

Appendix 1 to AP-12: Public Comments

Public Comments and Responses
 2018 Annual Action Plan
 Public Hearing, December 5, 2017
 30-Day Public Comment Period
 March 19, 2018 through April 18, 2018

#	Comment	HSD Response
1	Mr. Halferty commented that it would definitely be nice to see some money allocated that was oriented to helping the homeless situation in ways that it can be. There is a variety of different areas, but that’s definitely a need that we have in the region not just in Snohomish County. He wanted to be sure that homelessness was highlighted.	The County appreciates the comment provided by Mr. Halferty and acknowledges the need for more resources for programs to assist persons who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. The goals and allocation priorities in the 2015 - 2019 Consolidated Plan are based on the highest priorities identified through the planning process. A percentage of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the majority of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds, are targeted to programs and services to assist persons who are homeless or at-risk of being homeless, including persons living with special needs.
2	Ms. Allen stated that homelessness is a terrible tragedy in our nation right now, but you have to also understand that these funds also fund infrastructure and other community needs like fire engines and water and sewer lines. Homelessness is a big problem right now, but I hope that the boards and the County Council also understand that there are other needs in the community and that not all of the funds go just to homelessness.	The County acknowledges the need for our resources to cover a variety of needs across the County. The resources made available to the County from federal sources are used to address a variety of needs including housing and services for homeless individuals and families and the construction of public facilities and infrastructure improvements.
3	Ms. Volchkova introduced herself as an employee at Volunteers of America - Dispute Resolution Center. She explained that they do not work directly with the homeless,	The County and the Snohomish County Consortium recognize the need for more affordable housing in our community. The 2015 – 2019 Consolidated Plan priorities for affordable

	<p>but assist households who are at risk of becoming homeless and who have eviction notices, or 3-day pay or vacate notices. She stated that the lack of affordable housing in Snohomish County is a huge problem. They serve over 100 households per month, who are couch surfing, or in the process of being evicted, or are otherwise unstably housed. Ms. Volchkova explained that they target their services to households under 30% AMI, and a lot of people make a lot less than that. They have a program that is targeted to households that are at 15% AMI. Ms. Volchkova stated I don't know what we need to do but we need more affordable housing or people making more money. Households in this area are spending 60 to 80% of their income for housing; it's no wonder that when something happens like health issues, job is ending, or family separation, that they end up homeless.</p> <p>Ms. Volchkova further commented that they have some flex funding to help mediation between tenants and landlords, but sees the lack of affordable housing as the main problem; "we can build more shelters and put money towards other needs, but we need affordable housing that doesn't need a subsidy, like a section 8 voucher." One adult and two children household must work two jobs to afford rent. That's just really sad.</p>	<p>housing are to preserve, maintain, increase and provide accessibility for rental units affordable to households whose incomes are at or below 60% of the area median income. Funding is targeted through goals for construction of new rental housing, rehabilitation of existing rental housing, homeownership, and tenant based rental assistance, all of which help to address the affordable housing crisis. In addition, goals for Homeowner Minor Home Repair and Homeowner Home Rehab are intended to assist low-income homeowners to remain in their homes, who without assistance, could be at risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>The county recognizes that that the need is greater than the resources available and will continue to explore options that can help with the affordable housing struggles Snohomish County residents encounter.</p>
4	<p>Ms. Hovard commented she doesn't know how much flexibility there is with HUD funding, but for all of us who serve in human services there is very little in these contracts allocated toward salaries and when I'm looking at the 50% and 30% AMI, most of our staff who are working to end homelessness are falling in these categories. All of our staff qualify for low-income housing and that is because we do not have the flexibility with spending on salaries with these contracts, very little is allocated toward salaries. I don't</p>	<p>The use of CDBG for public services is restricted to 15% of the total allocation per program year. The CDBG regulations do not include limits on employee's salaries. The County recognizes that resources are limited and the finding resources for administrative costs can be challenging.</p>

	know if there is any room to consider increasing wages for our contracts.	
5	<p>Mr. Patterson commented that he agreed with Ms. Hovard's comment that you need to have the infrastructure to run these non-profit agencies. The common refrain is front-line services are important, even donors in the community realize how important the front line services are, but forget that they have to pay to keep the lights on and to keep the place running. Mr. Patterson questioned why the City of Everett and Snohomish County CDBG applications have different requirements regarding CDBG funds for administrative salaries. He explained that the County CDBG funding can only be used for front-line staff or those supervising them and that the City of Everett does not have that same stipulation. If the funds are flowing from the same source what's happening here.</p>	<p>The County appreciates the comment provided by Mr. Patterson. In implementing Snohomish County CDBG programs, the county adheres to CDBG regulation and guidelines as provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The use of CDBG funds for administrative costs is detailed in the CDBG regulations at 24 CFR 570.206, which allows 15% of the total CDBG allocation per program year, plus 15% of program income received during the program year, to be used for public services, which includes payment of salaries and benefits for employees working in CDBG funded programs. The CDBG regulations do not dictate what level of salary may be paid to an employee working in a CDBG program.</p> <p>The Cities of Everett and Marysville are direct grant recipients of CDBG funds that benefit their respective jurisdictions. They choose their own goals and priorities based on the needs of their communities.</p>
6	<p>Ms. Baze states that she read the news article about the federal funds and Snohomish County looking for ideas for spending. Ms. Baze commented that the trestle connecting highway 2 to Interstate-5 (I-5) and Everett is in serious need of repair and expansion. There have been some discussions on how to fix it. One of those plans includes tolls. This is the main path to I-5 for numerous residents of Snohomish, Lake Stevens, and Marysville. The trestle has been on lists as one of the worst bridges in need of repair for the United States. The population growth for the area has skyrocketed in recent years creating a traffic nightmare. It can take 30 or more minutes to cross this small distance during peak hours. I have spent more than an hour several times. I have also missed doctor appointments despite leaving early.</p>	<p>The Trestle is under the Jurisdiction of the State of Washington and maintained by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The Snohomish County Urban County Consortium (Snohomish County Consortium) is a partnership between Snohomish County and the cities and towns within the county. The partnership allows the Consortium, as an Urban County, to receive funds each year under the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs as formula grants and to use these funds to address local needs and goals. This funding cannot be used for improvements to property owned by the State.</p>

	<p>However, if the trestle is changed to a toll many people wouldn't be able to afford it and would need to move. I think a good place to spend the government funding is on the trestle.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Mr. Hole commented that as a resident of Lake Stevens, I'm concerned about the lack of sidewalks in the area of Cavelero MidHigh. As a parent at the school, I see many students walking in the street, navigating around trash cans on collection day, and narrowly missing cars on dark mornings. As our farm and forest community rapidly becomes a suburb of Seattle and Everett, Lake Stevens needs safe and continuous sidewalks so students (and residents) can walk in safety. While I realize your funds must impact as many residents of the county as possible, the growing morning traffic on 20th combined with a lack of continuous sidewalks is a recipe for disaster. Please consider allocating resources to address this issue.</p>	<p>The County values the input provided by Mr. Hole and acknowledges the need for safe streets and sidewalks near schools. The 2015 - 2019 Consolidated Plan includes priorities and goals for Public Facilities and infrastructure for streets and sidewalk targeted to low- and moderate-income areas within Snohomish County. The City of Lake Stevens may apply for CDBG public facility and infrastructure improvement assistance for projects like this. During the Application review process, it will be determined if the project meets the eligibility criteria for CDBG funds.</p>