Feedback Card

Your Name: Patricia Laughlin

Address: 300 Belmont Terrace
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Email: laughlin @ fidalgo.net

We want your feedback on the Comprehensive Plan's Housing Element. What do you see as the major housing issues facing Skagit County in the coming years?
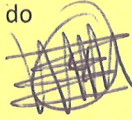
"Housing for the homeless."

✗ Please look at Quixote Village in Olympia.
  See Attached.   (micro units)

✗ Look at funding of this project.
          See Attached.

✗ In order to
  { Follow the 10 year Plan to End Homelessness
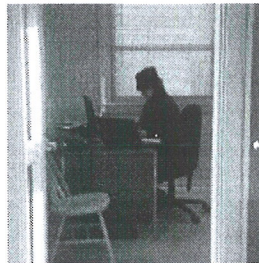
Quixote Village, Olympia, WA.
Housing for the homeless.
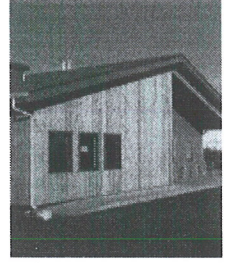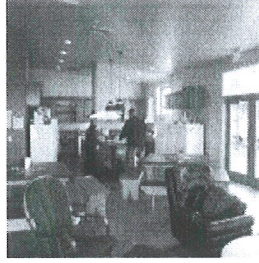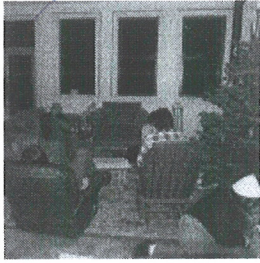
light industrial zoned, 2.17 acres,
adjusted to accommodate this
(code adjustments)   project.

Quixote Village.

Communal areas   Cabins.

notos

Quixote Village
website donated by Williams Group

Marketing + Design

FAQ

What is Quixote Village?

Quixote Village is a self-governing community of 30 previously homeless adults. The Village consists of 30 tiny (144 sq. ft interior) cottages, and a community building that contains a shared kitchen, dining area, living room, showers, laundry, and office and meeting space.

The Village site is 2.17 acres, and includes space for a large vegetable garden and personal "door yard" gardens in front of each cottage.

Donated by County / Surplus land. Zoned.

The Village is staffed by a full-time Program Manager and a part-time Resident Advocate. *—lite Industrial.*

The Village is supported by Panza, a 501C3 non-profit organization. (Panza is named for Sancho Panza, the servant of Don Quixote in the Cervantes novel.)

— Adjustments made to Develop. Regs to build. housing

What is Panza?

Panza is a 501C3 non-profit organization that mobilized community support for Camp Quixote, helped build Quixote Village, and now supports the ongoing operation of the Village. Panza is the legal owner and landlord for the Village.

Panza is named for Sancho Panza, who was Don Quixote's faithful servant in the famous novel by Cervantes.

Panza seeks to maintain an equal partnership with the Village Resident Council, which includes all Village residents. The Resident Council's elected leaders attend monthly Panza meetings, and representatives from Panza attend weekly Resident Council meetings.

Panza organizes community volunteers, raises funds, hires and supports staff, acts as liaison with federal, tribal, state and local governments, foundations, and community organizations

How can I apply for residence at the Village?

- The Village opened full, because its initial residents all moved from Camp Quixote.
- Quixote Village has a waiting list. If you are interested in applying for residency at the Village, please contact Sidewalk at (360)515-5587 to see if you qualify.
- In general, the admission process will include an initial interview with Sidewalk and Village staff to determine eligibility, followed by an interview with the Resident Council's Executive Committee and an opportunity to meet Village residents.
- Background checks are required; residents may not have outstanding warrants, a recent history of violence or theft, and may not be sex offenders.
- Village residents are expected to be clean and sober; urine analysis may occur.

Who built the Village, and why?

- In February, 2007, a homeless camp was established in a downtown Olympia parking lot to protest a city

ordinance that forbade sitting or lying on a sidewalk. When police threatened to break up the camp, a local church offered campers sanctuary on their grounds.

- Camp residents established their own code of conduct and elected their own leaders. The Camp included about 30 homeless adults.
- From the very beginning, the founders of Camp Quixote hoped to find land to build a village for themselves, consisting of tiny cabins and a shared building that would house showers, laundry, and cooking facilities.
- For the next six+ years, the camp moved from one church parking lot to another every three to six months under the terms of an ordinance that regulated it.
- Panza, a non-profit organization, was created to support the camp in 2008. Panza and the camp's Resident Council worked together to build Quixote Village.
- Camp Quixote residents left their tents behind and moved into the Village on December 24, 2013.

What did the Village cost to build?

- The total cost to build the entire Village was $3.05 million. (This includes all development costs, infrastructure, materials, labor, the community building, permits, fees, required road improvements, donated land and services etc.)
- The cost for each cottage was about $19,000.
- Thurston County leased us the land for $1 a year for 41 years. (The value of the land is about $333,000.)
- We had substantial donated services from our architect, our civil engineer, and others.
- IF we divide the total cost of the Village, including donated land and services, by the number of cottages, then the cost per unit would be $101,567 per unit. The average cost for studio apartments for low-income people is about $200,000 per unit.
- However, what we actually PAID for the Village was just under $88,000 per unit, because we didn't have to buy the land or pay full price for some high-value services such as architecture and engineering.

Where did the money come from?

- $1.5 million in the state capital budget, which came through the state Department of Commerce's Housing Trust Fund
- $699,000 from federal Community Development Block Grant funding that came through Thurston County and the City of Olympia
- $170,000 in Thurston County funding from state document recording fees
- $215,000 in community donations, including the Nisqually and Chehalis Tribes, the Boeing Employees' Fund, and individual donors

How did Panza and Camp Quixote raise the money?

The local ordinances that regulated Camp Quixote required that volunteers staff a "host desk" to control entry into the Camp and ensure safety. This meant that over the years, hundreds of faith community members and others who served as volunteers got to know people who were homeless. It was a transformative experience for everyone – volunteers and Camp residents alike – who had been strangers to each other before.

The result was a remarkable coalition. When 100+ people from diverse faith communities and 30 people living in tents packed city council meetings, council members took notice. This coalition was further strengthened by the support of local environmentalists who welcomed the idea of tiny house development.

The Thurston County Commission was an early supporter of the Village idea, and saw it as a promising model for affordable, sustainable housing. Their early commitment of land for the Village was an important first step towards raising the money to build it.

Camp residents and Panza members testified in support of a state capital budget appropriation and won a $1.5 million commitment from the state. Once we had that first big commitment, others followed.

We hired Community Frameworks, a non-profit low-income housing development agency based in Bremerton, Washington, to help and guide us through the complex processes involved in government grant applications and funding, and to manage the construction financing.

The keys to our fundraising success were:

- Residents of the Camp proved they were capable of self-government, and over time they built a great reputation for the Camp as a good neighbor and an asset to the community.
- Hundreds of people who volunteered at the Camp were willing to show up at public meetings to show their support.
- Camp residents were willing to speak at public meetings, legislative hearings, and in media interviews alongside their allies.
- Our coalition grew to include the local environmental movement, and many other interested community members.
- We are very blessed to live in a progressive, generous community with elected leaders who helped and supported us.
- Community Frameworks did a great job for us and was an essential part of our team.

How does the Village's self-government work?

The tradition of resident self-government began with the founding of Camp Quixote – a tent camp for homeless adults – in 2007. The first residents established a simple code of conduct that all residents agreed to live by.

In the six+ years of the Camp's existence, residents interviewed and voted on whom to admit to the Camp, and when to expel someone who didn't follow the rules. They also elected leaders every six months, and the leaders assigned chores, collected dues of $20 a month and managed the funds to provide paper plates, and other supplies.

Over time, it was established that Panza would not interfere with the internal governance of the Camp unless (1) the Camp asked us to, or (2) there was evidence that the Camp was not following its own rules.

These traditions from the Camp are the foundation of the Village self-government. The Village Resident Council will continue to interview and vote on new residents, and its elected Executive Committee will, in cooperation with staff, ensure that Village rules are followed and everyone is equally accountable. The Village's Program Manager supports the work of the Resident Council and the Executive Committee.

There are now two sets of rules for the Village. One set of rules was written by the Resident Council and its leaders; a second set of complementary rules was written by Panza in its role as the landlord agency. Panza rules are mainly directed towards maintaining the Village facilities and ensuring that the requirements of our funders and insurers are met.

The Resident Council meets once a week; its meetings are preceded by a dinner shared by all residents. The Executive Committee meets two or three times each week, depending on what issues come up that need their attention.

Quixote Village
Website donated by Williams Group

Marketing + Design

About Us

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What the Village Cost

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Marketing + Design

Planning Commissioners

Attached is a copy of the letter submitted last night by Bill Henkel, Executive Director of Community
 Action of Skagit County regarding the Comprehensive Plan Housing element.

Dale Pernula, AICP
Director
Skagit County Planning & Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360-336-9410 ext. 5818
dalep@co.skagit.wa.us

March 3, 2015

Dear Skagit County Planning Commission:

Thank you for accepting public input on your Comprehensive Plan's Housing Element, and for hosting an open house and public workshop on February 17. Because I was unable to attend that workshop, I would like to provide the Commission with a few high-level statistics that illustrate the critical need for affordable housing in Skagit County.

As you may know from other input at the February 17 workshop:

- Affordable housing is consistently identified as the highest need and lowest availability for low income Skagit County residents (2013 Skagit Community Needs Assessment, a survey of the needs and perspectives of nearly 700 local low-income households).
- The average renter in Skagit County needs a full-time job paying $17.70 per hour ($36,000 per year) in order to afford the fair market rate on a local two-bedroom apartment, while the average Skagit renter only earns $11.06, a more than $6/hour gap (2012 Skagit County Affordable Housing Strategy Interim report, created by the Skagit County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, and approved by the Skagit County Commissioners in 2013).
- As of July 2014, the rental market in Skagit County was tight, with a vacancy rate of 3.5% (2.8% in Mount Vernon and Anacortes) (HUD "Housing Situation Report for Skagit County," 2014).
- No permits were issued for multifamily construction in 2013, and only 51 units were issued permits from 2010 through 2013 (US Census)
- The estimated total additions to renter housing in Skagit from 2000-2009 was 1,450, while the total change in our renter households in the same period was 2,825 (HUD 2014 report).

Anecdotally, it is worth mentioning that it is not uncommon for our housing team at Community Action to have rental vouchers available to serve homeless individuals and families and move them into housing stability, but no available units. We hear the same from our local housing partners, such as the Housing Authority of Skagit County.

Please let me know if I can get you more information on housing needs or potential solutions. I would also like to pledge my and my organization's support in any way we can help as you develop the Housing Element of your Comprehensive Plan. Truly, this is a complex issue that will require a coordinated, communitywide response, and we thus appreciate your interest and leadership.

Sincerely,

Bill Henkel
Executive Director

Linda Christensen

From:	ALBERT <aperaino@comcast.net>
Sent:	Monday, March 09, 2015 4:14 PM
To:	Linda Christensen
Subject:	Fwd: Mount Vernon Housing

Linda,
Forwarding for department review/action
Al Peraino
40th
NAMI Skagit Board

From: "ALBERT" <aperaino@comcast.net>
To: janah@mountvernonwa.gov
Cc: commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2015 3:31:46 PM
Subject: Mount Vernon Housing

Hi Jana,

We emailed about a year ago on this subject and I just procrastinated. As you are aware and can read in Sunday SVH some 20,000+ housing units are needed in Skagit by 2025- part of this in Mount Vernon.

This would be units that are affordable- rent or mortgage around 30% of income. Apartment vacancy even at this time is very low and the rents are not affordable for those on disability.

We agree this is not a new problem. The problem has been there for years and our government (local, state, federal) seems content to not really provide a priority solution. Past solutions have arisen and a few have been successful and others have only made the matter worse. Any solution will be complex.

When I brainstorm possible solutions, I see the need for a partnership of gov't, private sector and non-profits. I see Skagit County raising the minimum wage to $15/hr over 5 years. I see a tax on non-profit revenue of churches, service organizations, foundations etc... etc.
I see a developer/home builder (multiunit development) who is required to provide 10% of the land for Skagit Habitat or Fuller Center for Housing (& others) to build affordable housing units.

1

These maybe are not original ideas and so what are other ideas. More important, what are we going to change tomorrow to start solving this problem of lack of affordable housing? I don't mean more talk without action.
Al Peraino, PE
NAMI Skagit Board