

North Star Advisory Group Charter

I. Background

Homelessness and behavioral health have been important issues in Skagit County for many years. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has added to housing challenges and created and exacerbated mental health issues and substance use disorders in our community.

In March 2022, the Mayors and Commissioners issued a public statement in which they committed to join forces and align their efforts to work towards a healthy and thriving community. This statement included the intention to mobilize the combined forces of the cities and county to do everything within their power to ensure the well-being of every Skagitonian.

In June 2022, elected officials signed a Call to Action that outlines a multi-phase whole-of-government effort with several linked goals:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategies
- Consider service delivery alternatives, with advice from stakeholders, practitioners, and those with lived experience
- Research best practices
- Develop an actionable plan that uses public funds and cooperative action to drive improved outcomes for people who are experiencing homelessness and disabling behavioral health disorders

The elected officials who have signed the Call to Action, also known as the Leadership Team, have convened an Advisory Group for additional insight and guidance.

II. Scope

The Advisory Group (AG) is charged with providing guidance to the Leadership Team (LT) on the following North Star activities:

- Engage in investigation and dialogue to arrive at a shared understanding of important issues.
- Explore questions as referred by the LT.
- Make recommendations to the LT.
- When subjects require deep study or attention, the AG forms task forces that include AG members and outside content experts.
- Seek to find common ground and develop mutually beneficial solutions.

The Advisory Group's charge is to ensure that there is broad, meaningful engagement and agreement on county-wide strategies. The AG will value honesty over harmony. It will commit itself to surfacing thorny issues and openly addressing disagreements, with the goal of resolving conflicts in a problem-solving spirit. Committee members will also commit to doing everything in their power to ensure effective follow-through on agreed-upon actions.

Tenfold Health will help to set agendas, prepare materials, and provide facilitation. To ensure adequate review time and allow for meaningful input, Tenfold staff will circulate materials to Advisory Group members in advance of scheduled meetings.

III. Basic Commitments & Decision-Making

Basic Commitments

- We will start and end on time
- We will make space for everyone to contribute
- We will test new ideas and take risks
- We will be rigorous on ideas and gentle on people
- We commit to a global community strategy and problem-solving
- We will learn through dialogue

As a group of highly knowledgeable individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise, we have a high level of respect for each other. Because of that, we commit to dialogue, not debate. In dialogue,

- We assume that many people have pieces of the answer
- We work toward common understanding and commitment
- We listen so that we can truly understand other perspectives
- We are open to new evidence and revising our assumptions
- We balance advocacy with curiosity and exploration

Rather than in debate,

- We assume there is one right answer and we have it
- We want to prove that anyone who doesn't agree with us is wrong
- We listen – but only to find flaws and make counterarguments
- We treat assumptions as truth
- We defend ground, restating the same points

The AG will strive for consensus decision-making that seeks to secure the support of all members. When consensus cannot be reached, the AG will utilize a majority vote.

IV. Timing/Schedule

The AG will meet monthly from September through December 2022. At the end of 2022, the Leadership Team will determine the appropriate meeting frequency for 2023.

This charter shall expire when the Leadership Team determines that the charter has been fulfilled.

V. Advisory Group Membership

No single group can represent every important perspective or include all relevant expertise. Therefore, as the needs of North Star evolve, the membership of the Advisory Group is expected to evolve as well. The following is a list of the current Advisory Group members.

Chair: Jennifer Johnson – Deputy Administrator, Skagit

1. Mayor Peter Donovan - City of Mount Vernon
2. Mayor Steve Sexton - City of Burlington
3. Mayor Matt Miller - City of Anacortes
4. Mayor Julia Johnson - City of Sedro Woolley
5. Commissioner Lisa Janicki - Skagit County
6. Commissioner Ron Wesen - Skagit County
7. Commissioner Peter Browning - Skagit County
8. Bill Aslett - Council Member, City of Burlington
9. Chris Baldwin – Chief of Field Operations, Skagit County Sheriff's Office
10. Superintendent Miriam Mickelson - Sedro-Woolley School District
11. Dr. Maureen Pettitt - Board Chair, Population Health Trust
12. Margaret Rojas – Assistant Director, North Sound Behavioral Health Administration Services Organization
13. Kevin Riley – Pastor, Mount Baker Presbyterian Church
14. Leon John – Outreach Director, Didgwalic Wellness Center, Swinomish Indian Nation
15. Dr. Connie Davis - Chief Medical Officer, Skagit Regional Health
16. Liz Baxter - Executive Director, North Sound Accountable Community of Health
17. Jose Ortiz - Network Builder for Latino and Farmworker Communities in Skagit, Catholic Community Services

18. Tina Tate - Executive Director, Skagit Habitat for Humanity
19. Brad Johnson - Community Development Director, City of Burlington
20. George Kosovich - Community Services Manager, Skagit County Public Health
21. Sandi Phinney - Division Director, Community Action of Skagit County
22. Dustin Johnson - Executive Director, Anacortes Family Center
23. Kat Lohman - Executive Director of Social Impact, Skagit Valley YMCA
24. Erin von Fempe - Integrated Outreach Services Supervisor, Mount Vernon Police Department
25. Kirk Pearson - Vice President, External Affairs, Volunteers of America
26. Steve Monrad - Community Paramedic, City of Anacortes
27. Judge Jenifer Howson - Skagit County District Court Judge, Community Court Services
28. Linden Jordan - President of PFLAG Skagit
29. Valerie McCormack - Operations Manager, Recovery Café Skagit
30. Lisa Sohni - Program Manager, North Sound Accountable Community of Health
31. Rose Ness - Co-Response System Program Manager, Skagit County Public Health/Sheriff's Office
32. Alan Muia - Executive Director, New Earth Recovery
33. Kelli Baker - Community Health Coordinator, PeaceHealth
34. Kevin Murphy - Executive Director, Skagit Council of Governments
35. Crystle Stidham - Chief Executive Director, Skagit Transit

Staff Resources

Tenfold Health: Margaret Van Vliet, Dr. Karen Hansberger, Chris Kelleher, Denna Vandersloot, Tripp Somerville, Michael Thomas, and Mike Bonetto

Skagit County: Keith Higman, Sarah Hinman, Andrea Harrison, Jenn Rogers

