

Subsidized Housing in a Light Industrial Zone at Quixote Village — Northwest EcoBuild...

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SUBSIDIZED HOUSING IN A LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONE AT QUIXOTE VILLAGE

Abstract

This case examines the partnership between the residents of Camp Quixote – a self-governing tent community of homeless adults – and Panza, their nonprofit support organization, Thurston County and the City of Olympia, to site a permanent supportive housing community in a light industrial zone. This required a comprehensive plan amendment and a zoning code amendment adopted by the Olympia City Council over the objections of neighboring commercial property owners, as well as a conditional use permit. On Christmas Eve, 2013 Quixote Village welcomed its previously homeless residents to their new homes, which include a 1700 sq. common house with shared facilities, and 30 individual "tiny house" 144 sq. ft. sleeping units.

Permitting Process

Quixote Village began as a protest in a downtown Olympia parking lot in February, 2007. When police threatened to break it up, the local Unitarian church offered it sanctuary on church grounds. Within a few months, the City adopted an ordinance which added a new chapter, 18.50 – Homeless Encampments to the Olympia Zoning Code. This new zone allowed a temporary homeless encampment to reside on property owned and managed by religious organizations for up to ninety days (later extended to 180 days). The residents' larger goal of developing permanent stable housing was only realized later after a lengthy public process. In response to Thurston County's donation of the land, in 2012 the Olympia City Council passed a one-time amendment to the zoning code which authorized a single "permanent homeless encampment" on County land. Thus for any future "permanent housing encampments" to be constructed, additional code amendments would have to be enacted.

After meeting all applicable City engineering, building, and fire codes, the project was finally constructed under a conditional use permit for 30 individual Tiny Cottage units and a 1700 sq. ft. shared common house in a light industrial zone.

Code Requirement

International Residential Code R-3

Olympia Municipal Code, Chapter 18.50 - Homeless Encampment

Olympia Municipal Code, Chapter 18.48 - Conditional Uses

Compliance Path

Individual units had to meet requirements of IRC; individual tiny homes were considered sleeping units rather than accessory dwelling units, similar to assisted living SROs because they each have individual toilets, but not kitchens.

City Council Adopted Change to Comp. Plan and Zoning Code to allow project

Project had to obtain conditional use permit for siting residential units in a light-industrial zone; code was amended to allow this use

Project Description

Quixote Village is a self-governing community of previously homeless adults who have been living together in a "homeless tent encampment" since coming together in 2007 to protest a new city ordinance that prohibited sidewalk and car camping. With the help of their non-profit partner Panza and Garner Miller of MSGS Architects, Camp Quixote residents designed their village through an integrated, collaborative design process. It now provides stable permanent housing and social service support for 30 chronically homeless people in Thurston County. This unique residential development was allowed in a light-industrial zone through a code amendment rather than a site-specific rezone, so that the project could become a model of this type of innovative housing led by homeless people.

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Category	Land Use and Development
Subcategory	Zoning and Land Use
Specific Innovation	Permanent Homeless Encampment
Jurisdiction	City of Olympia
Parcel Number	12821340200
Approving Officials	Tom Hill, Building Official, Community Planning and Development Steve Friddle, Community Planning Manager, Community Planning and Development
Owner	Panza
Building Type	Residential
Square Feet	144
Architect	Garner Miller, MSGS; Bob Wolpert KMB Design
Builder	Construction, Inc.
Subcontractor	Black Hills Excavating, Rochester, WA
Case Study Contributors	Michael Sloan, Chris van Daalen

Applicable Codes and Standards
International Residential Code R-3
Olympia Muni. Code, Ch. 18.50 - Homeless Encampment
Olympia Muni. Code, Ch. 18.48 - Conditional Uses

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The amendment finally adopted in 2012 by the Olympia City Council was preceded by a lengthy public process which involved a) Thurston County offering up the 217-acre site for the project; b) a site specific development proposal from Panza and Camp Quixote residents; c) staff development of the zoning amendment as an alternative path to compliance; which was then d) announced to the neighborhood and discussed at public meetings and hearings; e) recommended for approval by the Planning Commission; f) considered and adopted by the City Council; g) a vigorous appeal and campaign by neighboring property owners to kill the project; h) a Growth Hearings Board decision which resulted in a second round with the Planning Commission and City Council on a comprehensive Plan amendment; and finally g) another Hearings Board decision to allow the project under the amended Comprehensive Plan and zoning code. With this amendment the City changed the definition in the code from "temporary" to "permanent homeless encampment" and "temporary use" to "conditional use" subject to a public process. Although the definition asserts "encampment," it is actually defined as permanent subsidized housing.

Each individual dwelling is equipped with a front porch, private 8x18 foot living space (144 square feet) and a personal toilet and sink - designed to meet the express personal needs of the residents. Additional shared facilities are in the Community Center common house containing laundry facilities, showers, kitchen, dining, and other facilities. To secure the Conditional Use Permit to build in the non-conforming zone, the project also needed to comply with all applicable City engineering, building, and fire codes. It was determined that the single resident occupancy SRO units would be considered sleeping units rather than accessory dwelling units, similar to assisted living SROs because they each have individual toilets, but not kitchens. They were reviewed under 2009 International Residential Code – R-3 as residential occupancies.

Design / Build Process

Quixote Village grew out of a protest held February 2007 in downtown Olympia, in response to the City of Olympia passing an ordinance prohibiting sleeping on sidewalks. No longer allowed to camp on City streets, a coalition of homeless people and their allies worked with the City Council to adopt Emergency Ordinance 6480 on July 17, 2007, allowing their temporary encampment to continue.

From the beginning, Quixote Village was intended as more than a place to live, but as a place to build community. It's a living model for creating homeless housing that meets the needs of a unique population, and to demonstrate affordability and environmental sustainability. Nevertheless, from the onset there has been significant push back from neighboring commercial property owners who fought to prevent Quixote Village from being built.

One challenge, securing a site for Quixote Village, was overcome when Thurston County agreed to lease a 2.17-acre County-owned site to Panza for \$1 a year for 41 years. Part unused parking lot and undeveloped land, the surplus County property was chosen because it was served by existing city utilities, had limited impacts on adjacent properties and would be buildable at a reasonable cost. It is also close to South Puget Sound Community College; nearby employers, and public transit. It was also chosen in part because the County is the only public entity with jurisdiction over the public health issues arising from a permanent homeless encampment, such as the sanitation and food preparation issues. The County also has practical expertise in this area.

Quixote Village is operated through the non-profit organization Panza, which has a Board of local religious and community leaders. Panza was formed to support the needs of the chronically homeless residents of Camp Quixote in 2007, hosting the movable community at 5 different churches and raising the \$56,000 per year needed for operations and to provide social service support before raising the \$3.05 million required to build the permanent village. The successful construction of Quixote Village has been financed by a state capital budget allocation of \$1.5 million from the Housing Trust Fund, along with a federal Community Development Block Grant of \$604,000 that came through Thurston County, and additional funding from the County's Home Consortium, the City of Olympia, the Nisqually and Chehalis Indian Tribes, and many local individual donors.

Quixote Village has dramatically improved the standard of living of its 30 residents with the cultivation of an enriching, vibrant, and living community; cottage dwellings engendering privacy while simultaneously supporting a tangible community environment, e.g., showers, recreation/common areas with communal kitchen and garden. Therefore residents are free to socialize or engage in the common area, enhance job seeking skills, or simply enjoy the privacy of their unit. Residents also benefit from social service support that helps them gain access to health and mental health care, disability benefits, job training and education. Residents also learn social and civic skills by participating in the Village's governance. The Resident Council meets weekly, following a communal dinner, and twice each year residents elect a five-member Executive Committee which collaborates with Panza and the Village Program Manager to ensure that rules are followed, chores get done, and new programs and initiatives are planned and carried out.

Cost / Benefit

There are significant cost savings from housing chronically homeless individuals, who are more frequent visitors to emergency medical services and jail than any other population – a significant cost to society. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the average savings to a municipality for providing a chronically homeless individual with permanent housing is \$15,773 per year. Most importantly, Quixote Village is a sustainable legacy investment which disrupts the cycle of homelessness, incarceration, and mental decompensation; Quixote Village ultimately provides a stable and dignified living environment for people transitioning from homelessness into permanent housing. A ten year plan for Thurston County and the City of Olympia is calling for 150 new units of permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless population. Recently, a 95 unit dwelling in Seattle was found to have saved \$4,000,000 dollars in services from the first year alone. Quixote Village is a pilot project for Thurston County and the City of Olympia, one which will have a profound impact on addressing the homeless housing needs for years to come.

Project Contacts

Owner:

Jill Severn, Panza Board President
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Approving Official:

Steve Friddle, Planning Manger
City of Olympia Community Development

Approving Official:

Tom Hill, Building Official
City of Olympia

Tiny Houses = Big Impact on Homelessness

Quixote Village * Olympia, Washington, USA

The *New York Times* story of Olympia's **Quixote Village** illustrates the large impact tiny houses in a supportive community can have on homelessness and the residents who live there. This story illustrates how responsive public officials working with dedicated citizens can utilize existing land use, zoning and building codes to facilitate a non-profit's innovative approach to housing the homeless. Community planners play an important but largely unseen role in this story by assisting applicants as they negotiate their course through a community's regulatory framework. The challenge is to ensure that **innovation** doesn't cross the line into **non-compliance**. In the case study of Quixote Village, community planners and their community partners did just that - - resulting in a project that may become a national model.

Quixote Village presents a useful case study in how communities are able to construct innovative responses to homelessness with the right policy tools and focused community involvement.

For the **residents involved** with Quixote Village, this was the story of how a migrating tent camp of homeless people transformed into a permanent cottage-based community. For the three **local governments involved**, this story revolved around Comprehensive Plan issues and, more specifically, the extent to which the residential needs of homeless people either are or are not addressed.

Zoning is pivotal in siting homeless facilities. In a recent scan of other Washington municipal zoning policies, Olympia planners found very little, and what they did find was widely differing conditions: separation requirements; conditional use permit process; staff review, and myriad other issues. Often, the complexity of these zoning policies, or the lack thereof, reflect the widespread ambivalence about homelessness; people should be sheltered - - but not too close to housed people. This was also part of the Olympia story as well.

The **community planning** story of Quixote Village involved the examination of existing codes, searching for other models and ultimately, charting a new course of public process to determine the final location. Attached is a short index of articles that give more information on this process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Tim Ransom, PANZA Board President
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Quixote Village provides homes for 30 formerly homeless citizens of Olympia

Quixote Village in the News - Sampling of articles as of March 2014

Tortorello, Michael. (2014, February 19). **Small World, Big Idea**. The NY Times. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/20/garden/small-world-big-idea.html?_r=0

Hickman, Matt. (2014, March 3). **At Quixote Village, homeless community shifts from tents to tiny houses**. Mother Nature Network. Retrieved from <http://www.mnn.com/your-home/remodeling-design/blogs/at-quixote-village-homeless-community-shifts-from-tents-to-tiny>

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Lundahl, Erika. (2014, February 27). **Tiny houses for the homeless: an affordable solution catches on**. The Christian Science Monitor. Retrieved from <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/Change-Agent/2014/0227/Tiny-houses-for-the-homeless-an-affordable-solution-catches-on>

Wellner, Cathryn. (2014, January 14) **Quixote Village offers homeless people dignity**. This Gives Me HOPE. Retrieved from <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2014/01/14/912-quixote-village-offers-homeless-people-dignity/>

Hansen, Bettina. (2014, December 24). **Camp Quixote residents move to permanent location**. The Seattle Times. Retrieved from http://seattletimes.com/html/picturethis/2022523964_campquixoteresidentsmovetopermanentlocation.html

Butigan, Ken. (2014, January 3). **Olympia's homeless win struggle for permanent housing**. WAGING NONVIOLENCE – PEOPLE-POWERED NEWS & ANALYSIS. Retrieved from <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/olympias-homeless-win-housing/>

Konkel, Brenda. (2013, December 10). **Camp Quixote and Quixote Village**. FORWARD LOOKOUT. Retrieved from <http://www.forwardlookout.com/2013/12/camp-quixote-and-quixote-village/20468>

Bagshaw, Sally. (2014, February 25). **Building on Quixote Village: Divvy Up the Responsibility**. seattle.gov Seattle City Council. Retrieved at <http://bagshaw.seattle.gov/2014/02/25/building-on-quixote-village-divvy-up-the-responsibility/>

Royale, Rosette. (2014, January 15). **Quixote's Quest**. REAL CHANGE. Retrieved from <http://realchangenews.org/index.php/site/archives/8561>

Skinner, Donald. (2013, November 11) **Washington congregation creates permanent village for homeless**. Unitarian Universalist uuworld.org liberal religion and life. Retrieved from <http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/291240.shtml>

Severn, Jill. (2014, March 9). **Fame is fleeting, the Village forever**. The Olympian. Retrieved from http://www.theolympian.com/search_results?q=severn

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<http://www.resourcehouse.com/WIN211/details.aspx?AgencyID=11430&LinkID=64DF5714-FF32-4183-A5C1-3280C1B1D23C>
(Washington State 2-1-1)

Quixote Village Homepage <http://quixotevillage.com/> (Panza)

<http://www.thurstontalk.com/2014/02/21/new-york-times-highlights-olympias-quixote-village-template-homeless-housing/> (Thurston Talk.com)

<http://www.msnbc.com/weekends-alex-witt/watch/village-provides-housing-for-homeless-165362243877> (msnbc) video

<http://www.tinyhouseliving.com/tag/quixote-village/> (Tiny House Living)

Federico-O'Murchu, Linda. (2014, February 26). **Tiny Houses: A Big Idea to End Homelessness**. NBC News. Retrieved from <http://www.nbcnews.com/#!/business/real-estate/tiny-houses-big-idea-end-homelessness-n39316>

Quixote Village



Camp Quixote, founded as protest of City of Olympia "sit/lie" ordinance in 2007



Sanctuary with Faith Communities



Building relationships



Creating self-government



City of Olympia Ordinance: Chapter 18.50

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS



"...permitted only as an accommodation of religious exercise by Host Agency"

Application Requirements:

- 30 days advanced notice to city
- Informational meeting, signage two weeks before temporary use permit issued

Approval Requirements

- Area sufficient in size
- Sanitary portable toilets, hand washing stations, refuse receptacles
- Food and security tents
- Adequate water source
- No permanent structures
- 40 residents max
- Adequate onsite parking: close to bus stop
- Adequate buffering/screening from adjacent properties

City of Olympia Ordinance: Chapter 18.50
HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS



Security plan
Residents must sign Code of Conduct
No drugs/alcohol/weapons/violence
Host shall:
Manage the camp; have manager/host on duty at all times
Verify ids, check for sex offenders, outstanding warrants

Timing
90-180 days
Host only once/every 12 months
Only one temporary homeless encampment in City at a time

Health and Safety
no open fires; no unapproved heating or cooking appliances in tents
access for fire/emergency medical
Adequate spacing of structures, acceptable electrical service

The hardship of frequent moves



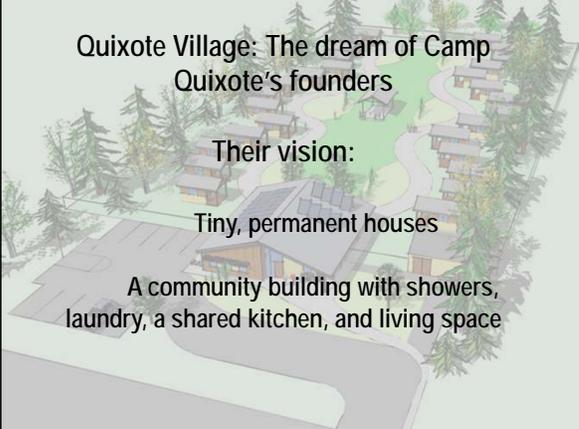
PANZA
Non-profit
grew out of faith
communities



Coordinate moves
Financial support
Recruit & manage volunteers
Generate political support
Support self-governance

Quixote Village: The dream of Camp Quixote's founders

Their vision:
Tiny, permanent houses
A community building with showers, laundry, a shared kitchen, and living space



Designing the Village



The "gift" of land from Thurston County – a 2.17 acre site



The inevitable NIMBY struggle



**QUIXOTE VILLAGE:
Funding For
Construction**

\$3.1 million

- Washington State Housing Trust Fund
- HUD CDBG funding through county and city
- "Free" Land
- State Document Recording Fees
- Nisqually and Chehalis Tribes
- Foundation & Private Donations



Groundbreaking
June, 2013



The end for Camp
Quixote!



The
Village opens,
December 24, 2013





www.quixotevillage.com