

Temporary Encampments in Bellingham

Planning for Temporary Encampments Workshop
May 10, 2019

Location & Population



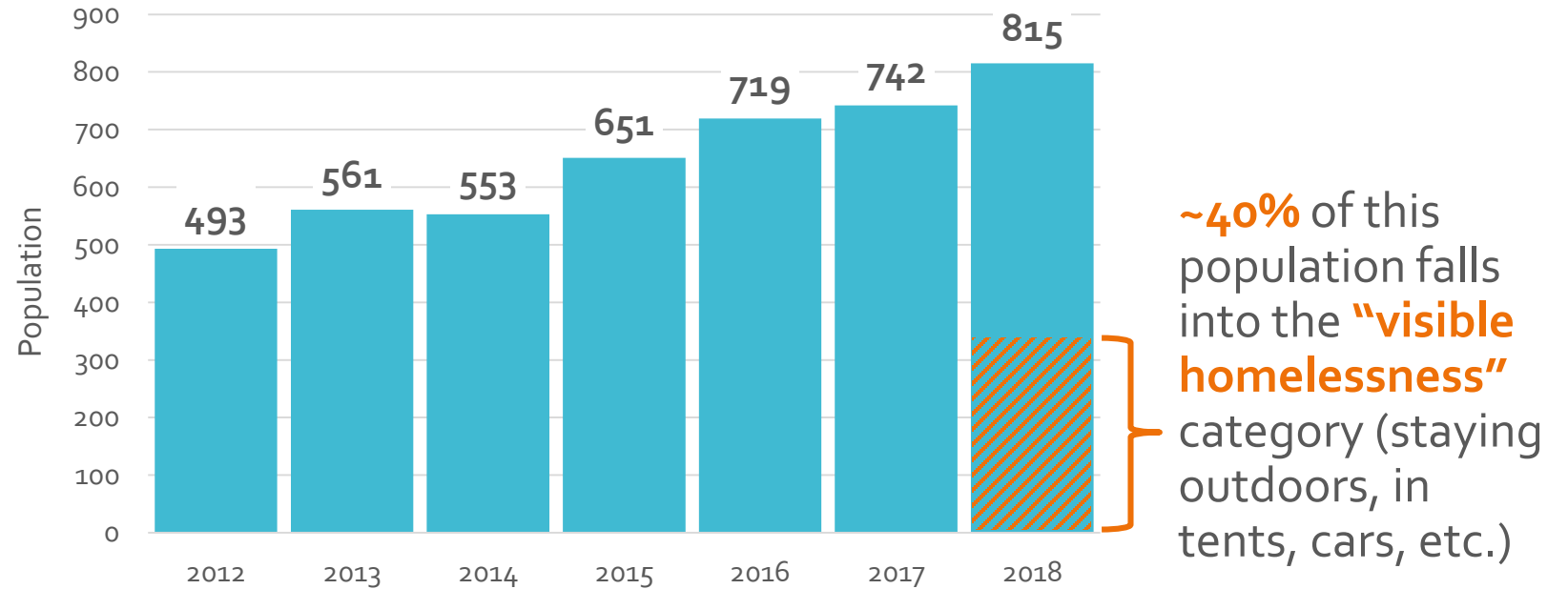
BELLINGHAM
Population: 88,500

WHATCOM COUNTY
Population: 220,350
including Bellingham

Source: 2018 OFM Population Estimates

What does the unsheltered population look like in Whatcom County?

Whatcom County Point-in-Time Census of Homeless Residents



- 70% of people experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County had their last home here

Approaches to Temporary Housing for the Unsheltered



Temporary
Building
Encampment



Temporary
Safe Parking
Area



Temporary
Tent
Encampment

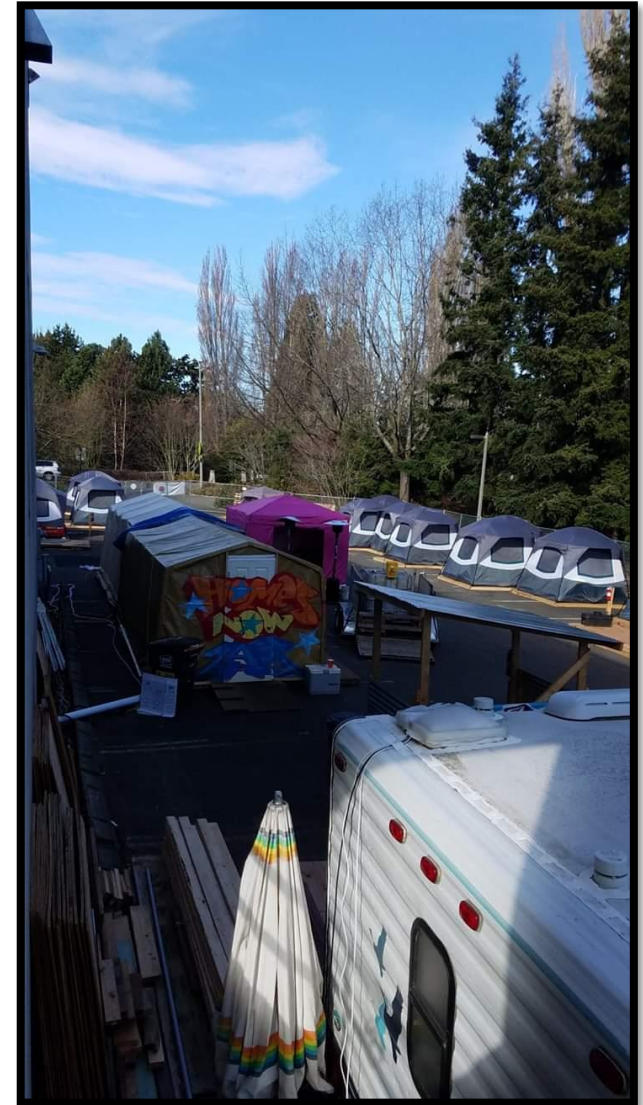


Temporary
Tiny House
Encampment

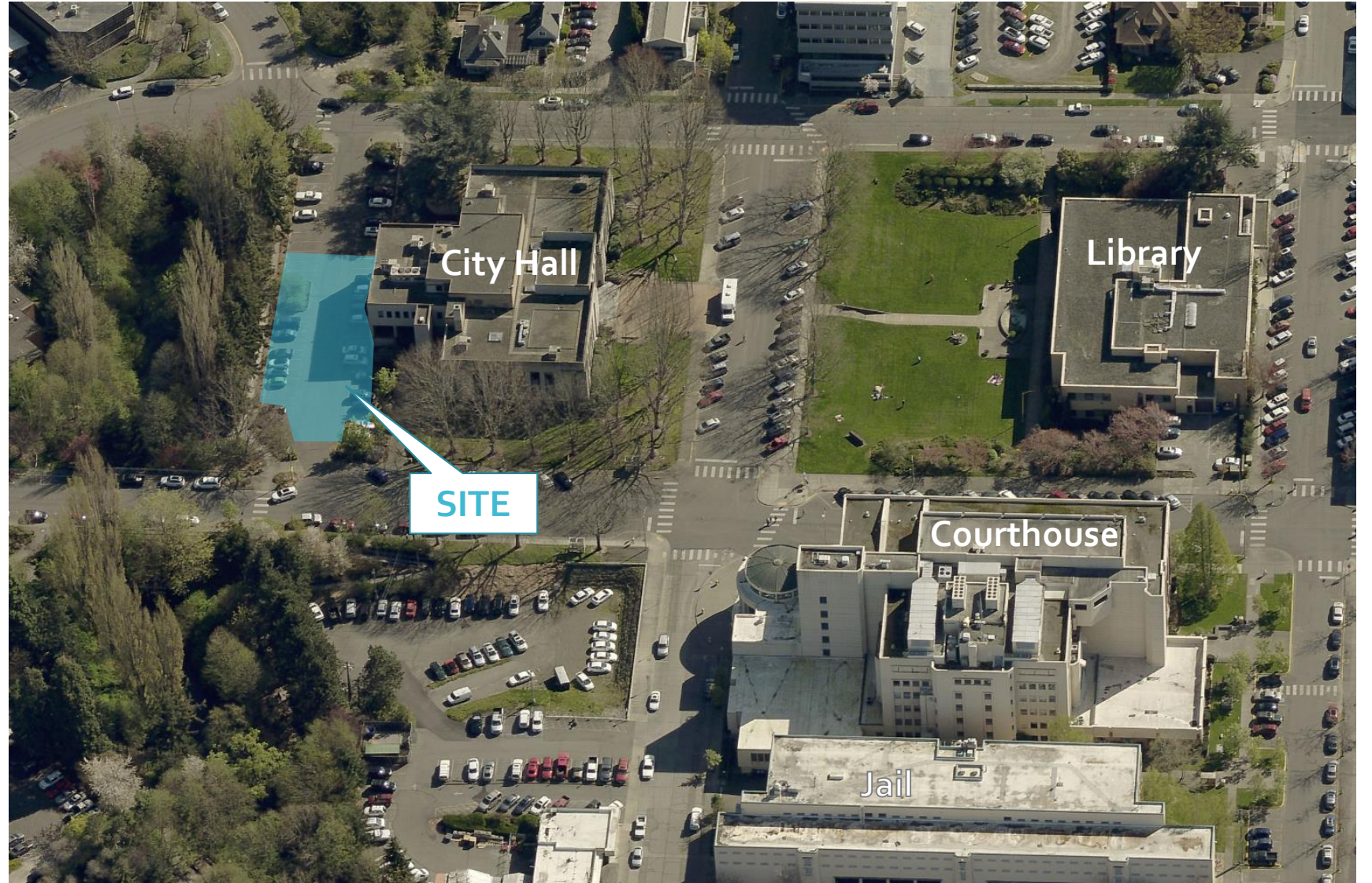


Temporary Tent Encampments

- No more than 100 people per site
- No more than 90 days (+ possible extension)
- May be located in any zone
- Health and safety provisions:
 - Restrooms
 - No open flames
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Code of conduct that includes no alcohol or illegal drugs
 - Fence with gates to control access
 - Resident list checked by police department for those with active felony warrants
 - 24-hour accessible point of contact
 - On-site supervision 24/7



Winter Haven Tent Encampment



Winter Haven Tent Encampment



Safe Haven Tent Encampment



Safe Haven Tent Encampment



Temporary Tiny House Encampments

- No more than 100 people per site
- May be approved for between 90 days and two years
- May be located in any zone
- Additional safety measures for tiny homes:
 - Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
 - Two openings to allow escape of smoke
 - Portable oil-filled heaters
 - No locks or latches that might inhibit emergency escape from unit



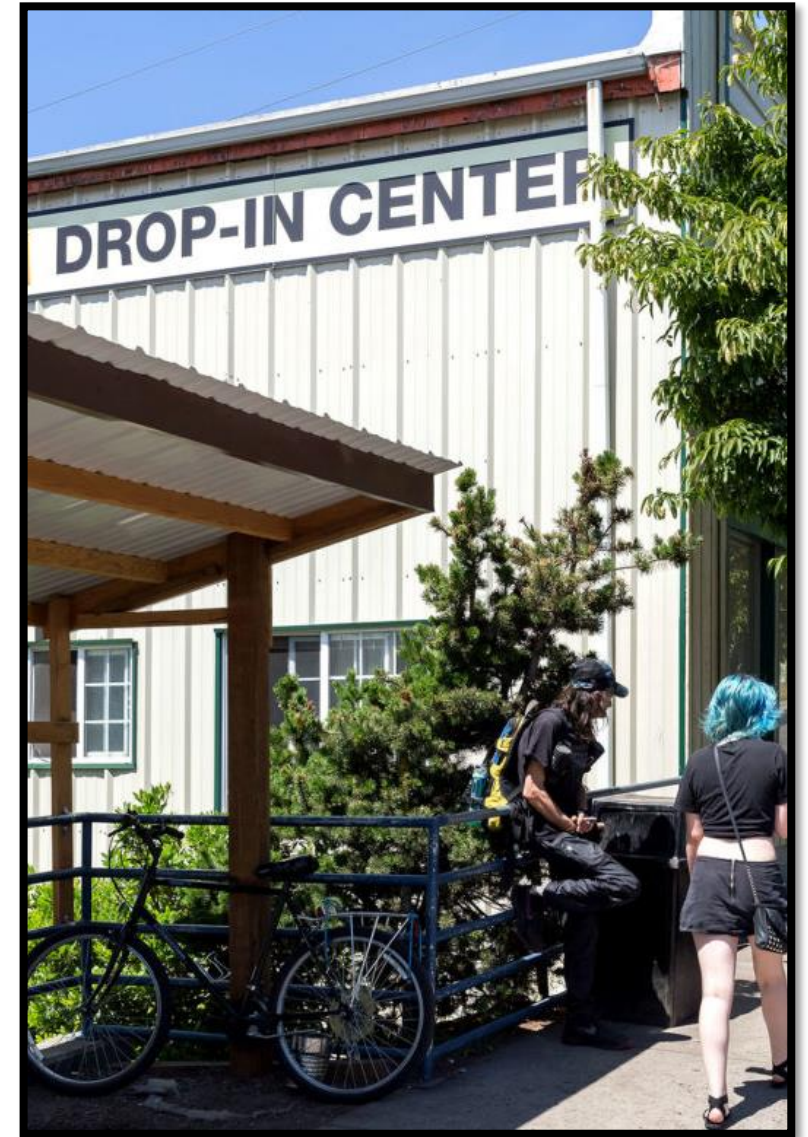
Temporary Building Encampments

- Located in a building or other permanent structure
- Zoning restrictions for encampments on land owned or controlled by nonprofits and government entities
- No more than 300 people citywide
- May be approved for up to 5 years
- Requirements to address potential impacts outside encampment:
 - All functions, including outdoor waiting, must take place in the building or site
 - Must be open 24/7 to limit outdoor waiting



Lighthouse Mission Ministries' Drop-in Center

- Provides access to counseling, health services, legal services, meals and sleeping accommodations for up to 80 people
- City issued permit for low-barrier temporary building encampment in 2018 with emergency ordinance
- City was recently successful in appeal
- City issued exemption from building code per RCW 19.27.042 for 5 years



Temporary Safe Parking Areas

- Safe, temporary off-street parking areas for people living in their vehicles
- No more than 100 people per site
- No more than 90 days (+ possible extension)
- May be located in any zone
- Same health and safety provisions as other temporary shelters
- No RVs allowed



Challenges to Permit

- Neighborhoods approve in concept only
- No location is a good location
- Potential collateral issues in surrounding area
- Need for timely approval vs. public process
- What are the qualifications/prerequisites for the managing agency?
- Not all proposals are equal; Not all applicants are equal
- How do you ensure that it is more than warehousing?

Challenges to Operate

- Who manages the encampment?
- How is adequate staffing insured?
- How “self-governing” can they be?
- Are there barriers to entry for residents?
- What are the internal rules for residents?
- What happens to residents when rules aren’t followed?
- Where and how is intake facilitated?
- Significant municipal commitment to provide regulatory overview

Questions?

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Type “temporary shelter ordinance” into the search bar at

<https://www.cob.org/>