some things that you would like to see changed about the East Side?

- How fragmented community providers feel
- Executive Directors of agencies that serve youth are all White
- DNA of agencies must change
- More resources
- Sex trafficking is increasing on the East Side as the gangs are getting more involved
- Concern about the community center being shut down

What are your hopes about this community development?

- That it empowers youth
- That it takes a Harm Reduction approach
- That it utilizes an adaptive leadership approach

Interest in being part of the project:

- Interest in being part of Advisory Board

What does THA need to consider?

- 60 new households weekly who have never touched the homeless system are being seen
- Some of the units that THA has built do not feel like home: cement floors/cement walls/no stoves. The small units can feel like prison and gives you the sense of being institutionalized.
- Evaluate the project and processes regularly
- Youth are the experts on their own lives
- POC need to be present and part of the decision-making process
- Training on institutional racism to have people look within themselves and at implicit biases.

How would you like to continue being involved?

- Associated Ministries has the capacity to serve as an information resource and can provide data
- Open to participating in meetings
- Willing to make a presentation at the advisory board meeting
- Serve as a resource through Community Resource Center. Community Resource Center provides: ID assistance, Birth Certificate Assistance, CAN certification assistance, Assistance with getting tabs for car, Assistance in securing glasses, light case management and referrals...

Recommendations for THA:

- Make the Arlington Drive Campus low barrier
- Do not exclude the youth who may be couch surfing but really who really need the help
- Do not automatically deny someone save for: sexual offenses, Arson, and Methamphetamine Production.
- There should be collaboration with Coordinated Entry
- Pick colors that blend the campus in with the community
- Approach this project from a Racial Equity lens.
- Have a diverse group of people making decisions
- Start thinking about Racial equity from the start and not after the fact
- Make SUD and Mental Health treatment available but not mandatory.
- Be deliberate about hiring staff who are POC and LGBTQ.
- Embed equity in job descriptions.
- Consider making life experience equivalent to education and experience
- Allow young people to fail
- Figure out a workaround to be inclusive of undocumented youth
- Identify POC direct care staff and proactively prepare them for leadership
- Be responsible in sharing client stories.
- Use strength-based language
- Permanent housing with supportive services and not permanent supportive housing.

Concerns about the project:

- That it will be prescriptive
- That too many aspects of the program will be mandatory
- That it adheres to traditional authoritarian approaches
- That immigrant youth will be excluded
- That it will be diverse but not inclusive

Questions:

- Will there be training for people involved in the project (advisory council)?
- What is the campus being modelled after?
- What is the eligibility criteria?

Recommendations for interviews:

- Lamont Green – City of Seattle
- Diane Powers – City of Tacoma
- Safe Streets
- Puyallup Tribal Council

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Tacoma Healing Awareness
Contact Name	Vanna Sing
Contact Position	Director/Provider
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	7/22/17
Staff/Youth Present	n/a
Population Served	API Community, Homeless
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes, joining advisory board
Organization Notes:	Offers support to the API community; address immigration and detention related issues and provides support to families in limbo
Programming/Events/Offerings/	Community events in the summer – backpacks for kids upcoming

Project – Have you heard? What is your interest in part of the project?

- Never heard about the project and believe that we need it.
- Would like to work 1:1 with youth and provide mentorship and empowerment support focusing on spirituality and wellbeing
- Was fighting for resources herself; has the ability to share from experience of being homeless and navigating the system

Expectations – What are your expectations of the partnership?

- Respect, nonjudgemental free environment with decision makers in the room, transparency; prefer to work with leaders who are transparent and clear of their motives
- Leadership and ways of transforming communities need to be looked at and changed
- Hope to bring change to the process

Conflict – What areas of conflict do you foresee?

- Disparity – not understanding this when making decisions, lack of resources, not sharing info
- Important that everyone at the table is heard

Homeless – what do you know about it?

- What is seen in Tacoma, drug addiction, youth being kicked out of homes, rejection and mental health issues as causes
- API Community – community is quick to shun and judge; PTSD among elderly community is prevalent and not having tools to address it so they are quick to cope in other ways; consequence of this is putting family in jeopardy
- Important to help families navigate resources and learn to help their kids instead of kicking them out of the house

Concerns – What are your concerns as it pertains to service delivery and youth?

- Need diversity among boards and diverse voices

Resources – what should be available to the youth?

- Activities to promote spiritual growth and wellbeing; mental health focus

Priorities – what should be THA's top priority?

- Housing for youth
- Addressing certain policies and systems – ie, Western State kicking people out into streets without proper resources to support them post-treatment
- Family Support Services – families don't like some policies as it affect them; need to be changed so that families can get proper housing ie families can't get housing because of bad records (kids)

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Team Child – Youth
Contact Name	Kimberly W.
Contact Position	Attorney
Staff Conducting Interview	Nissana
Date Met	
Staff/Youth Present	Three Youth
Population Served	Homeless, Foster Care
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Kimberly is part of the advisory board; youth wants to engage in project implementation
Organization Notes:	Team Child offers legal support and advocacy services to youth experiencing homelessness and navigating foster care system
Programming/Events/Offerings/	n/a

Themes and Takeaways

Project – Have you heard? What is your interest in part of the project?

- Have not heard about this project (all youth)
- Interested because of shared experience of homeless and want to share input about project concerns and ideas; Kimberly shared a little to youth

Expectations – What are your expectations of the partnership?

-

Conflict – What areas of conflict do you foresee?

-

Homeless – what do you know about it?

- Embarrassing being homeless, parents are the cause
- REACH Center is a great place to get resources such as food stamps, getting your ID and learning more about resources available to support homeless youth, getting a job
- Would befriend people in order to eat their food, pretending to be their friend

- Has to resort to stealing – very stressful living day by day when parents not feeding you
- Group homes – not nice, like jail being beat up; got out more depressed, constantly moving around and putting more stress youth
- Need more staff in order for youth to walk around and move around after hours
- CRC in Olympia is chaotic and crowded, girls are violent
- “I’m still struggling but I know will come out it. I’m focusing on school and my job.”
- Hard to get by without proper education and prove that you have an education
- Currently living with friend in shared space called “host home”

Perceptions – how others perceive homeless youth

- “Hoes” broken, lazy, prostitutes
- “Makes me feel denigrated not having a place to stay, not having a place to store your things.”
- “Hard to have boys look at us”
- “Court system thinks we are bad kids, but we are just trying to survive. If you really got to know me, I’m really a nice person.”
- Guys think that they can get what they want if they stay over night
- Don’t feel stable because you know will move out; don’t trust or build relationships with people
- Fostercare people see you as a “paycheck” how do you expect strangers to love you? It’s not going to happen.
- Social workers are the “worst”. They are not reachable; took two months to get a voucher for underwear
- People don’t believe you. Trying to get out a dangerous situation; takes two years to get resources you need
- Pierce County is doing nothing for them; believes King Co system is better for homeless youth
- System is failing us. Police is failing us. That is why youth kills themselves. Police is quick to give you a record. “Bad kids resume”

Eastside – What are bright spots?

- Diversity, most community members are nice
- Would change: violence, gangs, gunfire near CRC, more maintenance, have REACH Center in the eastside because it might be hard to reach the center, need center in every city. REACH is a welcoming community, makes you feel motivated, very supportive. At this center, there’s hope.

Concerns – What are your concerns as it pertains to service delivery and youth?

- This project might end up like CRC where you feel unsafe
- Need a ton of staff to engage youth in positive ways
- Don’t want to be stuck in a room by yourself especially if you have anxiety
- Need understanding staff with lived experience
- Need staff survey, anything that youth can say about staff and making sure concerns get addressed instead of “going in a file”.
- Cameras needed to watch staff; witnessed staff putting their hands on youth

- Need policies and parameters involving boys and girls on campus – solution – create campus to be similar to college dorms

Resources and activities – what should be available to the youth?

- Gardens, have place to plant and grow food
- Life skills, getting youth to school (didn't go to school when in a group home.)
- Job development, secure jobs, mentoring
- Swimming pool, gym, working out "I like to work out when I'm angry."
- Certification programs for youth to secure good jobs when you get out
- Sewing and cooking
- Mini store program with reward system (CRC had this), have youth volunteer and earn points if they cleaned, behaved, etc.
- Phone room – multiple rooms but conversations need to be monitored because "pimps" call and have access to young people
- Monitor social media accounts and block facebook and snapchat, easy to communicate with pimps and risk being trafficked
- Activities that educate young people on their rights, what they can and can't do "self-advocacy class"
- Camp, take youth out
- Lockers to store things and food, personal items

Priorities – what should be THA's top priority?

- Policies around escaping, kids are lying and giving numbers to someone they know pretending to be their parent; parents trafficking own kids
- Safety
- Shelter- waiting list is too long, housing - not much available to youth under 18

Vision

- That the project is successful and is a happy place for youth, "a place that saved us"; similar to Youth for Christ Program

How to Involve Youth

- Will help advertise on facebook and spread the word about Arlington; share about benefits and resources
- You will find that more youth coming out that are homeless if you involve youth in the process
- Want to help other homeless girls – providing facials, manicures, hair but need funding to help provide that
- Want to mentor girls and share their story

What makes you feel secure?

- Mentors and mentoring others
- Comfort
- Increased confidence – if you have low self-esteem you will be a target

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Tacoma Public Schools

Community Outreach Meeting Summary

Organization Name	Tacoma Public Schools
Contact Name	Thu Ament (pronounced "Two")
Contact Position	Director, HR (liaison to THA on behalf of TPS)
Staff Conducting Interview	Noel
Date Met	8/15/17
Staff/Youth Present	N/A
Population Served	Students
City	Tacoma
Interest in further participation	Yes – whatever you guys need.
Organization Notes:	Note on his role at TPs: in charge of all staff evaluations for all 8 different bargaining groups. Also in charge of evaluation support. Performance issues with employees, I work with manager and I take them through that long track with the legal department. Also in charge of Assistant Principals and Deans in the district. 70 of them. Anytime the Supt. Or Deputy Supt tell me to do something, I do it. I've been in charge of the Emergency Management system to get through crisis in district Two years ago it was lead, this year it was mumps. Also help with Districtwide Safety Command Centers. Lots of other things I'm tracking for HR, key performance indicators around professional development, PD outcomes, teacher retention the first four years, etc. Liaison with THA role came about because Supt/Asst Supt asks me to do. I meet with THA pretty regularly. I went to DC with Michael, Amy and April, in July for a week. Meet every two weeks. Working on agreement on assessment of the Urban Institute doing. Dr. Hodge, on THA Board, is a Teacher of ELL here. Resolving any data sharing agreements.
Programming/Events/Offerings/	n/a

Themes and Takeaways

Project Awareness

- I don't know anything about it. I know about McCarver, and the one by Goodwill.

Expectations

- That is a resource that no educator would argue against it being needed. (Make sure to communicate to educators so they know about it!) Because too often they are running into the problem of "where do we send these students that are in crisis?" They are scrambling, trying to figure out where to go. The simplicity of steps on how to figure out processes for how students would get in there, point of contact, etc. when the facility is up and running. HUGE resource; not a single educator would NOT get behind it. They are always looking for ways to help.

Resources To Bring To Project

- I can't speak for the Superintendent, but I can speak to what is currently happening at McCarver. We have provided staffing in the building that interface with THA. Somehow bringing in resources, staffing, that interfaces that facility with the school district. You're connected on a daily basis and on a logistical yearly connector to the schools, as well as to specific people. Somehow doing that would be beneficial; can count on communication being streamlined with employees providing referrals, etc.

Areas of Conflict

- I guess everybody is going to ask why? Why are you putting it here, the purpose, and you have to address all those things. Educators are never going to resist when you're providing a resource that is going to support students socially and emotionally. The "why" is easily explained. Then they take it to another level – why over here on the Eastside? Why not the north end? It becomes a political thing to why are you dropping it here vs. other places in the city. There's not a lot of space in a lot of areas. What other points of access are you trying to gain for the residents and the facility? It could be availability to other resources going up, that may allow for success. The more that you stair step your response around why over here, the resources, the availability to connect and partner with other community groups and schools since we have a direct line to a lot of things that could help this campus being successful. Who is served by it (geographically)

Knowledge and Perceptions of Homelessness In Tacoma

- Perception is that homeless population is growing. Even when I was at the alternative high school (for 4 years, 3 years ago). I had 68 out of 300 kids were homeless and I was trying to find placements for constantly. That was the highest rate (in the district). Definition of homeless – THA working on clear definitions.
- Perception of increased drug activity of meth & heroine.
- City has been pretty clear on policies on camping. Very directly related to homelessness. Perception that it is increasing. Parts of community is NOT OK with it, but want to help. Heard people complain at south end Community Center. Lady complaining that if we don't do something, we're going to end up just like Seattle.

- Youth homelessness is perceived separately. They don't see it as much. Kids are engaged in things. You don't see the 68 kids in my school as homeless. They aren't just camping out on the street. They are in school. Have to educate people on the problem. THA shoring up definitions.

Bright Spots of the Eastside

- I grew up on the Eastside, my parents still live up on 65th. When you grow up in an area, people are drawn to eventful areas, people are drawn to schools.
- Metro Parks' new pool is a gathering place.
- Metro Parks and School District partnerships have revitalized area. Community Center, Stewart Heights Pool – they are going to change things. Been tough since Boys & Girls Club closed.
- Lincoln High School is a bright spot because of all their successes.
- 38th Street – Vietnamese stores, Lincoln Business District. Very influential people involved in urban development. One name that comes to mind is Leslie Young (friend of mine). People lose sight of generating other areas that are not just there. Go down to 64th, and there is nothing that brings people together. Salishan and First Creek become focal points unless people want to go really far away.

Challenges of the Eastside

- If this is anything that is going to gravitate activity; people will come because there really isn't much down there. There used to be Gault Middle School and used to be a hub because it had a pool. That was a pretty non-existent area. If you're dropping something in there now, it depends on the communication and activity in the area. Once they closed down Eastside Boys & Girls Club, they didn't anywhere to go. It's really about facility and how much, and type of activity you'll offer. (interpretation from Noel: because there is so little going on in the neighborhood, a nice new campus is going to, inevitably, attract activity whether you want it or not. Something to think about with security, keeping young adults from older homeless, street youth that need a drop in center, etc.)
- Access to...who is going there, who is the campus accessible to? Gangs still around. Eastside traditionally all red (blood) gangs. Hilltop all blue (crips) gangs. We've gone through two ten-year generations of it. Lived through the first one – those were my classmates. Then I came through as an Assistant Principal and dealing with my classmates' kids and others. Not at that level anymore, but something to think about.

Implementation Considerations

- No –see elsewhere in notes. As you are stair stepping roll out, as that plays out, communicate through the schools and other avenues, make sure it's consistent. That consistency will help with getting to end goal. Great support. Accessible.

Services, Resources, Activities to Provide

- See above for what TPS can provide.
- Help promote your campus in the most accessible way for all. All of Tacoma. That would help your argument if you had other accessible services nearby. It's for all of Tacoma or all of Pierce County to access it. I'd want to know that if I'm in the North End and ID a young person that needs help, that I would have access it. Builds a broader base of support for the campus.

Hopes

- I'm here to learn.