

Appendix 1 to AP-12: Public Comments

Public Comments and Responses
2016 Annual Action Plan
During and After 30-Day Public Comment Period
March 18, 2016 through April 26, 2016

#	Comment	Response
1	<p>Two attendees at the public hearing commented that there is an inadequate supply of decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing with supportive services in the community for people recovering from drug and alcohol addictions. They explained that housing is needed for people in this situation but is hard to find, that they may be able to afford rent for a room but not an apartment, and that additional affordable housing options are needed for them.</p>	<p>The County and Snohomish County Consortium recognize the need in our community for additional affordable housing for persons recovering from drug and alcohol addictions. Increased housing options and treatment services for this population was one of the local housing needs identified in the Snohomish County Consortium's 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan which was adopted in May 2015. It is anticipated that housing and service projects funded under the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs in the Annual Action Plans over the five-year period will help maintain and increase housing options for homeless and low-income persons, including persons recovering from alcohol and drug addictions. The County also administers a number of other programs to help address the transitional and permanent housing needs of homeless and low-income persons, including those with drug and alcohol addictions. Although a number of programs exist in the community, the actual need in the community is greater than the resources available. The County values the input provided and will continue to engage in activities to help address this need in the community.</p>

<p>2</p>	<p>A participant of a group from the Holy Rosary Church in Edmonds submitted a written comment. The group would like to see more humane treatment of impoverished people and are convinced that only appropriate housing will make this possible. The commenter stated that homeless persons tend to be local, not trucked-in as is often callously imagined, and are our neighbors. The comment suggested that any development along the Highway 99 corridor is on a great bus-line, which the poor require for access to work and to health care and other services in Everett. The commenter noted that the cost of housing is very high and pushes folks into homelessness so Section 8 or rent control is badly needed. The commenter explained that ideally more housing is needed for aged persons with fixed, low-incomes and for homeless persons with mental illness and drug addictions. The commenter further noted that parks are not usually planned for lower-income neighborhoods and that they might realistically be included in planning for livability and quality of life. The commenter also encouraged including homeless persons at the table as what we read and learn is not always what the person living the experience sees. Finally, the commenter passed along the following quote from Pope Francis to consider: “Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life, and this entails considering the setting in which people live their lives. These settings influence the way we think, feel, and act. In our rooms, our homes, our workplaces and neighborhoods, we use our environment as a way of expressing our identity. We make every effort to adapt to our environment, but when it is disorderly, chaotic or saturated with noise and ugliness, such overstimulation makes it difficult to find ourselves integrated and happy.”</p>	<p>The County and Snohomish County Consortium recognize the need in our community for more affordable housing for homeless and low-income persons, including elderly persons and other persons with special needs such as those with alcohol and drug addictions. Increased housing options for these populations were identified as priority needs in the Snohomish County Consortium’s 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan. It is anticipated that housing and service projects funded under the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs in the Annual Action Plans over the five-year period will help maintain and increase affordable housing and services for these populations. A portion of the CDBG grant funds is also allocated for community development projects in low-income neighborhoods such as parks, streets, sidewalks, and water/sewer systems to improve community living environments. In addition, the County administers a number of other programs to help address the needs of homeless and low-income persons and utilizes various outreach methods to include input from these populations in the planning processes.</p> <p>Access to public transportation and other amenities is taken into consideration when evaluating the location of proposed housing projects funded under these programs to ensure that homeless and low-income residents have access to services to meet their basic needs and also have access to economic and other opportunities. In addition, the projects funded typically have rent requirements that make the housing more affordable. This may, for example, include limiting the amount of rent charged to an affordable amount based on household income, providing assistance to pay for all or a portion of the rent, or providing funds to create new housing units which reduces development costs and allows lower rents to be charged.</p> <p>The County appreciates the input provided and recognizes that the actual need in the community exceeds the resources available. The County will continue to participate in community partnerships and collaborations and engage in other activities to maintain and increase local affordable housing options.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>A Mill Creek resident submitted a written comment expressing a need to include in the plan existing properties that are in great disrepair or dilapidated, including some mobile home parks and single family homes in south the south county areas. The commenter proposed focusing on redevelopment, rather than building new developments on vacant lots, and reserving vacant lost for the development of homes with yards or open spaces like parks. The commenter expressed that any initial community opposition based on fears such as diminishing property values or negative impacts on the academic scores of local schools could be overcome by replacing the existing properties with housing that is safer, more sanitary, and respectable that would improve the surrounding area and also be of benefit to the current residents.</p> <p>The commenter further expressed that placing larger developments, such as multi-family dwellings, along arterial roads would help minimize noise pollution that would otherwise escape into neighborhoods. The commenter stated that locating these developments on a major road makes more sense as they would be closer to shopping, bus routes, and other amenities</p> <p>The commenter encouraged exploring new flats or townhouses in neighborhood clusters to improve housing options and living environments in these areas. The commenter also expressed that he was assuming that residents in these areas were in need and may be happy in their current environment. But he encouraged looking into these and other housing options for those in need in these areas, including a temporary displacement option for homeowners that did not want fair market value in exchange for their property, but could return to a unit on the property once it was redeveloped.</p>	<p>The County and Snohomish County Consortium recognize the need for housing rehabilitation assistance for low-income homeowners and supports exploring new strategies that could be implemented to improve existing affordable housing options. However, the County does not support focusing the funding available under this plan only on the redevelopment of existing properties, rather than allowing for different development strategies that may be used to both maintain and increase the supply of decent and safe affordable housing. In addition, the County supports an approach that encourages a wide variety of housing options for people to live in the community of their choice with access to public transportation and to other amenities and opportunities.</p> <p>The housing needs assessment and market analysis conducted last year for the Snohomish County Consortium 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan identified several priority affordable housing needs for low- and moderate-income households across the county. The needs included maintaining existing rental housing, developing new rental housing, providing rent assistance, providing homeowner housing repair and rehabilitation, and providing purchase assistance and creating new homeownership units for first-time homebuyers. The plan goals strive for a balanced approach by allocating the limited funding available to address a portion of the need in each of the categories and allows for flexibility in the development strategies that may be used as well as the type of housing units. A program to provide home repair assistance to low-income homeowners county-wide was selected for funding in both 2015 and 2016, which would include eligible single family and mobile home owners in the south county area.</p> <p>Flexibility is also allowed for project locations and the locations of proposed projects are evaluated to ensure there is access to transportation and other amenities. Projects funded are also required to be consistent with local planning requirements, with environmental requirements including an evaluation for noise pollution, and must also comply with anti-displacement and</p>
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4	<p>A City of Edmonds councilmember reviewed the draft plan with colleagues and submitted a written comment with the following observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan seemed unusually focused on Everett, Monroe, and Marysville. 2. The plan missed data available about the student-aged homeless population in Edmonds from the Edmonds School District, which encompasses five cities. Housing options for homeless teens is an urgent concern for the Edmonds area and they are often bused to Everett. 3. They are impressed with how comprehensive the plan is and noted that it addresses rehabilitation as well as chronic homeless. They appreciate the enormity of the task and the attempt to address the concerns. 4. They wondered what HASCO has learned about the homeless/housing situation in Seattle and asked to what extent we have incorporated lessons learned and new attempts to revise Snohomish County options. The commented noted that Edmonds is seeing more homeless pressure along Highway 99 and is also seeing younger families and second-time homebuyers coming to Edmonds, which is pushing up home prices. 	<p>The County appreciates the observations provided on the 2016 Annual Action Plan as well as the information provided on affordable housing needs and planning underway in the City of Edmonds. This plan is the second year action plan under the five-year 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan which was adopted in May of 2015. The County is the lead agency for the CDBG funds for the county-wide area, outside the City of Everett and Marysville; the City of Everett and the City of Marysville are lead agencies for CDBG grants they receive directly for their jurisdictions. The County is also the lead agency for the HOME funds which cover the entire county area. As federal regulations carry extra coordination and specific formatting requirements in the plan submission process by all the lead agencies, this may have given the appearance that there is a greater focus on Marysville or Everett. However, in reality, the County seeks ongoing input and participation by all jurisdictions in the Consortium in the planning and implementation process for use of these funds.</p> <p>In addition, the goals established in the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan guide investment of the grant funds in the action plans each year and are intended to help address affordable housing and community development needs throughout the Consortium areas, including both rural and urban areas. Projects are selected</p>

The comment also provided the following information regarding affordable housing in the City of Edmonds:

1. The City of Edmonds is engaging in an extensive planning process for Highway 99 and hopes to include some affordable housing options for both market-rate and subsidized housing in that area.
2. The City of Edmonds has a shortage of senior housing in the city, is looking for ways to create new solutions and opportunities, and is open to suggestions.
3. The rehabilitation of existing housing in Edmonds is a great opportunity as much of the older housing stock would make good fixer-up opportunities. They are interested in learning about what programs they could access to improving that level of housing, especially for first-time homebuyers.

through a competitive application process. Typically, over the five-year period, capital projects are supported in various areas of the county to help meet some of the need in each of the areas. Many of the housing programs, such as the homeowner minor home repair and homebuyer purchase assistance programs, serve residents Consortium-wide. In addition, while many of the service projects have offices in Everett, they typically serve residents county-wide and some have service sites located in different areas of the county.

The 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan process included various homeless, housing, and other data as part of the assessment process and may be referenced in that document. While specific breakout data on the Edmonds School District school-aged homeless population was not included in this plan, county-wide summary data available from other sources as well as input through the citizen participation and consultation process did identify the housing and other assistance needs for homeless youth in our county and included this population in the priority needs and goals identified for housing, services, and homeless assistance in the five-year plan.

The County values the input provided and recognizes that the homeless and affordable housing needs in Edmonds and across our Consortium are much greater than the existing resources available to meet these needs. Snohomish County Human Services Department staff will follow-up with the City of Edmonds to provide more information on: the 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan need assessment and goals; current projects and programs funded through the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan process and through the local Continuum of Care that may be available to help address homeless and housing needs for City of Edmond residents; new affordable housing and homeless initiatives that have been implemented to help meet more of the need in our community; and possible opportunities that may exist through the Consortium, with the County, or through other partnerships or collaborations that the City of Edmonds may wish to explore to help address the challenges and concerns raised.