

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan's "Building a Bridge to Housing for All" Proposal

Summary

Mayor Durkan is proposing major legislation to leverage \$11 million from the sale of an underutilized City property to create urgently needed bridge housing for those in our community experiencing homelessness and to support households on the verge of homelessness, while also reinvesting in essential City services. This one-time investment would provide \$10.7 million for affordable housing and bridge housing to help get those living without shelter into safer spaces, and help prevent families from falling into homelessness through expanded rental housing assistance.

The Challenge

Our City is in the grips of an affordability and homelessness crisis, with a significant gap in housing and shelter. If we want to see progress, we need to make substantial investments to address the crisis and try some new innovations. Our sanctioned encampments are currently near full capacity serving 300 people including 149 tiny wooden structures, often called tiny houses. In 2018, the City will fund 1,464 shelter beds, 85 percent that are 24/7 or enhanced shelter beds with services, which are also almost at capacity.

The Proposal

To address this crisis, Mayor Durkan is proposing her first major legislation, "Building a Bridge to Housing for All." This one-time investment would leverage \$3.5 million for essential City services and \$10.7 million for affordable housing, safer spaces for those without shelter, and provide housing stability for households on the verge of homelessness. The sale of the property located at 1933 Minor Avenue is expected to close in Summer 2018. Mayor Durkan's proposal includes:

- Investing **\$5.5 million** in a Bridge Housing Investment Strategy to increase our capacity to quickly and cost-effectively move people experiencing homelessness to safety through new bridge housing and shelter. This strategy will kick off with a project to serve chronically homeless women in our community by the end of Spring 2018 with additional solutions to be deployed later this year;
- Investing **\$2 million** to maximize housing options for those on the verge of homelessness by piloting a Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot Program;
- Reinvesting **\$2.5 million** into our City's communications capabilities including the relocation of the Seattle IT's Communication Shop and a new lease;
- Investing **\$1 million** for design and pre-planning costs for a new Seattle Fire Department facility; and,
- An upfront Mandatory Housing Affordability payment of **\$2 million**, for affordable housing. The City will be able to leverage the full payment of approximately **\$7.7 million** several times over through other funding sources.

Bridge Housing Investment Strategy

Mayor Durkan is proposing a new Bridge Housing Investment Strategy that aims to create new shelter options to move people off the streets and into safer spaces. To increase the supply of bridge shelter and housing options, an Innovative Housing Strategies subcommittee will evaluate a range of options aimed at rapid deployment, cost effectiveness, and increased capacity. To quickly move people out of homelessness, the

strategy would provide a bridge between homelessness and permanent housing solutions. Bridge residences create a safer option for people who would otherwise be living on the street as new permanent housing comes online. As part of her proposal:

- By Summer 2018, the Bridge Housing Investment Strategy will be outlined to include bridge shelter or bridge housing options including but not limited to mass shelter tents, hard sided tents, wood-frame sheds, portable modular bunkhouses or cabins, backyard cottages, and the master leasing of existing apartments. This proposal would be implemented following the sale of the property, expected in Summer of 2018.
- In the work that the City has done with people living unsheltered, there is a gap in women's-only encampment support services. In the Spring of 2018, the City will invest for the first time in tiny home structures as well as an encampment serving chronically homeless women. The City will continue to partner with non-profits, community groups, and volunteers who are building tiny homes at all the City's sanctioned encampments.

Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot Program

Following her first executive order on rental assistance, Mayor Durkan is proposing a Seattle Rental Housing Assistance Pilot Program specifically focused on preventing households from falling into homelessness while on the waitlist for longer-term assistance by maximizing the households' options.

- Nearly half of the 1,027 households issued a Seattle Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher in the 2015 lottery experienced homelessness at some point during their time on the waitlist. Fifteen percent of households were housed when placed on waitlist and became homeless prior to receiving a voucher.
- In a two-year pilot, this program will help approximately 150 households with incomes between 0-50 percent of the Area Median Income and who are on the waitlist for a Housing Choice voucher. These households will be identified as those most at risk of homelessness, screened according to Vulnerability Assessment used in prevention programs funded through the Human Services Department. This proposal would be implemented following the sale of the property, expected in Summer of 2018.

Reinvesting in Essential City Services

Mayor Durkan's plan would invest in essential City services, including the Seattle Fire Department and Seattle IT. In addition to \$1 million to identify and acquire a property for the Seattle Fire Department to serve South Lake Union and Denny Triangle, this proposal would also provide \$2.5 million to relocate the City of Seattle IT's Communication Shop, which installs and repairs radios for the Seattle Police Departments and Seattle Fire Department.

Mandatory Housing Affordability Payment

Following the sale, the City of Seattle will receive a Mandatory Housing Affordability payment from the proposed development of \$7.7 million to create additional affordable housing - this includes a payment upfront of \$2 million for the City parcel, an additional payment of \$1.2 million for the City parcel, and a \$4.5 million payment for the private development of the parcel next to the City's property. The City will leverage this payment several times over through other funding sources. To ensure the City optimizes its entire portfolio of publicly owned properties, Mayor Durkan is evaluating the full inventory of all City owned properties to ensure the City is wisely utilizing its resources to address Seattle's affordability challenge.