

LifeWire Q&A (March 13, 2019)

Q: What is your parking plan?

A: The City of Bellevue parking regulations are always a challenge. Our residents are typically below 15% of median income – less than 1/3 have vehicles. We will try to get a variance from the City, but will also develop a shared parking agreement (even though we probably won't need the spaces).

Q: Is the site close enough to public transportation?

A: The site is in an ideal location for public transportation, shopping, and other services.

Q: How do you work with neighbors?

A: The site does not require any zoning changes, so we will not need to get approval from neighbors. We currently house participants in a commercial apartment complex, and the other residents do not know their rent is subsidized by LifeWire. We are responsive and responsible if management alerts us to any neighbor conflicts

Q: Will you have two staff onsite?

A: We will have three full-time staff based here, with office space. They might not be onsite at all times, they may be taking residents out for other services. There will also be other staff onsite at various times.

Q: What if you do end up needing the parking spaces?

A: We will figure that out as we negotiate the shared parking agreement. We will not need designated spaces. Again, this is transitional housing. The average stay is projected at 8 months. Residents do not typically get a vehicle until after they leave. Building parking spaces is very expensive. We would rather use the funds to provide housing for residents.

Q: What security measures will be in place?

A: In addition to anonymity of the residents, we will have a key system that is both secure and changeable.

Q: Do you know about the project near the Humane Society, and what its impact will be on the housing need on the Eastside?

A: Congregations for the Homeless serves a different population than LifeWire. The shortage of affordable housing will remain.

Q: How do you prioritize who gets housing?

A: We have a process to assess the needs of each survivor. We offer a variety of services beyond transitional housing. We try to match the survivor with the services that best meet their needs. One of the things we look at is how dangerous the situation is for the survivor.

Q: Do you see opportunities for partnerships with East Shore?

A: We see many opportunities. Our other facility has a wonderful relationship with a nearby church, which has become very involved in supporting the families and the facility.

Q: What is the relationship between LifeWire and Sophia Way?

A: We have a strong relationship. We serve overlapping populations, and frequently refer people to each other. We have also told Sophia Way they can remain in Holly House until construction starts.

Q: What about the YWCA?

A: We also have a strong relationship with the YWCA, and have developed joint programs.

Q: How long will construction take?

A: Probably 12 months, depending on how much site preparation is needed. We also have to raise money to build the facility. We anticipate opening the doors to residents at the end of 2021.

Q: What is the difference between having land and having money?

A: We can raise money. We can't create land. The site is much more valuable than a cash donation.

Q: How did the King County Housing Authority guarantee come to be? (KCHA has guaranteed cash at closing, covering the purchase price.)

A: KCHA believes in our mission. We are reaching families that KCHA cannot. We have partnered with them on many projects and they are particularly impressed that we are able to get participants leased up (into housing) quickly. Though we do not expect to have a problem with financing the project if we are selected, if for some reason we cannot finance the project, King County Housing Authority will retain title to the land and it will be used for affordable housing.

Q: Why is your bid the lowest if the property is so valuable?

A: It's what we can afford. When we originally bid on the property in 2017, we were told the church needed a million dollars. So we bid a million plus 50K. We would much rather spend money on facilities vs land.