

Select Comm. Herman  
Services 7/17/18



# ARLINGTON DRIVE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT CAMPUS



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY  
& COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICES



ARLINGTON DRIVE  
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This **Arlington Drive Youth and Young Adult Campus Interim Engagement Report and Action Plan** provides a summary of the community engagement effort that has taken place between July and December of 2017. It describes **the structure and formats** of the engagement activities (pp. 1-3), **the themes** that have emerged from community conversations (pp. 4-8), and concludes with an **action plan** (pp. 9-12) that will help The Tacoma Housing Authority and Community Youth Services plan, design, and manage the Arlington Campus. This report is based on the findings from conversations with some 150-200 stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND

### **THE CRISIS**

Tacoma and Pierce County have an alarming number of homeless youth without families and homeless young adults. This problem has been growing for a long time. On any given night, 90 or more unaccompanied youth and young adults are homeless county-wide.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all of these young people experience homelessness due to the trauma of abuse, neglect, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, or family rejection due to sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

### **THE PROJECT**

When THA opened Salishan in 2007, that investment changed part of Eastside forever. A community better known for its rampant crime was transformed into a thriving mixed-income neighborhood. Now, in order to address the crisis in homeless young adults, Tacoma Housing Authority (THA), in partnership with Community Youth Services (CYS), is making a new investment adjacent to Salishan at 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Portland Avenue. THA and CYS will develop a service-enriched campus to provide homeless youth and young adults with short and long-term housing options and high quality, empowering supportive services. These services are anticipated to include professional trauma-informed case management services, independent living skills training, social support, and job training.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

In planning for the programming, design, and management of the Arlington campus, THA and CYS are seeking the views, concerns, advice, and support of many community members. In July 2017, THA enlisted the help of BDS Planning to engage the community in a series of ongoing conversations about how Arlington can become the most valuable asset to youth in need and the broader Eastside. In the latter half of 2017, BDS, THA and CYS have conducted more than 40 unique community engagement activities about the planned Arlington Youth Campus.

---

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Pierce County Point in Time Count Results: <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/41015>

This engagement has been organized into two main formats:

- Informal interviews, briefing sessions, and small group conversations
- A formal Community Advisory Board

### **INFORMAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS**

The informal engagement consisted of outreach to existing groups that have a direct interest in the project, including: organized neighbors, public and non-profit service providers, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, local educators, and most importantly, youth and young adults who have experienced the trauma of homelessness.



During this informal outreach, the engagement team endeavored to meet stakeholders where they were already meeting: within local non-profits offices, in churches, school yards, and at community fairs. In each case, the engagement team presented the overall concept for the Arlington campus (its proposed populations, services, and site constraints) before facilitating a conversation about the participants' hopes, fears, and goals for the project. By scheduling these informal conversations during one-on-one interviews and small groups hosted in local venues that are familiar and comfortable for participants, the engagement team was able to gather candid feedback and suggestions about the campus's design, programming, and operations.

### **COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

To help THA and CYS dive deeper into the themes and learnings which emerged out of these informal community conversations, the BDS team formed a recurring Community Advisory Board with about 20 members that met four times. This group consisted of influential Eastside community members in and around Salishan as well as service providers and other professionals who are experts in youth development or who have extensive experience with property management or development. Several youth members of the advisory board offered their invaluable perspective to the deliberations of this group.

The agendas of the Community Advisory Board were structured around the evolving themes that were simultaneously emerging from the informal community conversations. The board listened to presentations from the engagement team about these themes before considering the following questions:

- Why is this theme or issue area important?
- What recommendations do you have for THA and CYS?
- How would you prioritize these recommendations given the available resources and the activities of other organizations providing services in this area?

Through a series of meetings that built off one another, the Community Advisory Board first came to agreement about the six (6) core themes and a set of preliminary recommendations for THA and CYS in the planning and management of the Arlington Campus. These themes and preliminary recommendations (outlined below) became the foundation for the Action Plan which follows.



*Arlington Drive Community Advisory Board. October 12, 2017.*

## ARLINGTON THEMES & PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged from community conversations and that were validated by the Community Advisory Board. These include a series of specific preliminary recommendations that should be priority considerations for The Tacoma Housing Authority and Community Youth Services.



### Theme #1 Desire for Campus to feel Open and Inclusive to Broader Eastside

#### What We Heard:

- Make Arlington feel like a natural extension of Salishan; open and welcoming to all.
- Integration with external community groups will help reduce stigma for residents.
- Priorities for community space included: a library, flexible space for clubs and a variety of creative activities.
- Coordinate with Eastside Community Center (ECC) vendors and programs.

#### Recommendations:

- Integrate broader community by partnering with local organizations and programs serving similar youth; ensure that services will not be duplicated with Eastside Community Center.
- Utilize local best practices for working with homeless youth (i.e., REACH Center) by providing a variety of programs under one roof (educational, employment, workforce training, etc.).
- Develop strategic plan focused on community building for utilization of shared space, i.e., how Equity Center will be used and be distinctive from the ECC.

## **Theme #2 Youth & Resident Ownership**

### **What We Heard:**

- Concerns that this project will be rigid and unwilling to respond to resident's evolving needs or priorities.
- Project leadership does not reflect the population being served.
- Worry that the project may be culturally insensitive to the diversity of campus residents.

### **Recommendations:**

- Partner with organizations with a track-record (such as Mockingbird Society, REACH Center, Oasis) as they are proven to be successful in implementing strong youth leadership programming focused on homeless / foster care youth
- Actively recruit community residents, peers, and those with relevant direct experience for hiring.
- Proactively inform community of employment opportunities through the project website, at local job fairs, and recruiting at academic institutions.
- Include youth to inform the operations of any service programs offered at Arlington; they should also provide input on what success looks like for these programs.

## **Theme #3 Sustained Relationship Between Campus Residents and THA/CYS is Critical**

### **What We Heard:**

- Youth and residents want to be approached as partners.
- Interest a "bottom-up" ongoing evaluation system that is not prescriptive and includes staff and resident voices.
- Need for transparency in decision-making process for campus operations.

### **Recommendation:**

- Share leadership with youth and residents and co-develop plan on how to measure success. Plan will be the starting point for an ongoing Advisory Group charter.

## **Theme #4 Access to Youth Most in Need**

### **What We Heard:**

- Need for pathways and open doors for undocumented youth to access housing and services.
- Engage with the community to identify organizations that serve the most marginalized youth.
- Engage with community organizations that serve LGBTQ youth.

## **Theme #5 Community Awareness**

- Provide support to youth who have been trafficked and have been engaged in sex work.
- Ensure that campus is a safe space and that vulnerable youth are protected from gangs and outside influencers.
- Demand for CRC is strong, THA should consider dedicating its other 6-bed facility for direct County referrals.

### **Recommendations:**

- Build relationship with Northwest Detention Center and community organizations serving undocumented youth to develop a robust referral network.
- Prioritize youth with unique challenges who would not thrive in traditional settings.
- Employ staff with competencies needed to effectively engage residents in a manner that promotes success.

### **What We Heard:**

- Many neighboring faith groups expressed interest in eliciting the support of their congregants to welcome future Arlington residents.
- There is strong community desire to feel informed about the project, including: intake process, supervision plan and daily functions.
- Target those who may not be actively seeking to be involved and inform them.
- Broader public in Eastside is not well informed about youth homelessness; strong stigma and cultural stereotypes persist.
- Law enforcement perceive this campus as a much-needed resource for Tacoma and the Eastside.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop a web presence for the public to learn about the project.
- Leverage youth's skills and network in communicating project goals, mission, and services to peers who may be experiencing homelessness.
- Utilize youth leadership group or board to raise awareness and reduce stigma associated with homelessness.

## #6 Cultural Responsiveness

### What We Heard:

- Strong desire for the planning of the campus to continue to be inclusive.
- Project leadership / decision-makers do not appear to reflect the population being served.
- Worry that the project may be culturally insensitive to the diversity of campus residents.
- Reengage and reconcile youth with families in cases where they are willing

### Recommendations:

- All site staff should receive training on “undoing institutional racism” and/or “race, the power of an illusion.”
- Ongoing independent evaluation of program to assess whether it is meeting goals.
- Implement peer support models which utilizes youth and individuals with lived experience as direct care staff.
- Cultural sensitivity should be implemented into design of the campus
  - I.e., art, painting, design, space usage, and activation that makes youth feel welcomed
- Challenges faced by youth may be a result of conflict in family of origin. In some cases reconciliation is the best plan of action.



# THA GENERAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

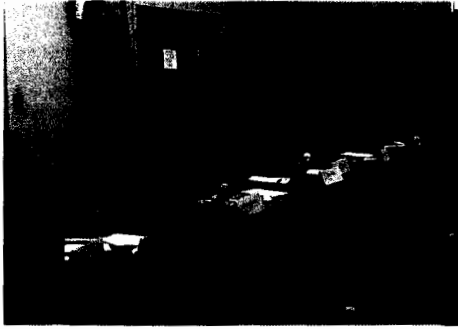
## Ongoing Community Engagement between THA and Broader Community

### What We Heard:

- Residents felt uninformed of previous THA initiatives and projects going on in the community.
- Stakeholders are cautious about community engagement and believe that their voices have been solicited but not utilized in a manner that informs the implementation of projects/programs that meet community needs in the past.
- Forums are often held outside of hours that fit the schedules of stakeholders, tend to be prescriptive and are not led or designed by community. This leaves participants feeling unwelcome and isolated in spaces that are not attentive to the multicultural needs of the community.

### Recommendations:

- Leverage established relationships with targeted stakeholders to continue ongoing engagement with residents and youth about new projects and initiatives.
- Attend existing community gatherings.
- Loopback - communicate decisions with stakeholders and deliberately demonstrate to community that feedback has been incorporated into plans.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

### IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

The following actions are near-term and will be prioritized in the first **six (6) months** of this plan's publication date.

No.	Action / Description	Lead
A1.	<b>Equity in CRC Staff Hiring Policy and Plan</b> Plan to include prioritization for community residents, peers, and those with relevant direct experience. The plan will build in flexibility on educational requirements which can be a barrier to equitable hiring. Staff hiring panel should include Eastside residents and youth. Plan will be published and communicated to the service provider, resident, and broader community. Add a priority for THA residents.	CYS
A2.	<b>Serve Undocumented Youth and Refugees through Partnerships</b> Build overt partnerships with local organizations who are already serving or interfacing with undocumented youth and refugees in order to develop a menu of services that will be available to these youth at the Crisis Residential Center when it opens (e.g. The Korean Womens' Association, The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest, and Lutheran Community Services Northwest). A small physical location on campus to host a rotating mix of service providers could help make connections.	CYS
A3.	<b>Launch Public Website</b> Develop and release a project website that will have the most current information about the campus plans and will offer an anonymous form for offering feedback. Leverage Community Advisory Board networks to spread broader community awareness of the website.	THA
A4.	<b>Learn from the Tribe</b> Accept Puyallup Tribe's invitation and visit tribe to learn best practices in designing culturally sensitive and community-informed healing spaces to inform campus design.	THA/CYS

A5.	<p><b>Continuing Community Advisory Committee</b></p> <p>Seek commitment from community partners to participate in an ongoing Community Advisory board that can meet periodically on an as needed basis to help vet and develop project plans over the next phases. Meetings will be organized around specific topics, such as the programming of any resource space for residents in the rental housing. Specific groups that should be represented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Salishan Residents and Leaders</li> <li>• Law Enforcement</li> <li>• Service Providers</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• Faith-based Organizations</li> <li>• Puyallup Tribe</li> <li>• Funders</li> </ul>	THA
-----	--	-----

**MID-TERM ACTIONS**

The following actions are mid-term and will be prioritized for initiation within **six to twelve months** of the publication of this document.

No.	Action / Description	Lead
B1.	<p><b>Equity Staff Training</b></p> <p>All site staff at Arlington will receive periodic training on recognizing and undoing institutional racism/cultural bias in addition to training on cultural competence and equity. Staff will receive regular performance evaluations that will include resident feedback. This activity calls for staff to engage in evaluation of programs/operating bodies/climate of campus. This means staff involved with the campus must take basic equity training as foundation for building a shared analysis and definition for this equity work. THA and CYS will create a committee to manage, monitor, and coordinate equity-promoting efforts. Partners: REACH Center Collaborative, Associated Ministries and People’s Institute</p>	THA/CYS
B2.	<p><b>Scope and Criteria for Supportive Services</b></p> <p>THA will publish and widely disseminate the scope and series of criteria that it will use to select a supportive service provider in the rental housing at Arlington. THA will work in collaboration with youth to solicit stakeholder feedback on these criteria before issuing its RFP. Criteria will prioritize diversity, cultural competence, mental health support, and transitions/age-out support. Youth will participate in the RFP process from the beginning to end – to the design of scope and selection of grantees. Partners: Mockingbird Society (youth leadership and guidance) and Family Self-Sufficiency Programs and Puyallup Tribe (youth transitions)</p>	THA

B3.	<b>Develop Tool for Evaluation of On-Site Service Providers</b> Seek City support (e.g. through the Office of Equity and Human Rights) to develop a third-party assessment of operational partners, focusing on adherence to intercultural sensitivity, effective delivery of services and outcomes. The evaluation process will be inclusive of consumers of services who will participate in the process.	THA
B4.	<b>Develop Campus Resource Space Program</b> Ensure that the program for any resource space for campus residents is well-coordinated with the offering of the new Eastside Community Center and the Salishan Investment Center so as to not duplicate resources/services. The parameters for the broader public use of this space will need to be clearly articulated in order to create opportunities for the dual goals of social exchange and campus resident safety. The rental housing service provider will provide input on this program. Partners: Puyallup Tribe, YMCA, School District, and neighboring churches (recovery programs)	THA
B5.	<b>Access for Minority &amp; Marginalized Youth</b> For services and housing on campus, extend an intentional marketing and outreach effort to minority and marginalized youth including: Youth of Color, immigrants, LGBTQI, American Indian, Justice Involved and survivors of sex trafficking. Partners: Vadis, Risking Connections, Rebuilding Hope, Asian Pacific Cultural Center, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project	THA/CYS
B6.	<b>Resident Engagement through Public Art</b> A process for establishing resident-directed and resident-assisted public art projects and pro-social activities at Arlington to help build cultural relevance into the design will be established. Space on the campus will be reserved for this intended use. Partners: Puyallup Tribe and Hilltop Artists.	THA

### **LONG-TERM ACTIONS**

The following action are long-term and ongoing and will be prioritized for initiation within **twelve to thirty-six months** of the publication of this document.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action / Description</b>	<b>Lead</b>
C1.	<b>Arlington Resident Council</b> A resident oversight group will be formed with representatives from Arlington renters and places held for staff of the Crisis Residential Center. With staff support from THA, this group will develop its own charter, write bylaws, and operating norms. The group will advise THA on issues pertaining to property management, service provision, etc. In collaboration with THA, this group will create a clear set of policies and procedures for relaying feedback and receiving responses. THA will support the Resident Council in developing capacity and effectiveness by providing trainings, planning, and outreach guidance. Prioritize employee	THA

	wellness, including creating a position that provides support for line workers, offer benefits such as gym memberships to safeguard against burnout of staff.	
C2.	<b>Equity in Rental Housing Services Staff Hiring Policy and Plan</b> The development of a plan to promote equity in staff hiring (including a prioritization for community residents, peers, and those with relevant lived experience) will be incorporated into the contract for services in the rental housing. Build internal structure to support equity work while simultaneously working with external partners to educate community on homelessness and equity/inclusion. (i.e. associated ministries has toolkit and data to educate community on homelessness and equity/inclusion). Develop training plan to improve competencies of employees without lived experience. Create public awareness and generate interest by hosting/cohosting employment fair(s), partner with local universities and schools. Design and hire for position specific to working on reconciling families.	THA
C3.	<b>Staff Support for Ongoing Community Engagement</b> Dedicate staff time and resources to maintaining an ongoing, two-way dialogue about THA projects and activities more broadly in Tacoma. This staff person will attend existing meetings of local stakeholder groups to provide informal updates about what THA is working on as well as to listen and learn. The liaison will collaborate with the Eastside Neighborhood Council.	THA
C4.	<b>Equitable Contracting</b> Contract with underutilized contractors of color and community-based contractors. Look into policies on contracting practices to determine whether there may be requirements that have unintended bias. Contract for independent review of guidelines/RFP's. Maintain a database of local and minority contractors. Collaborate with the City of Tacoma to learn about Project Labor Agreements, platforms and resources for engaging the right candidates. Continue to seek third party advice (such as from the University of Washington) while reviewing THA's contracting and procurement policies.	THA