

Archived: Thursday, October 15, 2020 4:12:30 PM

From: [Heidi Costello](#)

Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2020 3:17:13 PM

To: [agenda comments](#)

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Homeless shelter by U-Haul at 165 & Aurora

Response requested: No

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:

[Nine questions RE SL homeless shelter - Oct 14.pdf](#) 

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From: [realityinpractice@yahoo.com](mailto:realityinpractice@yahoo.com) <[realityinpractice@yahoo.com](mailto:realityinpractice@yahoo.com)>

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 4:26 PM

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Homeless shelter by U-Haul at 165 & Aurora

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of Shoreline. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**Re: Proposed "low barrier homeless shelter" near U-Haul at 165<sup>th</sup> & Aurora**

Dear Business owner/manager in Shoreline,

As you might know, our Shoreline City Council is about to allow a 24/7 Enhanced, Low Barrier, Permanent Homeless Shelter to be located here, just across the street from the U-Haul site on Aurora at 165<sup>th</sup>. This facility will only be for single adults, and will not screen for previous criminal history, drug addiction or mental illness. Unlike most other shelters, it will not require that its residents leave each morning, and many might stay for weeks or months.

Naturally this decision, which will not be subject to a vote of the people of Shoreline, has raised many objections. Still, a major Council session will be held about it on October 26<sup>th</sup>, and a vote will follow shortly thereafter. At present the council is apparently now 5 to 2 in favor.

You can send a note about this shelter decision to the Council members, which will be circulated to them all at this address: [council@shorelinewa.gov](mailto:council@shorelinewa.gov). They do read all of the emails they receive. If you have two spare hours, watching the Council Study Session on this topic, held Oct 12<sup>th</sup>, is very rewarding. The thoughtfulness, professionalism and effort invested by the council members is very, very impressive. You would be proud of your city to see this, or any part of it: [https://shoreline.granicus.com/player/clip/1111?view\\_id=4&redirect=true](https://shoreline.granicus.com/player/clip/1111?view_id=4&redirect=true)

However, from that session several things become clear. One is that the October 26<sup>th</sup> decision to be taken by Council could potentially open up eight additional sites for such shelters in Shoreline. Another is that several comparable enhanced shelters have been ...seriously unsuccessful. Licton Springs south of 85<sup>th</sup> and Aurora had to be closed, the Red Lion shelter in Renton is now the subject of a 'pitched battle' (according to councilmember Dr Susan Chang), and the BaseCamp shelter in Bellingham has caused very severe problems. A major concern with these and the Shoreline proposal, is the possible behavior of the residents, but also of those predators who would be attracted here, to sell drugs, etc to the residents.

Here is the official city web page about this shelter project: <https://www.shorelinewa.gov/Home/Components/News/News/4242/21?backlist=%2F>

A Zoom meeting was held on this Sept 26, and over 300 questions were raised. The city impressively documented these, and provided answers to many, but certainly not all of them:

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There have been modest Zoom-based attempts to let the citizens know about this plan, but at a level that any disinterested person could only regard as . . . minimal. Indeed, due to the time constraints to get funding for this project, the October 26 decision date was established, and a public hearing on it was only scheduled for – early December. As of Wednesday October 14, Council is trying to change this, to have a public hearing also on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Surely at a minimum a very formal survey should have been taken of a large sample of the citizens here, and best would be to have a vote of the citizens, even though the Council members have personally invested much time, and anguish, over this major decision.

In any case, good luck with all this, from someone who has seen other communities fall, and their productive citizens eventually leave, due to unfortunate, if usually well-meaning, policy decisions.

Dr Johnson

Following are several key aspects about this project, that you might encourage our City Council members to further contemplate:

**[1] Types of Clients.** Does this Enhanced Shelter program distinguish between people temporarily 'down on their luck' and those with very serious long term 'challenges'? Does it identify those who want help, and those who aggressively refuse help? Wouldn't such a triage approach make sense, with the long-term and uncooperative folks being helped in a much lower cost environment, elsewhere in the county, or state, since they likely would not need immediate proximity to jobs, transit, etc. If it costs 50% less to house people in Sunnyside or Yakima compared to Shoreline, we could provide possibly life-saving services to twice as many people there, instead of here. Why should a homeless person's location preferences for Shoreline be given more weight than our interest in helping as many people as possible, in addition to our local concerns about risk management issues, especially if a major subset of these folks are unlikely to 'turn around,' soon, or even refuse to cooperate with offers of assistance? Surely a much broader, risk management perspective on this entire issue would be appropriate.

You have likely seen the discussion of the somewhat successful BC homeless program that paid people cash directly – but that experiment only addressed folks who were not criminals, mentally ill, or in a serious addiction state. Their results can tell us little if anything about the proposed Shoreline permanent shelter, as it is currently being drafted.

**[2] Metrics for Evaluation.** Advocates said that if this shelter proposal goes forward, at six months it will be reviewed. Are there any firm metrics by which it will be judged, such as. . . an X% increase in 911 calls, robberies, car prowls, assaults, burglaries in the nearby neighborhoods, fights at the facility... "loitering"? Or will this be somewhat played by ear, with vague, if any, explicit performance criteria? We all know how difficult it is to cancel government projects once they get going. Almost all of the 41 state income tax laws across the country were initially set at about 1% and only applied to the 'rich' . . . but of course that got . . . extended, with California now proposing 16.8%. The current fight between Renton and King County about closing their shelter is not encouraging.

**[3] Shoreline's Contribution.** We now in Shoreline already have armed guards at Fred Meyers, a methadone treatment center close to this proposed site, prostitutes openly soliciting on Aurora south of 145<sup>th</sup>, and a 90-unit "homeless transition facility" in design at 198<sup>th</sup> and Aurora (<https://www.shorelinewa.gov/government/projects-initiatives/198th-affordable-housing-project>). We also have the 60-unit low-income Ronald Commons housing project at 178<sup>th</sup> and Aurora (<https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Washington/Shoreline/Compass-at-Ronald-Commons/10099161>), and the quite interesting low-income oriented InterUrban Lofts project (<https://www.comellandassociates.com/north-seattle/interurban-lofts>) at 17020 and Aurora.

In addition, although Shoreline has largely been a middle-class enclave of single-family owner-occupied homes, filled with kids, recent zoning changes have ensured that in the next few years we will have possibly 3,000 new apartment units, along Aurora, and on 15<sup>th</sup> NE east of I-5. Plus of course the two Link Light Rail stations. Huge changes are coming to Shoreline already, which will involve a material shift to generally younger, single people, compared to our recent past. In addition, Shoreline also hosts a bus barn and a solid waste transfer station. Is our community already contributing admirably with regard to the general category of social policy/infrastructure issues?

While this facility will be in Shoreline, it is designed for people from "the north county" area – including Kenmore, LFP and parts of Bothell. Will priority be given to homeless people who are long-time residents of Shoreline? We possibly have enough local candidates to already fill the 60 places.

**[4] Learning from Seattle/Everett.** Might we agree that downtown Seattle is in serious trouble, now with Columbia Sportswear also deciding to pull out? It wasn't always like this. Recently, it was possible to walk around safely, even near the McDonalds at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Pine, without the risk of being shot in mid-day by criminals with 47 prior arrests. What lessons can we learn from Seattle's descent into a semi-third world status in many areas, since we do not want such results here? It would likely be helpful if Shoreline commissioned a brief study of exactly this issue: what caused the unsafe and dangerous conditions in Seattle, that especially harm black and brown people. . . and also in South Everett, especially along Casino Road. This study could be completed in 3 months and might be quite informative, possibly leading to realistic policy alternatives for our community. . . *that could be subject to a vote of the people.* Unfortunately, we should recognize the reality that Shoreline is, at present, an island of relative calm, in between the sometimes astonishing violence in the Seattle and Everett areas.

**[5] Spillover from Seattle's Solution.** Fortunately, the Seattle City Council has figured out how to eliminate systemic racism, by firing 100 cops, lowering the salary of senior police supervisors and eliminating their Navigation Team, which is designed specifically to help the homeless: <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Homelessness/committee/MDAR-Navigation-Team.pdf>. Since they have solved this problem, are their homeless folks less likely to relocate up north to us? What happens to all the Seattle people who previously thought that when in trouble they could call 911 and get help? What will happen to our response times in Shoreline if our officers are materially occupied with calls to this proposed shelter? What has been the response of the Shoreline police department to this homeless shelter proposal?

**[6] Local Incentives.** As we know, many store managers in Shoreline have been instructed to just let shoplifters walk out the door without any resistance, or calling the police. Do we think this de facto incentive system will produce constructive long-term results for our community and for the future of our kids?

**[7] Selection Criteria.** Would the Enhanced Shelter accept people who are in the US illegally?

**[8] Mentally Ill.** Will it accept the mentally ill, even those having a history of unprovoked violence?

**[9] LCP Performance Record.** Since Lake City Partners will manage the facility, what is the current status of the increasingly well-known gang problem and crime situation in Lake City? At an earlier hearing, it was acknowledged that LCP has never previously managed an "Enhanced Low Barrier Permanent Homeless Shelter."

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And again, wouldn't it be more socially responsible and caring for us to help twice as many in locations where housing costs half as much? One suspects that the Lake City Partners homelessness specialists could feel just as professionally fulfilled by carrying out their programs in many much lower-cost locations.

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