



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release March 3, 2016

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Summit participants agree on ‘housing crisis’, express desire to see community-wide campaign

MOUNT VERNON – An overwhelming 98 percent of 300 participants in a recent county-wide housing summit agreed that Skagit County is experiencing a housing crisis.

Skagit County Public Health, host of a regional summit held on January 22, this week published a summary report based on a survey of participants at the event. The summary reflects data collected from 133 comment cards and 111 follow-up survey responses.

“There is no question that summit participants feel strongly enough about the housing issue to apply the label ‘crisis’ to our challenge,” said Bob Hicks, Skagit County Public Health Operations Manager. “Details from our surveys also reflect a common desire to tackle this challenge on many fronts, including increasing the supply and diversity of housing options.”

The first-ever Skagit County housing summit attracted an impressive cross section of community leaders ranging from County Commissioners and mayors to city council members and land-use planning experts. Among event speakers was U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen, who told his audience affordable housing is a vital element of any American family’s financial security.

In addition to elected officials, those in attendance included individuals whose lives have been directly impacted by housing issues. Also on hand were builders and public housing officials, law enforcement officers, hospital representatives, social service and faith community leaders.

Roundtable discussions and surveys resulted in a compilation of data that will be shared with Skagit County partners, said Kayla Schott-Bresler, Skagit County Public Health Housing Resource

Coordinator. Those who weighed in shared a wide variety of views on continued planning efforts, with some supporting new task forces and data collection and others expressing a desire to act immediately.

Among conclusions and recommendations cited by summit participants are the following:

- The first thing that must be done to address the housing crisis is establishment of a committed partnership of those in a position to create permanent supportive housing
- Priority strategies must address housing supply, diversity, and density
- Training efforts in terms of the housing crisis must include focus on how to bring quality multi-family housing to our communities

“A comment by one of our survey respondents reflected an often-repeated theme among those we heard from,” said Hicks. “That individual stated, ‘There is enough talent and concern in the community to go head-on with this crisis and leave it behind us very soon.’ A number of respondents also expressed their desire to learn more about how to get involved in being a part of the solution.”

For details regarding the summit, roundtable discussions and survey results, contact Hicks at (360) 416-1504.

See Skagit County’s [website](#) for data on Skagit County affordable housing needs and full summit summary report.