

2023 City of Bremerton Shelter Analysis

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Scope Summary



The City has conducted a thorough review of available land and is looking for a comparison and recommendation between three different approaches to a shelter site: a sanctioned tent encampment, a Pallet community, and a Sprung Shelter.

RPM's current scope is to provide a recommendation for a type of shelter and an overview of how different shelter types impact neighborhoods.

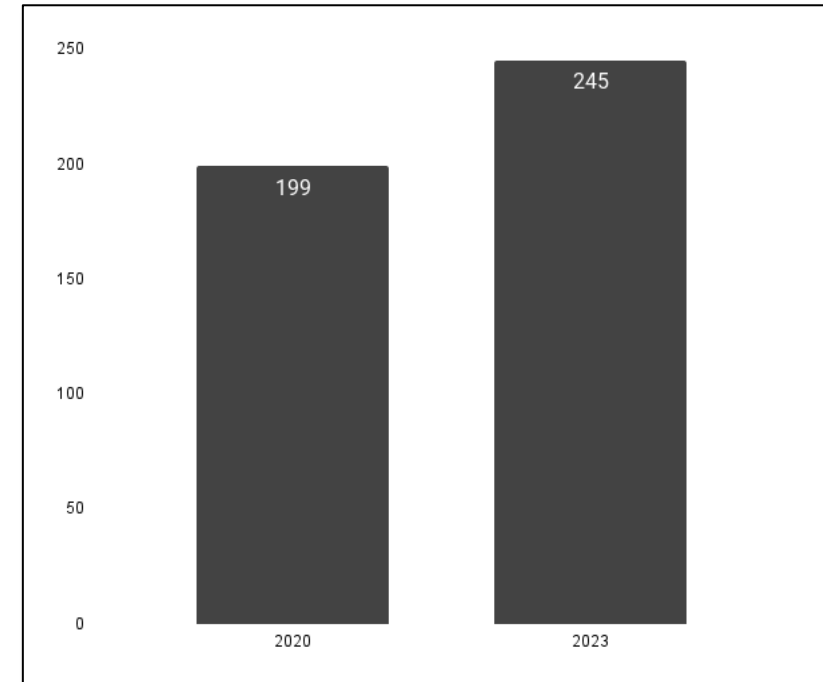
To determine the most appropriate shelter type, RPM Team has prioritized understanding community feedback, engaging with local service providers, and assessing the scope of the issue and available resources.

Increasing Numbers of Unsheltered Individuals

The 2023 count of 245 unsheltered individuals indicates a 34% increase from 2022 and a 23% increase from the prior highest count of 199 in the year 2020. Note that additional shelter beds were in operation from 2021-2023. The unsheltered count was not performed in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic*.

58% of the 245 unhoused are in Bremerton.

Current shelter waitlist is 100-175 people.



RPM Introduction

RPM Team operates as both a consultant for homelessness programs and a turnkey design firm involved in developing and constructing Navigation Shelters. Specializing in pre-engineered and prefabricated structures, we deploy teams faster than traditional EPC firms while remaining an economical option for planning, designing, and constructing housing projects.



Community Faith Meeting, California

Introducing Shelter Options

With the consideration of the local community, Bremerton's public policies, local service providers and assessing the scope of the issue and available resources, RPM Team has prepared an overview of how three different shelter types impact neighborhoods.

- Regulated Tent Encampments
- Pallet Communities
- Sprung Shelter



Regulated Tent Encampment

A regulated tent encampment is a designated area where individuals or groups can set up temporary shelters, typically in the form of tents, in a controlled and regulated manner.



Regulated Tent Encampment, California

Pallet Community

A pallet community typically refers to a housing arrangement where individuals or families reside in small structures or tiny homes made by Pallet Shelters.



Pallet Community, Oregon

Sprung Shelter

Sprung Shelters are used as a solution for providing temporary congregate housing quickly and efficiently for emergency response or initiatives addressing homelessness.



Sprung Shelter, Washington

Option 1: Regulated Tent Encampment

A safe camp facility may become an effective short-term alternative to living in an encampment, however it is critical for decision makers to understand and acknowledge that even a very clean, safe and well-run encampment with tents is technically speaking, not sheltering any of its residents.

Definition of an unsheltered homeless person: A person that lives in a place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the street.

A sanctioned encampment does not align with the City's initiatives, and Mayor's core values.



Tent Encampment, Colorado

Health implications of regulated tent encampments

Tent encampment sites are a growing concern in cities across the United States. These makeshift shelters, often located on cold, hard ground, rarely offer any insulation or protection from the elements. With limited heating options and inadequate sanitation facilities, they pose a significant risk to the public health of both residents and the surrounding community.

Tent encampments are not comparable to Pallet communities and Sprung shelter sites for the following reasons: they don't provide shelter, they don't fall in line with national definitions of shelters, they are unhealthy, unsafe, and they become a city sponsored public health situation further perpetuating the stigma of homelessness.



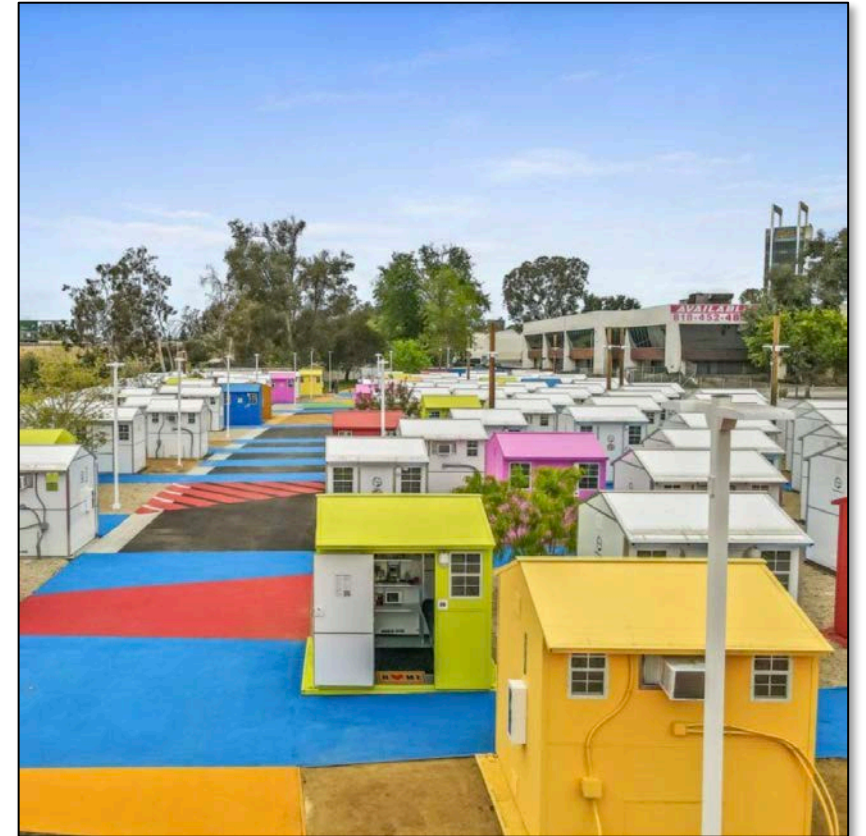
Tent Encampment, California

Option 2: Pallet Communities

Boasting nearly 2,700 units across 13 states, Pallet Shelters offer the quickest solution for quick-build emergency shelters. Their success stems from a unique combination of minimal site development which allows for rapid construction, and a commitment to employing recently unhoused individuals.

General maintenance can also be more difficult due to the large number of individual units which require inspections of mechanical units, smoke detectors, and electrical circuit overloading with multiple appliances. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are easily disabled and vandalized by residents. Individual mechanical units are typically low efficiency and require regular filter changes and frequent maintenance due to damage and over-use.

The interior of the Pallet shelter is also unrefined. The structures have not been adequately tested for fire resistance, and several sites have caught fire due to the Pallet materials' propensity to ignite when a flame is nearby.



Pallet Community, Oregon

Modular sleeping units do not contain individual bathrooms or showers and shared facilities must be accessed by walking outdoors. This is a security problem, particularly during nighttime hours for women, seniors and people with disabilities. Exterior-only access to shared bathroom and shower facilities is also problematic for mixed populations such as trauma and abuse victims, transgender and mentally ill clients.

Aside from the safety concern of using restrooms at night, there is the health concern of traveling outside in freezing temperatures from a shower to your unit, which has been known to cause negative health effects due to the exposure to cold in a damp environment, per NILH standards referenced in the report.

Staff could have difficulty in making sure that clients are protected from outside elements, such as weather, crime, and health due to the lack of visibility that comes with individual private spaces.



Pallet Community, California

Pallet Shelters contain an effective footprint of approximately 64-80 square feet per dwelling unit but an ineffective maximum of 30-40 units per acre.

Costly additional grading would be needed at the site chosen at the city due to the size restrictions individual sleeping cabins present.

Pallet shelters screws pierce the structural envelope, creating many leak points over time. As a result, occupants have voiced extra measures needed to mitigate leaks.

Unfortunately, Pallet Shelters have a negative track record and propensity for fires. Fires have been reported at Pallet sites in Oakland, Los Angeles, and Banning.



Pallet Community Fire Oakland, California

Crosscut.
CASCADIA PBS

News Politics Culture Investigations Podcasts Video

NEWS

Oakland fire in tiny home village turns spotlight on WA company

The plastic structures are made by Everett-based Pallet Shelter and used in several Seattle-area villages.

by Josh Cohen / March 31, 2022

LOCAL NEWS

15 tiny houses for veterans go up in flames in west Los Angeles

by Marc Sternfield
Posted: Sep 9, 2022 / 06:28 AM PDT
Updated: Sep 9, 2022 / 03:47 PM PDT

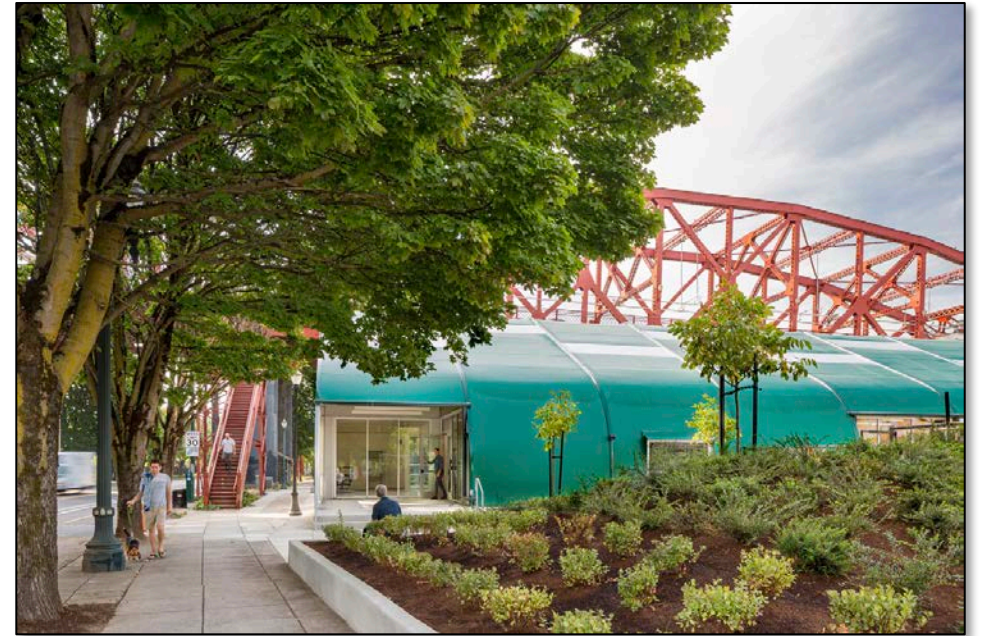


Option 3: Sprung Structures

Shelters exist to provide residents with safety and protection from exposure to the weather while simultaneously reducing the environmental impact on the community, providing respite and services to the residents, and a hygienic bathroom and shower area. Homeless shelters with services are best executed with a Sprung Structure, an energy efficient clear span tension membrane structure.

The shape of the Sprung Structure with the tall interior ceilings enable a more dense floor plan without feeling claustrophobic, fitting more residents relative to other construction types like modular trailers. With the tall ceilings also comes natural light which offers a bright voluminous living space, becoming a more dignified and humanistic facility.

The Sprung Shelter option offers a regulated open space, where climate controls and thus disease prevention is managed at a staff level, versus an individual (resident) level, adding to the positive health impacts of the facility.



Sprung Shelter, Oregon

Congregate dormitories are highly staff-efficient because staff and clients are regularly interacting. This results in increased safety for staff and clients by reducing the response time for emergency situations through visual monitoring and a limited number of building entry points.

Shelters with dormitory buildings also provide more convenient and safe access to restrooms and showers during day and nighttime hours without ever having to leave the facility, meaning there is not outdoor exposure to use a restroom in a Sprung Shelter. Direct access to staff and security offices is also easily accommodated in a shared shelter building.

Centralizing operations under one roof makes day to day operations more streamlined and efficiency is improved resulting in better outcomes and less stress. The intake process occurs indoors with easy access to restrooms, lounges and most importantly, respite from the outside elements. Also improving neighborhood optics.



Sprung Shelter, California

Congregate dormitory buildings are the most efficient way to maximize the number of dwelling units/beds on a given site. A typical site with dormitory only sleeping provides approximately 400 beds per acre and a 100-bed dormitory can be placed on a site that is less than half an acre.

The column free design means that the interior build out and environments can change over time, to evolve with the demographic of the population, or to change its use completely to transition into a community center or public works facility.

When designed properly, a shared, congregate living facility can help create a sense of shared purpose & belonging and in general, larger buildings feel more traditional than individual sleeping units. Sprung Shelters are flexible in design to allow traditional architectural components to be integrated like glass entry doors, storefront glazing, and fun curves, alcoves, and entry ways.



Sprung Shelter, Washington

Stigma Around Crime

Relevant research:

<https://sf.curbed.com/2019/11/21/20976211/navigation-centers-san-francisco-crime-rates-sf>

-According to city data obtained by Kron 4, crime around most of SF's Nav Ctr's has dropped based on evidence of crime reports requested of a quarter mile radius

<https://dignitymoves.org/dispelling-the-myth-home-less-shelters-and-crime-rates/>

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11942734/emergency-calls-complaints-are-down-near-san-joses-temporary-housing-sites-so-why-are-they-still-so-politically-risky>

-Studies show the opening of homeless shelters does not result in an increase of crime rates, and crime rates have decreased after the establishment of homeless shelters.

<https://thefrisc.com/sfs-specialized-homeless-shelters-do-not-bring-more-crime-no-matter-what-angry-neighbors-say-d7322054a568>

-Shows no pattern of rising crime in the months following the opening of a shelter

Stigma Around Crime continued

<https://www.fremontforeveryone.com/s/Navigation-Center-Neighborhood-Impacts-Final-Report.pdf>

Navigation Centers Have No Effect on Neighborhood Crime: An analysis of San Francisco Police Department data indicated that navigation centers have no effect on neighborhood crime.

- Amount of crime occurring near Navigation Centers was equal to locations without centers
- Half of those surveyed believe amount of visible homeless decreased after a center opened in their neighborhood
- Neighbors living within one block of the Navigation Centers did not believe that the centers had any effect on the value of their property

<https://californianewstimes.com/embarcadero-navigation-center-once-the-focus-of-much-rage-from-neighbors-quietly-gets-two-year-extension/647826/>

- Neighborhoods that usually oppose shelter, end up supporting them

Out of the three, Sprung Shelter best aligns with the intent of the above provided information. It is the only option that truly offers an open, transparent, and controlled setting for the residents ensuring safety to the public of the surrounding neighborhood.

Our Recommendation: Sprung Shelter



The Sprung Shelter option is better because it offers shorter stays, climate control, and disease prevention. This is better for the health of the residents and the surrounding community.

Sprung shelters are a better alternative to both encampment and pallet options because they align with the 2019 Homeless Crisis and Housing Plan, provide shelter from the elements (weather resistant), and are more transparent.

A Sprung shelter fits into the City of Bremerton 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments Support efforts to provide for a variety of housing options such as: Emergency group housing, homeless shelters and short-term housing.

Sprung shelters are a sustainable option due to their reusability, adaptability, and reduced construction time compared to conventional methods.