

Restoring Buildings, Restoring Lives: Transitional Housing Through Adaptive Reuse

November 18th, 2026

Objectives & Agenda

- Objectives
  - Understand the role of transitional housing in addressing homelessness and creating lasting benefits for individuals and communities.
  - Identify funding opportunities, partnerships, and key considerations that support successful transitional housing development.
  - Evaluate existing buildings for adaptive reuse, including feasibility, building conditions, and opportunities for transformation.
  - Explore lessons learned from Snohomish County's New Start Centers and how these approaches can inform future housing solutions.

- Agenda:
  - Transitional Housing: Purpose, Community Impact & Funding
  - Evaluating Existing Buildings for Adaptive Reuse
  - Snohomish County New Start Centers: Project Case Studies
  - Looking Ahead: Future Opportunities & Next Steps

Restoring Buildings, Restoring Lives:

Transitional Housing Through Adaptive Reuse

Speakers

SNOHOMISH COUNTY





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SECTION #1

Transitional Housing



Transitional Housing

Transitional housing bridges the gap between homelessness and permanent housing, **providing individuals and families with a safe, stable, and supportive environment to rebuild their lives** and move toward long-term independence.



Why Transitional Housing?

Bridging the Gap Between Shelter and Stability
Emergency shelters provide immediate safety, but often offer only short-term stays, leaving individuals and families without the stability needed to move forward.

Permanent affordable and supportive housing provide long-term solutions, but the transition into these environments takes time.

Transitional housing fills this critical gap, providing a stable place to live while individuals rebuild independence, secure employment, access supportive services, establish rental history, and prepare for permanent housing.



Why Transitional Housing?

745,000+

People experiencing homelessness,
On a single night in the U.S., 2025

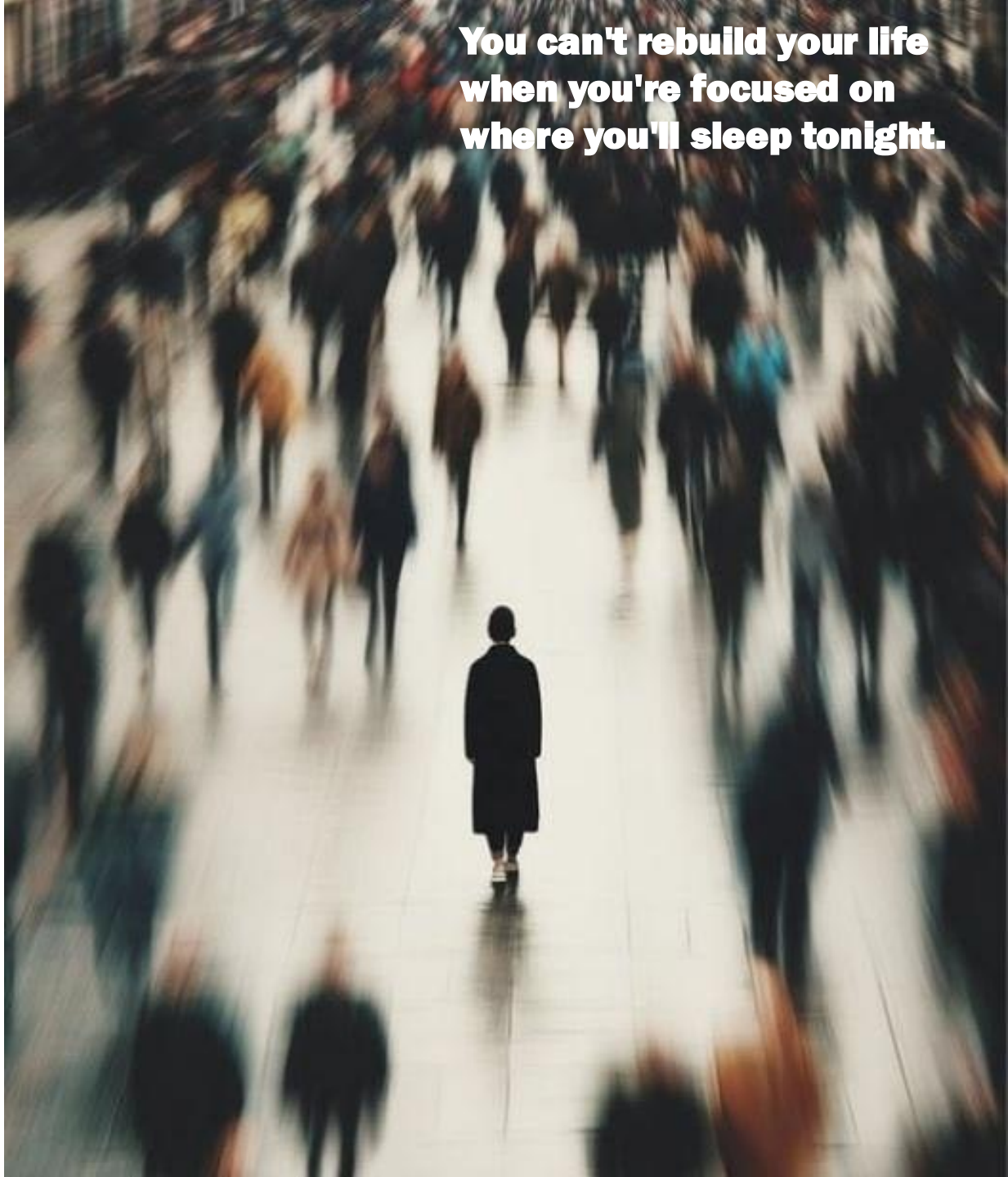
Real time data – Snohomish County

403,000

Year-round emergency shelter beds in 2025

84,000

Year-round transitional housing beds nationwide in 2025



Between <u>surviving</u> and <u>thriving</u>, there must be <u>space to rebuild</u>

Why Transitional Housing?



EMERGENCY SHELTER

IMMEDIATE SAFETY

SHORT-TERM
1 DAY – 30 DAYS

Provides immediate safety and basic needs during a crisis.



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

STABILITY + SUPPORT

SHORT-TERM
UP TO 90 DAYS

Provides a stable place to live with supportive services while individuals rebuild independence and prepare for permanent housing.

<u>Includes:</u> Counseling, Group Therapy, Job Assistance, etc.



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

LONG-TERM HOME

LONG-TERM
INDEFINITE

Provides a stable, long-term home with opportunities for continued growth and community.

Grants: Why They Matter

- **Essential Funding:** Primary source for programs
- **Shared Investment:** Distributing financial responsibility
- **Expanding Opportunities:** Acquisition, renovation, reuse
- **Beyond the Building:** Services, staffing, and programs
- **Local Implementation:** Varying eligibility, priorities, and processes



Grants: What is the Process?

- **Identify the Need:** Housing gaps and community priorities
- **Find Funding:** Federal, state, and local grants
- **Develop the Project:** Properties, budgets, eligibility, services
- **Secure Funding:** Applications, allocations, and approvals
- **Implement & Report:** Renovation, services, and outcomes

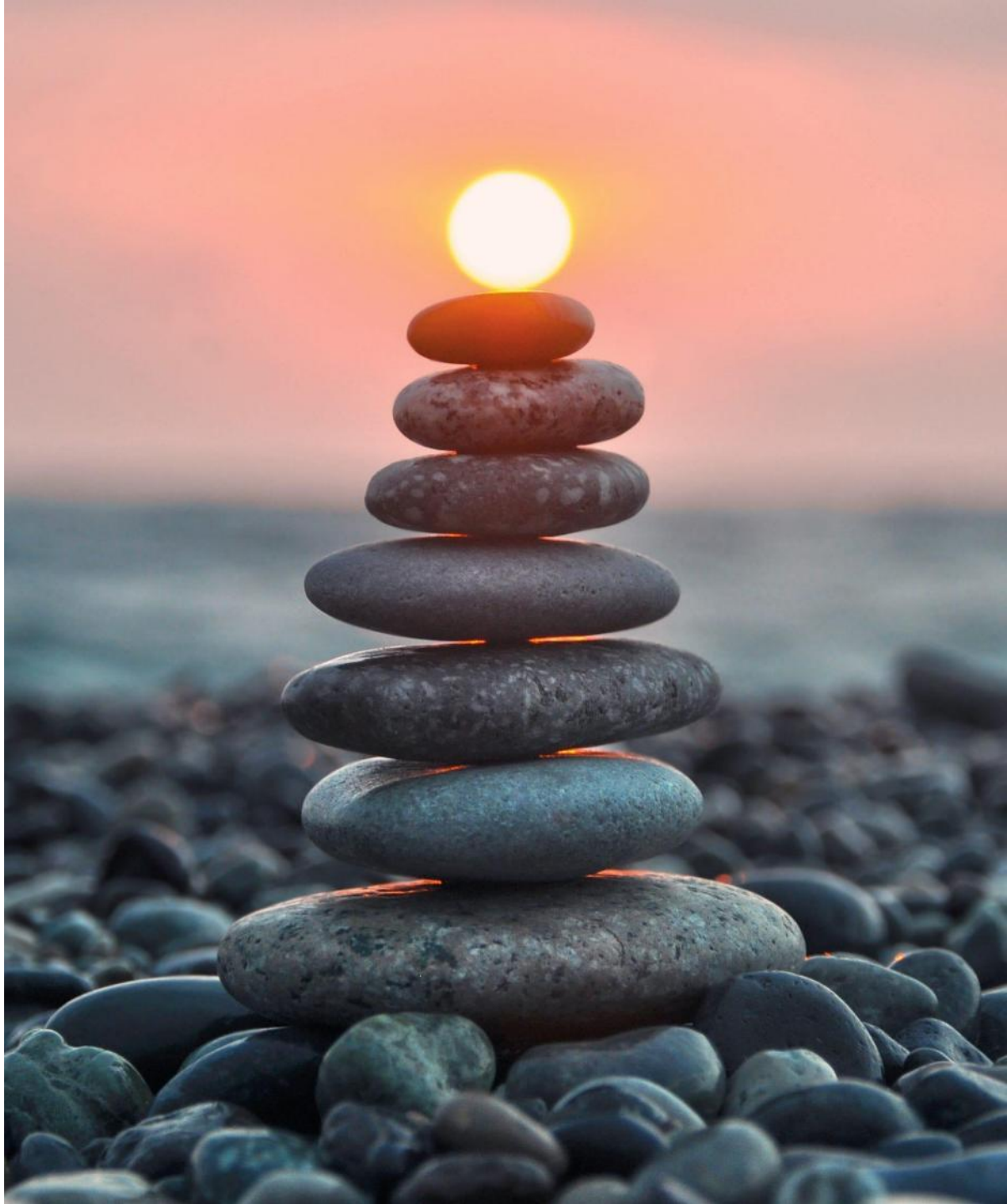
Available Upcoming Grants:

- HUD Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)



Grants: Submission Needs

- **Demonstrated Community Need:** Housing data, populations, service gaps
- **Project Scope & Feasibility:** Property, capacity, design, zoning
- **Budget & Funding Strategy:** Project costs, commitments, matching funds
- **Supportive Services & Partnerships:** Providers, programs, housing transitions
- **Implementation & Outcomes:** Schedule, measurable goals, long-term operations



SECTION #2

Buildings & Assessments



Adaptive Reuse or New Construction?

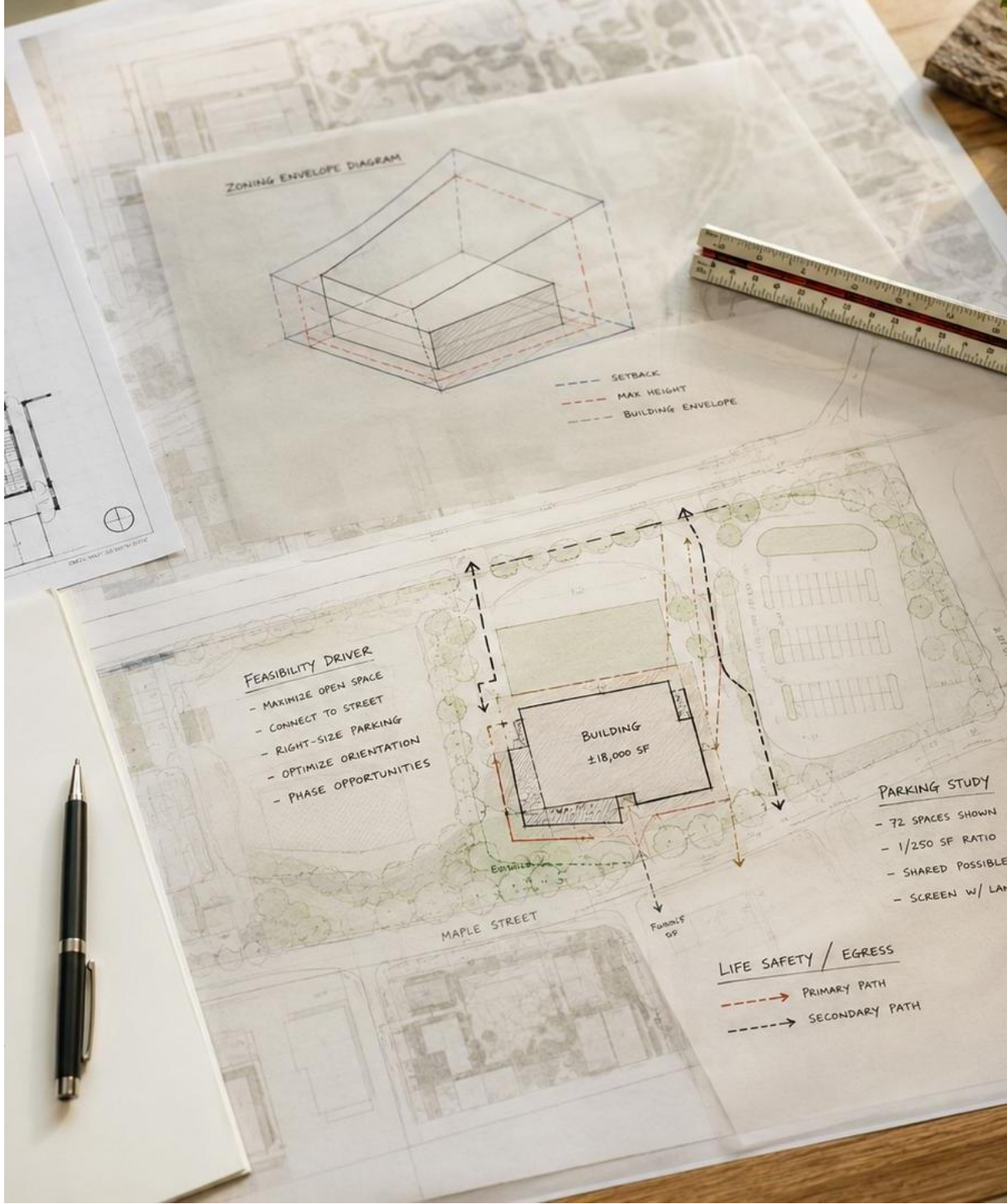
- **Cost:** Total project investment
- **Schedule:** Speed versus unforeseen delays
- **Building Condition:** Structure, systems, & remediation
- **Project Lifespan:** Short- vs long-term needs
- **Resilience:** Durability, maintenance, and adaptability



Transitional Housing: Dogan-Gaither Flats, Knoxville, TN, Sanders Pace Architecture

Finding the Right Building

- **Location Matters:** Transit, employment, healthcare, services
- **Building Compatibility:** Layouts, accessibility, shared spaces
- **Site Conditions:** Zoning, utilities, environment, security
- **Neighborhood Context:** Surrounding uses, community integration
- **Property History:** Previous uses, vacancy, maintenance



Due Diligence: Look Beyond the Surface

- **Go Beyond Standard Inspections:** Experienced, multidisciplinary assessment team
- **Investigate Hidden Conditions:** Exploratory openings, concealed systems
- **Evaluate Existing Infrastructure:** Plumbing, electrical, mechanical, life safety
- **Assess Environmental Risks:** Asbestos, hazardous materials, contamination
- **Understand Vacancy Risks:** Deterioration, deferred maintenance, damage





The Right Team, at the Right Time

- **Engage a Contractor Early:** Cost estimates, constructability, feasibility
- **Involve the Design Team:** Code, accessibility, renovation scope
- **Bring Operators to the Table:** Staffing, security, resident needs
- **Coordinate County Departments:** Human Services, Facilities, Planning, funding
- **Establish Shared Priorities:** Budget, schedule, capacity, operations



The True Cost of Adaptive Reuse

Cost considerations:

- Acquisition and property due diligence
- Environmental remediation and unforeseen conditions
- Renovation, code upgrades, and accessibility
- Furniture, fixtures, equipment, and security
- Long-term maintenance and operating costs

Cost Models – Re-Use vs. New Construction Example:

**Approx. costs*

Renovation:
120K / Unit

New Build:
300K / Unit



The True Cost of Adaptive Reuse: Deeper Dive

Cost Models – Re-Use vs. New Construction Example:

**Approx. costs*



80 Units



80 Units

Renovation:
Total Cost: $8M

New Build:
Total Cost: $45M

Community Acceptance & Success

- **Engage Early:** Neighbors and community stakeholders
- **Communicate the Purpose:** Residents, operations, housing continuum
- **Build Trust:** Transparency, communication, addressing concerns
- **Plan for Continuity:** Maintenance, management, operator transitions
- **Protect the Investment:** Minimize vacancy, maintain property



Do's & Don'ts: Re-Use for Transitional Housing

Do

- Engage the design team, contractor, and operator early
- Investigate hidden conditions before acquisition
- Compare total project costs with new construction
- Evaluate the building for its new use and code implications
- Plan for long-term operations and maintenance

Don't

- Purchase based on a standard property inspection alone
- Assume vacant buildings are ready for renovation
- Overlook costs beyond construction
- Expect existing layouts to accommodate longer stays
- Rush critical due diligence to meet schedules

SECTION #3

Sno-Co New Start Centers



Designing for a Different Purpose

- **Changing Occupancy Patterns:** Short-term stays to extended living
- **Supporting Daily Life:** Storage, laundry, cooking, privacy, gathering
- **Designing for Dignity:** Safety, choice, belonging, trauma-informed design
- **Planning for Operations:** Staff visibility, security, circulation, services
- **Long-Term Durability:** Resilient materials, continuous residential use



Existing Photos





Existing Photos - Edmonds





Existing Photos - Everett





Everett New Start Center

- **Construction Cost:** $8.6M
- **Total project Cost:** $22.4M

- **Sq ft:** 29,000 sf

- **Operator:** Salvation Army

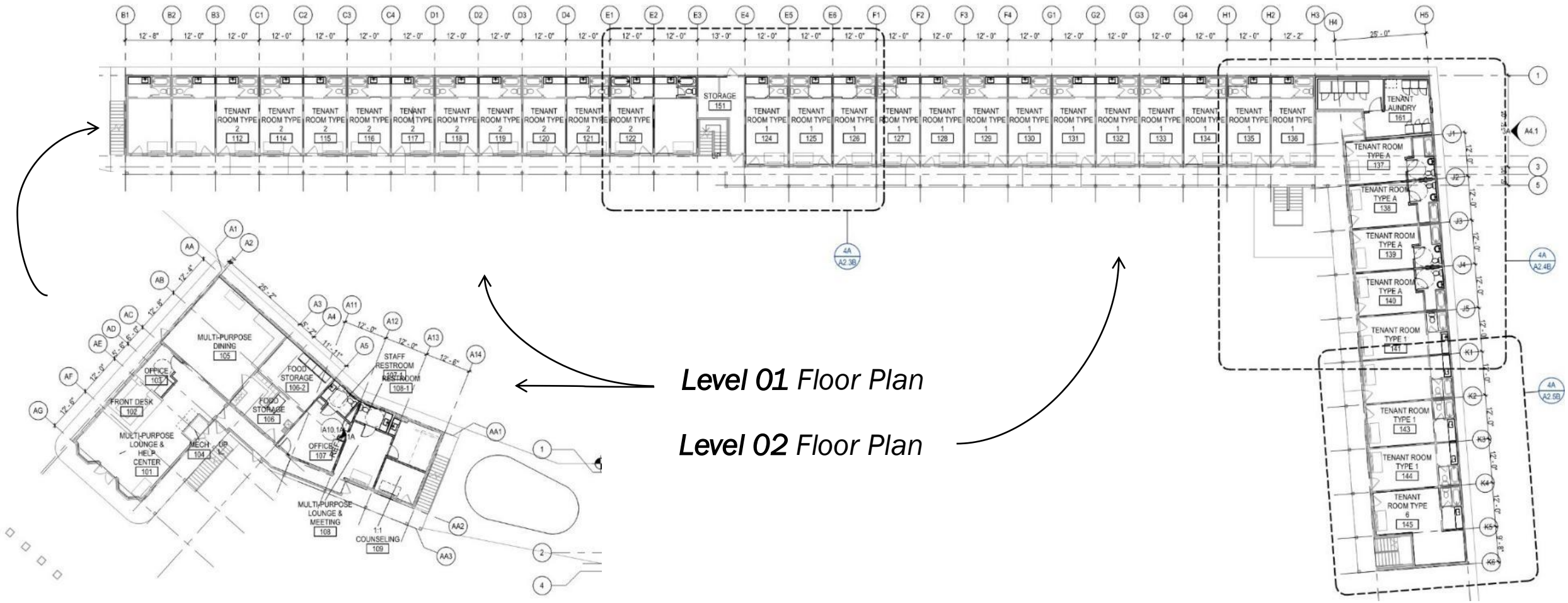
- **Unit Count:** 75
  (TSA using 3 as offices)

- **Amenity Spaces:** Community Room, Meeting Room, Communal Workspace, Counseling Space

- **Staff Spaces:** Staff Offices and Break Area



Everett New Start Center



Level 01 *Floor Plan*

Level 02 *Floor Plan*

Edmonds New Start Center

- **Construction Cost:** $5.6M
- **Total Project Cost:** $17.3M

- **Sq ft:** 24,000 sf

- **Operator:** YWCA

- **Unit Count:** 48

- **Amenity Spaces:** Community Room, Meeting Room, Communal Workspace, Counseling Space

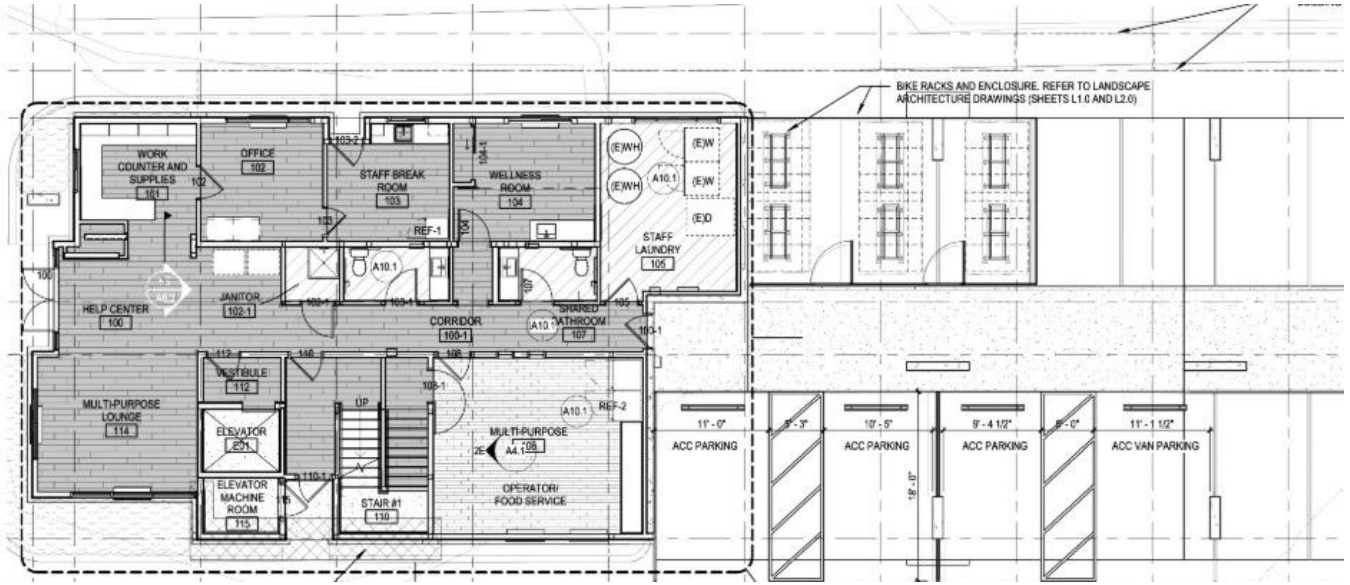
- **Staff Spaces:** Staff Offices and Break Area



Edmonds New Start Center

Level 01 Floor Plan

Level 02 & 03 Floor Plan





Design Overview

Residential Spaces





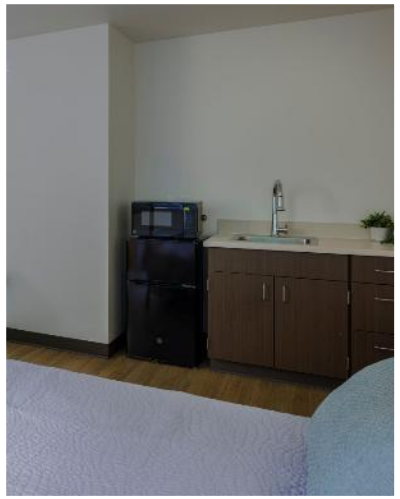
Community Spaces





Design Overview





Bedroom Spaces

Wellness Spaces





New Start Centers – Intake Process

Eligibility & Referral Requirements

Referral Partners

Applicants must be referred through one of seven approved partner organizations, with an established relationship and demonstrated program compliance.

County Qualifications

Applicants must be 18 or older, meet the County's income requirements, and demonstrate at least 30 days of substance-free living.

Background Screening

Applicants must pass a background check, have no felony convictions within the previous five years, and not be registered sex offenders.

Intake Process

01 Partner Referral

Approved partner identifies and recommends applicant

02 Eligibility Review

Qualifications & background screening reviewed

03 Off-Site Interviews

Operator meets with applicant before placement

04 Move-In Prep

Intake preparation completed before arrival

New Start Centers Projected Impact



+ ywca +



Everett New Start Center:

- **Operator:** Salvation Army
- **Unit Count:** 75
- Potential Impact:
  - 5 year impact: 1,500
  - 10 year impact: 3,000
  - 15 year impact: 4,500
  - 20 year impact: 6,000 People

Edmonds New Start Center:

- **Operator:** YWCA
- **Unit Count:** 48
- Potential Impact:
  - 5 year impact: 960
  - 10 year impact: 1,920
  - 15 year impact: 2,880
  - 20 year impact: 3,840 People

Two Sites in 20 Years..... **9,840 possible People Served**

SECTION #4

The Future & Next Steps



Future Considerations



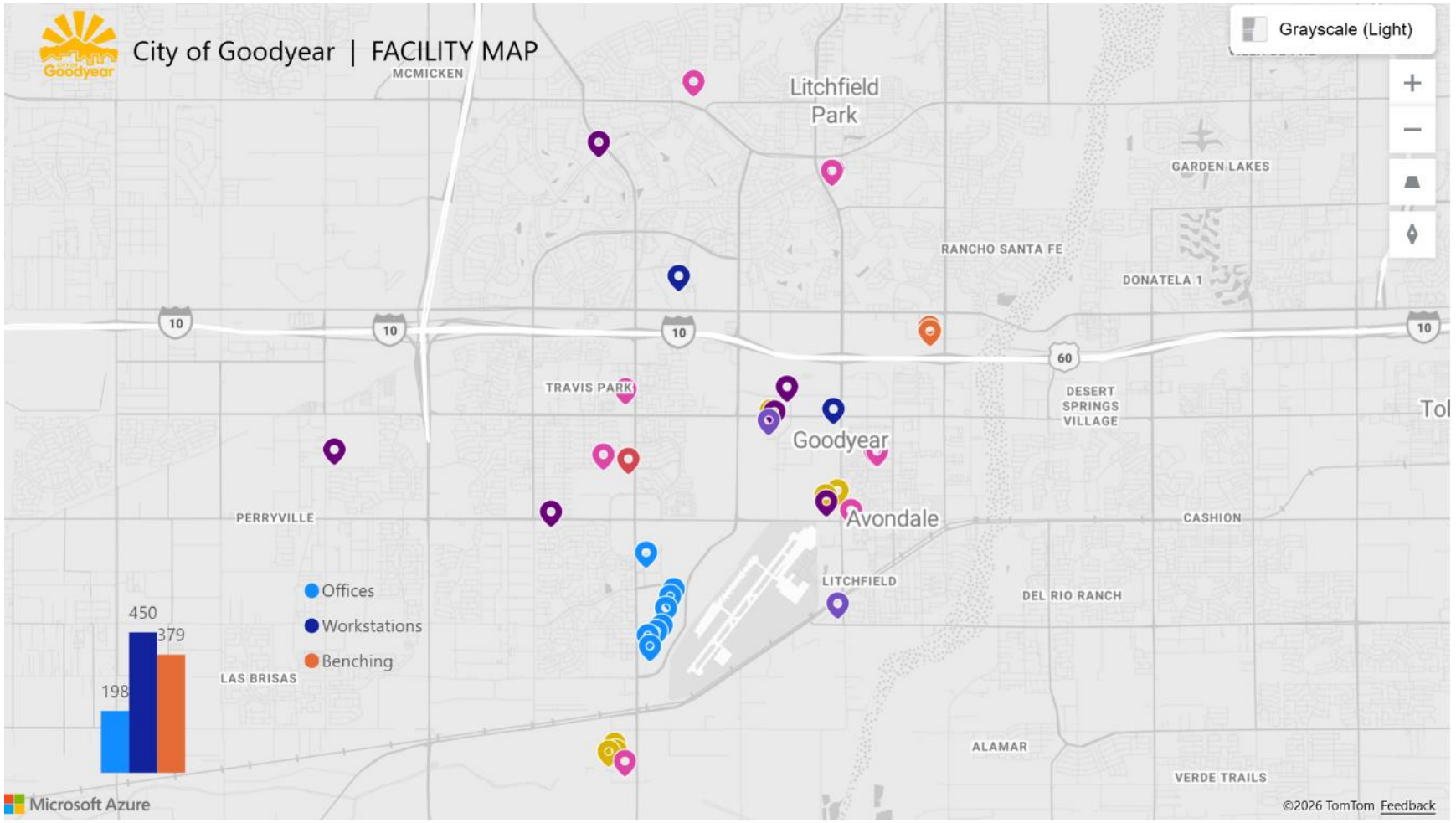
***Option 1 - Existing Buildings**: Motels & Hotels – Transition occupancy while still occupied. Also Office, Warehouse, and other county asset buildings*



***Option 2 - Tiny Home Communities:** utilizing pre-fabrication and open area. More landscape and community design part of this option.*



***Option 3 - New Build Construction:** utilizing small pod apartment design, modular design, or typical construction*



724,992
Area (sf)

55
Buildings

36
Sites

Priority Sites

No	Yes

Ballpark	City Hall
Engineering	Fire
Parks and Rec	Police

- Ballpark Center Field Concession
- Ballpark Right Field Pavilion
- Guardians Dc Batting Tunnels
- Guardians Dc North Tower
- Police Dept. Headquarters
- Police Dept. South District (182)
- Reds Dc Batting Tunnels
- Reds Dc North Tower
- Reds Dc South Tower
- Calle De Pueblo
- Reds Dc Main Building
- Reds Dc Maintenance Shop
- Community Park Restrooms/Concessions
- Community Park Maintenance

Clear all slicers

Office_Available	Workstation_Available	Benching_Available	FCI - Current	Age
0 – 30	0 – 68	0 – 71	0.00% – 32.80%	0 – 79

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People - First Design Background

Trauma — Trauma-Informed Design

Create physical spaces that promote safety, wellbeing, and healing

Neuro-diversity — Neuroinclusive Design

Account for sensory processing differences

Nature — Biophilic Design

Incorporate natural elements to support physical and mental wellbeing

Nature — WELL Design

Performance-based certification measurable human health outcomes

Access — Universal Design

Usable by all ages and abilities

Access — Human-Centered Design

People-First Design

Trauma-Informed Design

11 Domains of Trauma-Informed Design as identified by the Trauma-Informed Design Society

(14) Cowart, C. A., Roche, J. E., & Erdman, A. (2024). Trauma-informed design: A framework for designers, architects, and other practitioners. *Trauma-Informed Design Society*.



Community
Celebrated through culturally responsive design, local partnerships, and spaces that foster belonging.[14]



Equity
Supported through inclusive design, universal access, and environments that reflect diverse cultures and identities.[14]



Play
Fostered through interactive elements, creative spaces, and opportunities for exploration and discovery.[14]



Collaboration
Supported through flexible gathering spaces, inclusive settings, and environments that encourage connection.[14]



Support
Fostered through spaces for peer connection, restorative interactions, and access to care.[14]



Choice
Supported through flexible spaces, adjustable features, and control over the environment.[14]



Transparency
Supported through visual connectivity, accessible information, and spaces that balance openness with privacy.[14]



Comfort
Fostered through accessible design, calming sensory experiences, and connections to nature.[14]



Empowerment
Fostered through adaptable spaces, supportive amenities, and opportunities for self-regulation.[14]



Movement
Supported through active design, engaging amenities, and opportunities for physical activity.[14]



Safety
Fostered through secure design, clear wayfinding, and environments that support physical and psychological well-being.[14]

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People - First Design Strategies

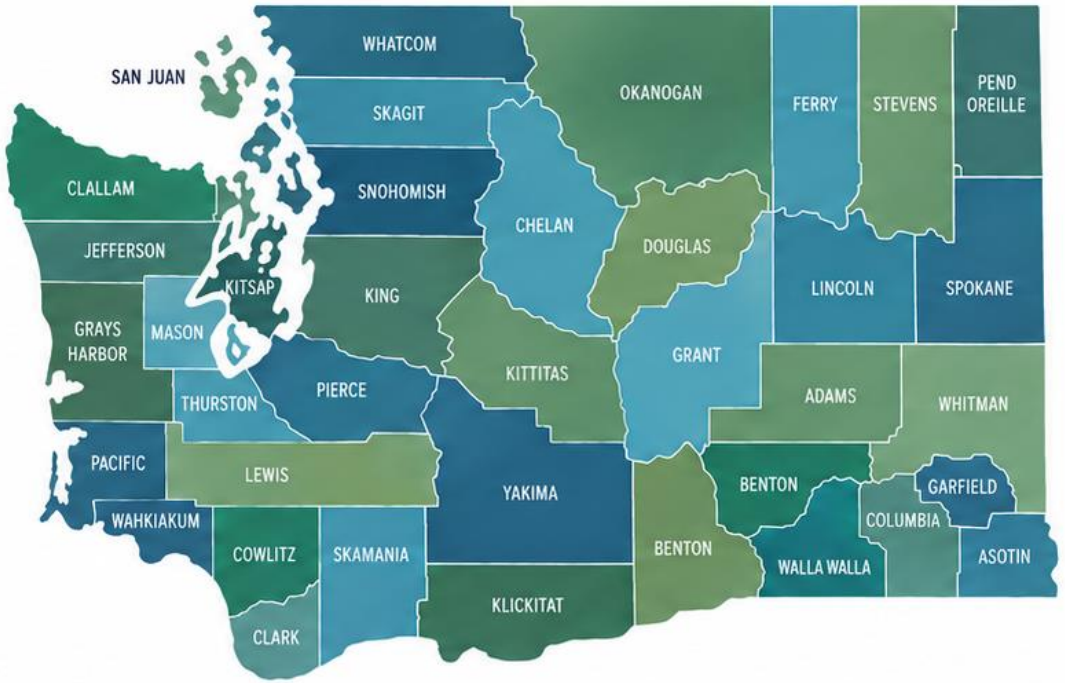




People-First Design

Stronger Communities. A Brighter Tomorrow.

What if every county committed to **an average of two** transitional housing communities?



39
COUNTIES
Working together across Washington

78
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING COMMUNITIES
An average of two sites in each county

4,797
HOUSING UNITS
Based on 123 units per county (75 Everett + 48 Edmonds) model)

4,797
POTENTIAL RESIDENTS AT ONE TIME
Assuming one person per unit

POTENTIAL RESIDENT PLACEMENTS OVER TIME

Assuming a 90-day maximum stay, four stays per unit per year, and full occupancy.

5 YEARS	10 YEARS	20 YEARS
95,940	**191,880**	**383,760**
POTENTIAL RESIDENT PLACEMENTS	POTENTIAL RESIDENT PLACEMENTS	POTENTIAL RESIDENT PLACEMENTS

SCALE TO LOCAL NEED.
Two sites in each county is a starting point, not a universal formula.

MAKE DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVABLE.
Consider adaptive reuse, new construction, modular housing, and regional partnerships.

DESIGN FOR LASTING SUCCESS.
Pair dignified environments with experienced operators and supportive services.

CREATE PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING.
Transitional housing should support measurable, sustainable exits—not become a bottleneck.



Thank you!

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