



2023 City of Bremerton Shelter Analysis



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Scope Summary

In recent years, homelessness has witnessed a noticeable increase, impacting not only the City of Bremerton but also our entire nation. This challenge has strained the resources of the Cities and has tested our dedication to guaranteeing that every individual in our community has access to secure, dignified, and stable housing. In alignment with the recently implemented unauthorized camping ordinance, the City of Bremerton, WA is in the process of setting up an emergency shelter to address the pressing needs of the homeless population while simultaneously safeguarding city parks, neighborhoods, and other public spaces from unregulated camping.

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.



Sprung Shelter, Washington



Pallet Community, Oregon

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.



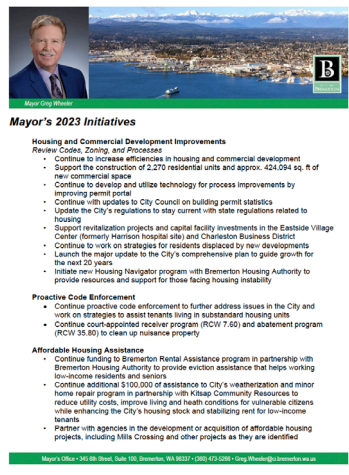
Tent Encampment, California



Summary of Local Research Presented

RPM attended the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition meeting on November 15th where they received input from Kitsap Community Resources, Kitsap Rescue Mission, Kitsap Mental Health, and other homeless coalition members regarding the scope of the issue including current information on their wait lists along with the Kitsap County Heart meeting.

Additionally, RPM has reviewed the Oyster Bay Site.





2023 Kitsap County Point in Time Count Overview - Preliminary Data



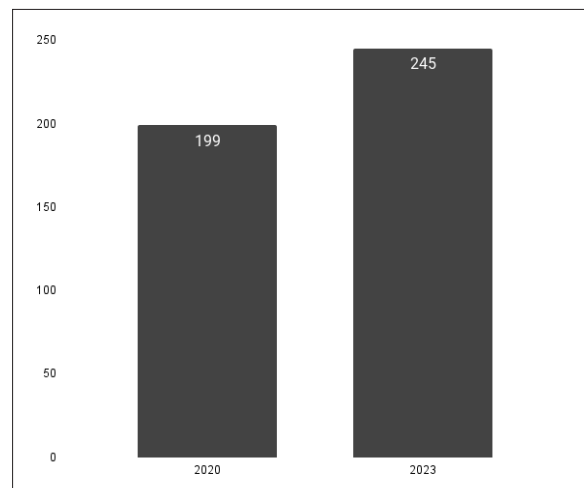
Unauthorized Tents, California

The “Point in Time” count is an annual survey that gathers information about people experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period at the end of January. This survey provides critical information regarding the scope and nature of homelessness in our community and can impact funding for homeless housing and services. Because participating in the survey is voluntary, and relies on volunteers finding people experiencing homelessness, it is considered to be an undercount of the actual number of people experiencing homelessness. Participants are surveyed in a number of locations throughout the county including the Project Connect Resource Fairs[1], food banks/meal sites, in encampments, and on the streets.

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*.

Current shelter waitlist is 100-175 people.





Defining Sheltered vs. Unsheltered

For the purposes of this survey, information is collected on sheltered (in Emergency shelter or transitional housing) vs. unsheltered homelessness. In the 2023 count, 245 people said they were unsheltered. The majority of those who were unsheltered indicated they lived outside in places not meant for human habitation.

Last Place of Residence

Surveys also collected information about the last city of permanent residence, and 27% of unsheltered households provided this data. 42 (75%) of those households previously had stable housing in Kitsap County.

Characteristics

When asked about various personal characteristics, 142 unsheltered heads of households (68%) responded. The most common response from survey participants was that they experienced challenges related to mental health, followed by chronic substance use, permanent disability, and chronic health conditions.

Causes of Homelessness

When asked about the specific cause (or causes) of homelessness, 113 unsheltered households (54%) responded. The most common response was health issues (including mental health), economic issues (loss of a job or unable to work), and housing issues (eviction or loss of housing).

[1] In 2023 the Project Connect Community Resource fairs were hosted at the Salvation Army in Bremerton, Gateway Fellowship Church in Poulsbo, and at the United Methodist Church in Port Orchard.





Introduction to RPM Team

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.

We deliver projects that are well-designed, energy efficient, dignified, and inspiring. RPM Team makes a point to incorporate principles of trauma informed design to enhance the experience of the clients, reduce stress, and cultivate an environment of mutual trust and support.

Our team aims to eliminate homelessness by developing public-private coalitions to provide permanent homes by integrating social, health, and public services to provide support to the city's unhoused to ensure their rehabilitation and stability.



Community Faith Meeting, California

Mission: To end the cycle of homelessness

- Develop public-private coalitions to strategically transition our homeless clients from the street to permanent housing units.
- Collaborate with non-profits, community-based organizations, law enforcement, City, County, State, and other government entities to proactively support homeless individuals and to prevent homelessness.
- Provide 24/7 case management services plan to clients during intake, transitioning, and permanent housing periods.
- Build safe communities, one site at a time, throughout the city and county, with supportive counselors at community sites to ensure stability and smooth case management for clients-turned-tenants.
- Eliminate the “Not-In-My-Backyard” (NIMBY) mentality in the community with education about the cause and prevention of the cycle of homelessness.

RPM has worked on projects such as navigation centers, campuses, overnight shelters, dormitories, and housing that has accommodated up to 3,000 bedspace units. These projects were conducted in collaboration with government agencies: City of Sacramento, Phoenix, San Francisco, Huntington Beach, Reno, Manteca, and Stockton. We've also worked with public/private organizations such as Human Services Camp Inc., Interfaith Works, Volunteers of America, Family Promise, and Yakima Union Gospel Mission.



Introduction to Three Shelter Types

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. There are specific rules, guidelines, and oversight in place to govern the operation of the tent encampment. These regulations may cover aspects such as the size and layout of the tents, the provision of essential services like sanitation facilities and waste disposal, security measures, and overall safety standards.

Regulated tent encampments are often established in response to homelessness or emergency situations, providing a temporary and organized solution for individuals who lack permanent housing. Local authorities or organizations may implement regulations to ensure that the encampment operates in a way that promotes safety, health, and dignity for its residents while addressing community concerns. The goal is to offer a transitional housing option while also maintaining a degree of order and accountability within the encampment.



Tent Encampment, Colorado

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 Shelters are thin foam insulated panels with metal stud material and a smooth finish. In the context of a pallet community, these pallets are creatively transformed into basic structures that can serve as makeshift homes.

These communities are often associated with efforts to address homelessness or provide affordable housing solutions. The use of Pallet Shelters allows for relatively inexpensive and easily obtainable materials,



Pallet Community, Delaware



and the structures are often simple and quick to assemble. Pallet Shelter communities may be part of broader initiatives aimed at providing temporary or transitional housing for those in need.

Sprung Shelter

A Sprung Shelter refers to a type of clearspan pre-engineered structure created by Sprung Structures, featuring a distinctive design with a curved, tensioned membrane roof supported by a robust frame. These shelters are renowned for their versatility, rapid assembly, and durability.



Sprung Shelter, Oregon

In the context of emergency response or initiatives addressing homelessness, Sprung Shelters are often employed as a solution for providing temporary congregate housing quickly and efficiently. The tensioned membrane roof offers a resilient and weather resistant cover, making these structures suitable for creating enclosed and spacious environments.



Deep Dive Analysis of Three Shelter Types

Option 1: Regulated Tent Encampment

Emergency “safe camps” are gaining traction with municipal agencies seeking rapidly deployable solutions for homelessness. These facilities, with roots back to the 1970s, offer a low-barrier entry point through non-congregate/non-dormitory settings, attracting residents of homeless encampments before or after their removal.

Providing low-barrier pathways to permanent housing begins with offering interim housing opportunities and a clear path to permanent housing.

“Permanent housing opportunities cannot always be immediately accessed, so it is important to be able to provide an immediate, interim housing opportunity (which could include shelter, bridge housing, or other temporary arrangements) without barriers to entry while permanent housing and appropriate supports are being secured.” US Inter-agency Council on Homelessness (USICH)



Tent Encampment, Colorado

Once residents begin to see their friends & neighbors moving into safer, dignified supportive housing or permanent housing, even the most service resistant residents are much more likely to leave their encampment or ‘rough sleeping’ living situation. The key factor is inter-agency cooperation and providing immediate supportive housing options that can provide an alternative to traditional congregate living shelters.

Tent Encampments in Action

One very successful example is Venice, CA where 200 people were living in tents along the iconic Venice boardwalk and which resulted in 89% have been matched to a permanent resource—82 people are now in permanent housing, and another 84 are in interim housing waiting to be placed in permanent homes. A homeless service agency, St. Joseph Center worked closely with local elected officials, the city homelessness services authority, sanitation workers and law enforcement to build relationships with their unhoused neighbors to help them understand why the boardwalk wasn’t a healthy or sustainable place to live – and they presented a clear, tangible offer of shelter and housing that was close by.



“The effort on the boardwalk was no one-off. On the other side of the city, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) successfully housed every one of the 326 people living on the lake side of MacArthur Park near Downtown LA. A handful of holdouts declined to leave before the closure, stirring fears of arrests. None were made. Even the most disillusioned, watching their fellow community members accept real offers of housing, came around to ‘yes.’

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. This is because homeless people have been displaced from their homes and are offered essentially the same level of accommodations they were living in previously in an encampment. In spite of the added security and better access to services, a sanctioned, intentional tent encampment basically provides a few more amenities and a less convenient location for unsheltered people to camp. The dilemma in equating tents with emergency or temporary housing is best illustrated on the UN and HUD definition of acceptable shelter conditions:



Tent Encampment, Colorado

An unsheltered homeless person lives in “a place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the street.”

Clearly a tent is no better suited for human habitation than a car or an abandoned building. More importantly, for a government or homeless services agency to be erecting tents - even as an interim solution to a clear crisis situation- sends an highly unsympathetic message and makes for some very poor optics because it says with little uncertainty that homeless people do not deserve to live indoors with any level of basic human decency.



Sanctioned Tent Encampment, California

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



In contrast to the rules that govern many aspects of shelter stays, staying in an encampment means that people can generally come and go as they please.

“The ability to exercise autonomy and freedom of movement appears to be a powerful factor that draws some people to encampments” (Lutz, 2015; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2014; Sparks, 2017a.).

This independence is sometimes eroded in communities that “normalize” encampments, introducing regulations that restrict residents’ activities in the process. When that happens, encampments may in effect become an extension of the same shelter system that people reject in favor of encampments (Herring, 2014; Speer, 2018a).

Courts have found that depriving homeless people of the rights to perform survival activities in public spaces when no alternatives are available violates the 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, and 14th Amendments to the Constitution (Kieschnick, 2018; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2014).

In *Martin v. City of Boise*, the court held that “as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property.” Making it difficult for cities to enforce anti-camping laws.

Health Implications of 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 Encampment, California

Tent encampments have been proven to negatively affect health as per a NIH study, “Mortality rates among the homeless under cold stress show the highest relative risk in comparison to deaths among the homeless occurring during thermo-neutral conditions. This indicates a significant risk of excessive mortality among the homeless under cold stress.”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5739436/>



With the information provided on sanctioned tent encampments, this solution does not align with the initiatives and values of the City. A tent encampment type solution does not provide dignity, health safety, public safety, nor help to dispel the stigma surrounding visible homelessness.

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 become a city sponsored public health situation; further perpetuating the stigma of homelessness.



Tent Encampment, Tennessee



Comparisons: Pallet Communities & Sprung Shelters

Option 2: Pallet Communities

Lighter-duty modular units like Pallet Shelters, popularized by the “tiny house movement,” have become a convenient option for some municipal agencies. These prefabricated sleeping cabins offer a quick way to set up an urban campground, providing



Pallet Community, Oregon

a temporary solution for unhoused people displaced by encampment bans and similar ordinances restricting public sleeping or loitering. The recent US Supreme Court rulings limiting such bans unless cities can provide sufficient alternative (and voluntary) living arrangements has created a robust industry for sleeping cabins and many new manufacturing companies have popped up to meet the growing demand.

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.

However, the shortcuts to quick construction can have long-term impacts on the dignity of a community.

Pallet Shelter Safety and Operations & Maintenance

Pallet and other light-duty modular sleeping units are not designed for long term use and are easily damaged and somewhat difficult to repair with standard building materials. Sleeping units are not designed for relocation to future sites and often get damaged in transit. Individual sleeping units are also more difficult to monitor for safety and enforcing facility rules, i.e. smoking and cooking in unit; illicit activities and drug & alcohol abuse. Because of this it creates an increased opportunity for residents to return to their own ways because of the privacy the unit allows. Once a resident



Pallet Community, Oregon



discovered breaking these rules they will be removed from the site and be back on the street, continuing the cycle of homelessness.

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.



Pallet Shelter, California

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.

Additionally, if the shelter is not perfectly flat, its doors will catch and not open properly. Since Pallet shelters are not inspected in advance, the interior wiring requires ongoing inspections, making the structures high maintenance.

Another drawback of Pallet shelters is that they have to be built on-site and deteriorate faster when relocated. Although Pallet shelters were created with the best intentions, they are ultimately not conducive to dignified semi-permanent living space.

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



Pallet Community Fire, Oakland, California



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 earlier referenced.

Security

Security must be 24/7 due to the setup and ongoing monitoring of all pallet units and their housed clients along with case manager/s and or staff operating pallet communities. Security personnel must be able to inspect unit interiors to ensure conformance with program or to remove residents from premises from unit tampering, drug & alcohol abuse.

Staffing of security must run in shifts of 8 hours so that security will be conscious and alert with any areas of concern and or alarming matters or even as simple as check-ins and or follow-up to client questions for safety. Law enforcement must have a direct line of communication with security at all times for the true safety of all clients housed in the pallet structure. Security must also be able to understand the population of clients that are housed and be able to empathize with scenarios and or situations that arise and be able to understand how to de-escalate vs escalate a situation and or concern.

The Security role also helps with an extra set of eyes and ears for day-to-day operations and awareness of services being implemented.



Pallet Site, Unknown

Client Health, Safety and Hygiene

Providing portable restrooms is a must for a pallet community to make sure all clients have access to clean and sanitized facilities for their own health and hygiene. Clients must be provided a safe and clean space for their dignity and well-being aside from their sleeping unit so these sites need to be paired with some kind of community building. Sanitation should be a top priority within the layout of a pallet community, re-



strooms should be cleaned on a daily basis and in close proximity to the sleeping units.

All pallet units should be inspected and cared for by not only the client but also the operator to ensure that living conditions are environmentally safe and healthy and to be aware of all hazardous conditions that will create damage to the pallet units.

Weather also plays a significant role in how the wear and tear of these units are safe havens for clients because the majority of units are in the elements outdoors. 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.

Staffing and Operations

Staffing and operations are the keys to the success or failure of a working pallet community. Staffing must provide an intake-like process for check-in and out of units. The layout of the Pallet community should always be designed with the ultimate goal of no blind spots and or block-off areas where staff and clients would be concerned about being in a no-exit zone. Understanding that operations should be geared towards client-centered hours and not regular business center hours. Operations are meant to help clients sunset away from pallets into more permanent supporting housing.

Pallet Shelter Site Efficiency and Flexibility

Single-occupant, sleeping units are much smaller than the popular tiny houses, and do not include a living space, storage closets, kitchen or dining areas. Modular sleeping units are nearly all Type V-B, non fire-protected construction using combustible materials such as wood, composite plastic or fiberglass wall panels. Without fire-protected construction these units must be separated by a minimum of 10 feet in all directions to meet building and fire codes in order to prevent fire spread from one unit to another. This results in an effective footprint of approximately 64 square feet per dwelling unit but an ineffective maximum of 30-40 units per acre. Light duty tiny houses are also not designed to be stacked and all non-congregate tiny house shelters are limited to single story structures.

Pallet communities depending on site and size will differ from the number of units it can hold or place within community design. Weather elements and conditions of where the pallet community is placed will also have either a positive or negative impact on the longevity and wear and tear of units. The size of the pallet (unit) will also determine how many can be placed or built within the design of the community that is trying to be built to meet the needs of cities and or counties. The site chosen by the City is unable to fit 100 people due to the size restrictions individual sleeping cabins present.

Pallet Shelter Neighborhood Impact

Tiny house sleeping units are not a standard building typology and do not fit into the standard planning and zoning design guidelines in most cities. Modular sleeping unit



sites often require a special use permit or land use zoning variance, which generally require public hearings and adds two to three months to the development schedule.

Pallet communities also visually resemble itinerant camps and do not elicit a sense of permanence or human dignity. The typical Pallet size is 8 ft by 10 ft, which is smaller than a children's bedroom. Pallet Shelter sites often do not provide a central day use facility that is conditioned and large enough to accommodate all the residents. Without these community spaces, these sites can often feel more isolating than their previous encampment where their friends and support system were.

Pallet have cold, sharp edges, and their thin walls are only 1.5 inches thick. Because they don't have a closed envelope system, air gaps are visible from the interior. Their lack of insulation makes it very difficult to heat the structures in the winter and cool them in the summer, which generates significant energy costs. Pallet shelters are also assembled with 500-700 tech screws that penetrate the structural envelope, creating many leak points. As a result, occupants frequently have to cover their homes with tarps after just one season of use to mitigate leaks from rain. From a neighborhood perspective Pallet Shelters are easily visible from the street and the overall site rarely looks clean and evokes the encampment feel that communities want to move away from.

Crosscut
CASCADIA PBS
News Politics Culture Investigations Podcasts Video **MEMBERSHIP** 🔍 ...

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 Sternfeld
Posted: Sep 9, 2022 / 8:28 AM PDT
Updated: Sep 9, 2022 / 8:47 PM PDT

FIRE DESTROYS 15 TINY HOMES AT VA FACILITY
WEST LA
KTLA 7 NEWS
DEVELOPING NEWS
KTLA 7 NEWS

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.

- <https://crosscut.com/news/2022/03/oakland-fire-tiny-home-village-turns-spotlight-wa-company>
- <https://kesq.com/news/2020/12/27/38-banning-residents-displaced-after-fire-destroys-newly-built-temporary-homes/>
- <https://ktla.com/news/local-news/15-tiny-houses-for-veterans-go-up-in-flames-in-west-los-angeles>



Pallet Shelter Testimonials & Community Feedback

Testimonial of a Pallet Shelter resident in Everett, WA, Jaime Adams, Age 43.

“Although the site is supposed to have case managers, the hours are not consistent, along with the laundry services. Inside, most of the time the heaters work, sometimes they can fail and it will be freezing until they replace it, but the heaters are at waist level which makes no sense because the floors are not insulated and the floors are freezing at night, my door handle has been broken so it cannot lock that’s why I call it the dry erase board hut... the operators are more concerned about items around our units then the services, a site manager makes routine checks and puts notes on our units to put them away or they’ll be thrown away by 3pm. They’re more focused on not making this look like a shanty town then on us.”

Jaimie’s testimonial illustrates a considerable deficiency with pallet shelters; even with proper oversight for operations, the units themselves fail quickly and add to the stress for the residents occupying them.

Patrick Newman, a member of the public, echo’s Jaime’s feelings with his letter to the editor stating, “In any case, for the homeless person “lucky” enough to procure a 64 square-foot Pallet shelter, this is one step removed from utter destitution. Being one step removed from utter destitution hardly qualifies as pleasurable.”

<https://www.chicoer.com/2022/09/11/letter-where-is-the-pleasure-in-shelter-life/>



Option 3: Sprung Shelters

Homeless shelters are a type of homeless service agency that will provide temporary residence for all those in need. 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. Sprung incorporates energy-efficient components, such as insulation, high-performance windows, and energy-



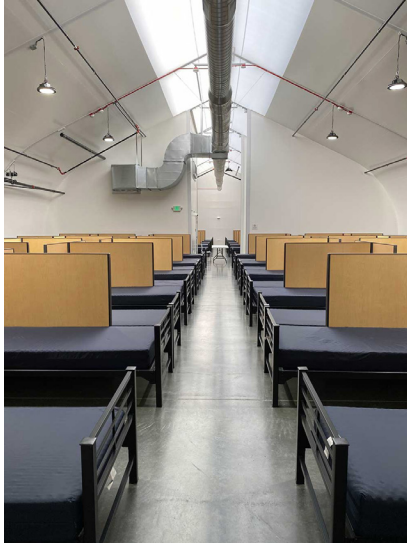
Sprung Shelter, Oregon

efficient lighting, which can help reduce the building's overall energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Sprung Structures are exceptionally airtight, minimizing heat or cooling loss. They utilize formaldehyde-free fiberglass insulation to insulate their structures, adding foil backing to increase efficiency and assist in the containment of radiant energy. Sprung also incorporates skylights and windows to take advantage of natural light and reduce power consumption.

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.

Sprung Shelter Safety and Operations & Maintenance

Sprung Shelters provide a commercial or light industrial level of durability & require very low maintenance for the building enclosure. Dormitories and day rooms in Sprung Shelters generally use 1-2 high efficiency package heat pump mechanical units which are low maintenance and offer 10-15 year manufacturer warranties. Fabric buildings include standard a continuous daylight panel at the roof ridge which provides ample natural light which creates and airy, welcoming space that feel significantly larger than it actually is.



Sprung Interior

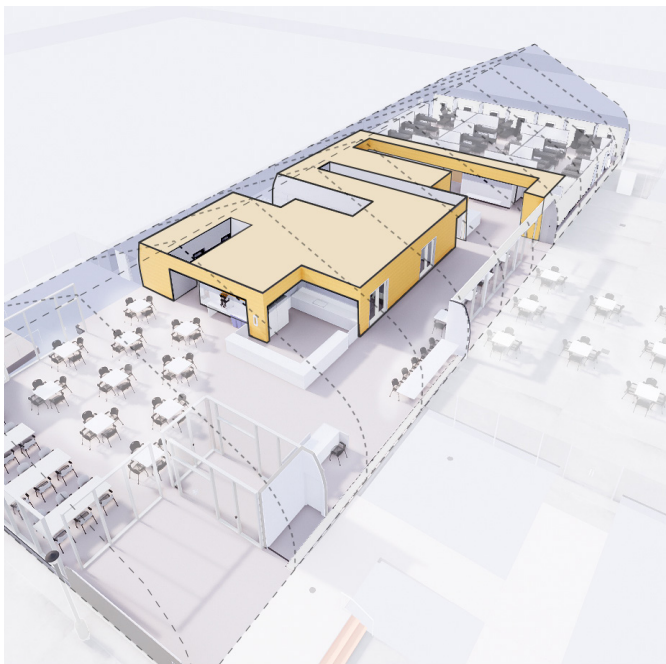
The use of light sensors and dimmable fixtures further reduce energy use when there is sufficient daylight. The Sprung Shelter option offers a regulated open space, climate controls and thus disease prevention is managed at a staff level, versus an individual (resident) level, adding to the positive health impacts of the facility.

Congregate dormitories with centralized & shared Navigation Center day rooms and dining facilities 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. Navigation Centers 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 Navigation Center building.

Men, women and disabled clients can be housed in separate buildings in a congregate dormitory setting and sub-groups such as couples, transgender individuals can be further segregated using interior privacy partitions. Access to restrooms and common spaces

for individuals with disabilities is also more convenient in a congregate living building.



Sprung Interior Plan by Opsis

Security

Security must be 24/7 due to the setup and ongoing monitoring of all housed clients along with the case managers. Staffing of security must run in shifts of 8 hours so that security will be conscious and alert with any areas of concern and or alarming matters or even as simple as check-ins and or follow-up to client questions for safety. Law enforcement must have a direct line of communication with security at all times for the true safety of all clients housed.



Client Health, Safety and Hygiene

Sanitation should be a top priority within the design and the layout of the whole structure and should be cleaned on a daily basis. The goal for clients is to come off the streets and although it is an enclosed Sprung shelter, it's not meant to be a shelter for the long term, but a more effective and safer haven for us all. Staff will be able to help clients and protect them from outside elements, such as: weather, crime, and violence.

Staffing and Operations

Centralizing operations under one roof can lead to a number of benefits for both clients and service providers. Day to day operations are 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. The layout should always be designed with the ultimate goal of no blind spots or block-off areas, where staff and clients would be concerned about being in a no-exit zone.

Operations are meant to help clients sunset away from pallets into more permanent supporting housing and a Sprung Shelter is a more appropriate starting point given the weather elements in Bremerton.



Sprung Shelter, Washington

Sprung Shelter Site Efficiency and Flexibility

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 can provides approximately 400 beds per acre of land and can be designed to fit virtually any site size or shape and a 100-bed dormitory can be placed on a site that is less than half an acre. The modular design of tension fabric buildings also allow for easy expansion in the future to provide additional beds, staff offices or day use and dining spaces.



Sprung Shelter, California

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. The modular nature of the components used allow for easy expansion. The aluminum substructure of a Sprung Shelter allows an all bolt assembly which enables the structure to be relocatable, at the end of the Sprung Shelter life the structure could be disassembled and relocated to another city location to serve a new purpose.

Neighborhood Impact

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. The Sprung Shelter is code compliant and satisfies local zoning and building codes.

Stigma Around Crime

Concerns about crime near shelters are understandable, but Sprung shelters can actually bring positive change. While they may initially face opposition, Navigation Centers with ongoing operations often see a decrease in loitering and surrounding encampments. This is because they introduce much-needed oversight that wasn't there before, both from the center itself and from law enforcement. This draws unsheltered individuals towards resources and support, while also making it easier for police to distinguish between genuine criminal activity and issues related to homelessness. Yes, there's a stigma around shelters, but the reality is, they can lead to a safer environment for everyone.

Relevant Research

- A three-year study on the effect of housing navigation centers on recidivism found that 70% of justice-involved individuals who received housing at the HNC exited to permanent housing, with a recidivism rate of 9.6% compared to the national average of 68%. Navigating Homelessness: The Effect Of Housing Navigation Centers On Recidivism, Jun 12, 2023. <https://fas.org/publication/navigating-homelessness-the-effect-of-housing-navigation-centers-on-recidivism/>
- 3/4 Navigation Centers experienced a decrease in crime rates in San Francisco: Division Circle by 17%, Bayshore by 4%, and Bryant Street by 11%. <https://sf.curbed.com/2019/11/21/20976211/navigation-centers-san-francisco-crime-rates-sf>
- Homeless shelters are often better for neighborhoods than tent encampments and can lead to a decrease in crime. <https://dignitymoves.org/dispelling-the-myth-homeless-shelters-and-crime-rates/>
- Temporary homeless shelters are designed to replace tent encampments and provide



- a safer, more controlled environment.
- Studies have shown that the opening of homeless shelters does not result in an increase in crime rates. In some cases, crime rates have actually decreased after the establishment of homeless shelters, as they provide stability and reduce the need for individuals to resort to criminal activities. <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>
- Providing shelter for homeless individuals can help address the root causes of crime and improve the safety and well-being of both the homeless population and the surrounding community. <https://californialocal.com/localnews/statewide/ca/article/show/6215-homelessness-crime-california/>
- A 2018 study by the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, in which 255 unhoused people were interviewed over a 24 month period, the most frequent charges fell into the category of “homeless status offenses.” These are offenses which result “from behaviors intrinsic to homelessness.” Those include **“loitering,” “vagrancy,” and “trespassing,” all of which are largely unavoidable for people who have nowhere to go.** <https://californialocal.com/localnews/statewide/ca/article/show/6215-homelessness-crime-california/>
- The Frisc, a San Francisco based media outlet conducted a study, analyzing crime reports from areas surrounding Navigation Centers that opened between 2015 and 2018 and operated for at least 12 months. Of the eight centers analyzed, incident rates either decreased or stayed relatively flat after the Navigation Centers opened for five of them. Rates increased around three centers. According to Mike Males, a senior research fellow at the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, the random nature of increases and decreases after opening indicates that Navigation Centers cannot be shown to increase crime.
- The study considered control areas outside the 500-foot radius around each Navigation Center to compare incident rates slightly farther away. In most cases, adding control areas did not significantly change the data, with one control area showing a notable rise in incidents.
- The conclusion drawn is that whether immediately close by or slightly farther away, there is no pattern of rising crime in the months following the opening of a Navigation Center. <https://thefrisc.com/sfs-specialized-homeless-shelters-do-not-bring-more-crime-no-matter-what-angry-neighbors-say-d7322054a568>
- “Navigation Center Neighborhood Impact Study” <https://www.fremontforeveryone.com/s/Navigation-Center-Neighborhood-Impacts-Final-Report.pdf>
- **Executive Summary:** The City and County of San Francisco is in the process of expanding its network of navigation centers, an updated version of a traditional homeless shelter. However, plans to open new centers are sometimes met with opposition from people who live or work nearby. Such opposition has blocked plans



to open similar sites in San Francisco and impedes the city's ability to provide homeless services. People opposed to navigation centers and shelters expressed concern that they might have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood, such as by increasing crime, increasing visible homelessness, or decreasing property values. This report examines whether these impacts occur in practice.

- **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. This analysis revealed that the number of crimes occurring near navigation centers was approximately equal to the number of crimes occurring at similar locations without centers. A survey of people living and working near navigation centers also indicated that navigation center presence is unrelated to neighborhood crime. Over half of surveyed community members believed that neighborhood crime levels had stayed the same since a navigation center opened nearby, and felt just as safe in the area as they had previously.
- **Navigation Centers Have No Effect on Property Values:** Property values were rising in all neighborhoods, regardless of navigation center presence. The Mission saw an especially large increase in property values, despite being the only neighborhood hosting multiple navigation centers. Neighbors living within one block of the navigation centers did not believe that the centers had any effect on the value of their property.
- **Closing:** This study provides evidence that navigation centers do not have negative impacts on the neighborhoods where they are located. In some cases, housed residents may even benefit from having a homeless service site nearby. This shows that the city does not need to compromise the well-being of housed residents in order to provide support for their homeless neighbors. It is my hope that information from this report will enrich dialogue with community members and policymakers interested in the neighborhood impacts of homeless service sites, and ultimately contribute to San Francisco's efforts to reduce homelessness.

RPM Addressing statistics that say shelters “increase” crime.

An explanation why residents and older studies consider that there is an increased crime rate near shelters is a result of increased police presence around shelters alongside the criminalization of homelessness (due to using the shelters' existence against “illegal” encampments) or anti-homeless laws. As well as the police addressing many of the residents' complaints (fear, bigotry, etc.) about the unhoused. So, the numbers could mean that since there are more reports = more crime in the area.

- A supply of shelter beds insufficient to meet the demand; this problem may be exacerbated by limited funding for emergency shelters and by community opposition to creating new or expanded shelter and bridge housing facilities or permanent supportive housing.
- 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.

Stigma Around the High Cost of Temporary Solutions

According to the US Inter-agency Council on Homelessness report, Ending Homelessness for People in Encampments: Advancing the Dialogue 2 (2015), there is a persistent concern that costly homeless encampment operations can prevent funding from going directly to permanent housing and “distract communities from focusing on” more permanent solutions. In one particular RAND study, researchers found that receiving supportive housing reduced the costs for public services by nearly 60 percent, reiterating the point that it is more cost effective to house people experiencing homelessness. (From 2019 Andre House report) <https://andrehouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Unsheltered-Perspectives.pdf>

The cost of doing nothing also comes with a large price tag to local agencies and their taxpayer base. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, someone experiencing chronic homelessness costs taxpayers an average of \$35,578 per year, largely as a result of frequent emergency room visits and other health-related services; arrests and associated court costs. A lack of low barrier shelter beds is a primary determinant in the inability of outreach workers to get the unhoused into shelters.

“When asked about outreach experiences with case managers, 52 out of 100 people described how they’ve never been offered a place to stay by a service provider or case manager.” (2019 Andre House Interviews)



Our Recommendation: Sprung Shelter

After reviewing the scope of the homelessness issue in Bremerton, and with consideration of the number of clients that seek shelter at the Salvation Army, RPM recommends that the City select a shelter type that accommodates 75-100 clients. This capacity will enable the City to maintain consistently open beds such that persons experiencing homelessness in Bremerton will have an emergency resource available. Available shelter on the first night of homelessness is a safety net that prevents your citizens from spending the night outside making them vulnerable to victimization. Additionally, shelter options that do not provide enough capacity will make chapter 9.32 of the Bremerton Municipal Code titled “Unauthorized Camping” non-enforceable creating an environment where those that chose to be criminal vagrants will have an avenue to exploit your streets and citizens.



A Sprung Shelter can provide the capacity that Bremerton needs while better meeting several other critical considerations for a successful shelter model than the regulated tent encampment or the pallet community. Among those considerations are:

- regulated open space with climate and environmental controls that aids in disease prevention
- alignment with the 2019 Homeless Crisis and Housing plan
- true low barrier entry
- fully bringing folks “inside”

Additionally, the Sprung Shelter is a relocatable asset that is designed to be adapted and reused. This affords the City the options to alter its interior configuration to better meet emerging needs of the housing crisis, convert to a new use on site, or relocate to a new site entirely.

RPM does not recommend a regulated encampment for addressing Bremerton’s crisis. While it would be the simplest and least expensive to construct, tent encampments do not provide adequate shelter, don’t comply with the city’s health standards and do not provide any sheltered spaces for much needed services and community space.



While a pallet community can be a useful piece of a holistic housing crisis response, it does not adequately provide the safety net that Bremerton requires. Additionally, the proposed layout for the Oyster Bay Site would only accommodate around 40 units. Expanding the site to accommodate 75 - 100 units would increase the costs of site development, shelter construction, and operations such that it would significantly exceed the cost (in all categories) of the Sprung Shelter model.

A more thorough analysis of each of the three shelter types is provided in the preceding sections.

RPM



Summary of Bremerton's Initiatives Related to Homelessness

Mayor's 2023 Initiatives

The 2023 initiatives outline a focused approach to address critical issues facing the community, prioritizing homelessness prevention, enhancing public safety, and strengthening mental health support.

To combat homelessness, the Mayor proposes exploring innovative shelter options, including temporary and permanent facilities, while expanding the Block Watch program to empower residents in crime prevention.

Additionally, the Mayor commits to continuing the Navigator Program, which provides crisis intervention and connects individuals with mental health and addiction services. In the realm of public safety, the Mayor reaffirms support for the 'Stand By Me' program, ensuring comprehensive care for homeless and at-risk individuals.

City of Bremerton 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Element 3: Housing, Vision, Goals & Policies H2(E)

Support efforts to provide for a variety of housing options such as emergency group housing, homeless shelters and short term housing to meet the needs of those in the lower income categories.



Mayor Wheeler

"In 2023, Fentanyl continues to victimize our most vulnerable, tear apart families, and kill at an alarming rate."

"The President's supplemental funding request would also allocate \$1.5 billion in grant funding to localities through the Department of Health and Human Services' State Opioid Response (SOR) grant program."

"Fentanyl Supplemental Request Letter" signed November 14, 2023, Bremerton Mayor Wheeler along with other Mayors representing millions of citizens sent letter to Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries, Schumer, and McConnell.