

Recommendation for Formation of

Spokane Regional Authority for Homelessness, Housing, Health and Safety

Summary of Recommendations:

A tremendous amount of public engagement supports the recommendation to form an integrated, single purpose, regional authority to effectively manage homelessness, housing, health and safety, and the impacts on the broader community. This consolidated, focused entity, a public corporation, will be accountable for significant and measurable reduction of our region's homeless population and for ensuring safe and healthy outcomes for the homeless and for the entire community. This regional authority will take action to improve the quality of life for all citizens by leveraging investments and alignment of activities in the areas of housing, health/social services and safety.

This organization will unite existing housing and human services resources under single leadership with responsibility to a governing board and will be accountable for building further integration opportunities with key operations groups throughout the region including a number of health, safety and housing entities as well as the community at large.

Guiding Principles:

A number of guiding principles and core beliefs led the way in this process. We assume:

- Our region cares for those in need and our service providers are doing hard but remarkable work.
- Our region wants and deserves a clean, safe and healthy community.
- Individuals can be helped out of homelessness with appropriate services and an expectation to succeed.
- Our region cannot merely build its way out of our homelessness crisis - services AND access to housing are the path to success.
- Treatment is often a priority.
- Detention remains a necessary accountability tool.
- Emergency shelter is not housing but a connection point to services.

- Integration of dollars, services, people and data are critical to successfully and sustainably managing homelessness.
- The integration of housing, health and safety are critical to long-term success.

What problem do we need to solve:

Resources currently invested in housing and human services are siloed by both funding type and jurisdiction resulting in lack of leverage to achieve program outcomes. Expenditure of resources are based on short term need rather than long term strategy sustaining an emergency response environment. The method for distributing dollars creates a competitive rather than collaborative environment among service providers. Service providers and public safety organizations are overwhelmed and progress has been elusive. Over the past decade, even with significant increases in investment, homelessness continues to increase - a 34% increase in just the last year – and impacts on the community are being felt.

- Mental health & substance abuse concerns continue to grow
- Citizens and visitors feel less safe
- Support services are not keeping up with demand
- Businesses are losing customers
- Blight is visible and increasing

Goals for integration:

Integration is a step beyond collaboration where the region's assets, both financial and people, can be put to work to create a unified strategy under centralized leadership. The result will deliver services to those in need and deliver clean and safe public spaces for all. Integration breaks down organizational silos and will utilize existing funding sources to facilitate the following:

- Leveraged use of public funding sources to achieve more for each dollar invested
- Delivery of centralized communication to provide clear, relevant and transparent information
- A one-stop-shop for housing and human services service providers across the region
- Ability to react swiftly to address chronic concerns and adapt to address emerging issues
- Reduction of shelter needs with a shift to triage and support services
- Improved ability to enforce 'clean and safe' ordinances with increased capacity for treatment and detention
- Development of an integrated strategy which includes housing with enhanced service requirements
- Accountability for achieving outcomes for the entire community
- Creation of necessary analytics to demonstrate successes as well as weaknesses
- Formation of necessary policy to support the integrated strategy

Integration is the key to facilitating a seismic shift in priorities to deliver measurable outcomes in housing AND robust services to meet individual needs as well as enhanced enforcement ability for public safety agencies.

What will integration Include:

Though the regional entity will adapt and evolve over time, the first steps in integration will include staffing and funds derived from State, Federal and Local funding sources that are used for housing and human services. State and Federal funding from the regional partners would be consolidated under central leadership of the regional entity. Current staff from the regional jurisdictions which are funded through State, Federal and Local funding sources would be assigned to the regional entity and operate under the authority and leadership of the same. The various volunteer boards of the regional partners would then work with the new regional entity.

What is the Governance Model:

The governance model will include a mix of elected officials, who have authority and accountability for expenditure of public funds, and members of the community who bring

expertise from key sectors of the community at large. The governance model will consist of three distinct but collaborative groups:

- 1. Spokane Regional Authority for Homelessness, Housing, Health and Safety Governing Board**
- 2. Executive Committee**
- 3. Authority Implementation Teams**

Board seats for the partner jurisdictions are allocated based on the magnitude of resources currently under management. Individuals and/or agencies who may receive benefit of public funds investments may participate on the Continuum of Care and other advisory boards.

Governing Board Purpose: Adopts Authority's vision, mission, and strategies. The recommended board structure of 13 members is as follows:

5 Standing Board Members from participating jurisdictions:

- Spokane Mayor or Designee
- Spokane City Council
- County Commissioner
- Valley City Council
- Small Cities Representative

8 non-elected appointed sector representatives selected by entire Authority Governing Board from recommendations submitted by Authority Executive Director:

- 1 Housing Public
- 1 Housing Private
- 1 Medical
- 1 Behavioral Health
- 1 Public Safety
- 1 Lived Experience
- 1 Business
- 1 Philanthropy

The board will hire and oversee an Executive Director/CEO and all program and administrative staff will report to that Director.

What are the top priorities:

The first order of business of the regional entity will be to deliver a significant reduction in chronic homelessness – those unsheltered. Over the course of two years, the regional entity will enable Spokane to outperform all counties in Washington state, on our way to being the best performing county of our size in the country.

The recommended 2 year objectives are as follows:

Housing: 40% reduction in unsheltered homeless:

- Incentivize mixed income and multi-family residential development County wide with subsidy for set aside homeless placement
- Begin shift from congregant housing model to distributed housing model
- Require robust support services package for all subsidized housing units
- Achieve 20% annual throughput in all subsidized and transitional housing units

Health: Establish integrated resource center:

- Shift current shelter model to a triage support model with 72 hour throughput
- Provide sobering beds and connection to support services and housing
- Provide treatment and beds for mental health and addiction
- Provide misdemeanor detention space with access to treatment and support services
- Co-locate misdemeanor court/probation and pretrial support services

Safety: Diversion & Detention:

- Utilize enforcement of sit & lie and camping ordinances to connect homeless to the integrated resource/detention center
- Utilize enforcement of public drug use/possession ordinances to connect homeless to the integrated resource/detention center

How will the regional entity be formed:

The regional entity will be formed by legislative action of the region's elected officials from the various partner jurisdictions. A multi-jurisdictional Interlocal Agreement will define governance and operations for the entity and will lay out the Charter of the regional authority. Both the Interlocal Agreement and the Charter will then be adopted County-wide by the Spokane County Board of Commissioners. Those documents include the detailed recommendations we are bringing forward to develop and operate the Authority and are attached in draft form to this Executive Summary.

What's next?

With support from the community, the region's elected officials will take legislative action to establish the new regional entity. Following legislative action, a Board will be formed and an Executive Director search launched. Throughout the startup period, Spokane Regional Collaborative will be available for support and community engagement will continue. As operational details are developed the Board will have operational control until such time as an Executive Director is named.