

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL  
Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite #105  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
(360) 778-5010



COUNCILMEMBERS  
Rud Browne  
Barry Buchanan  
Tyler Byrd  
Todd Donovan  
Ben Elenbaas  
Carol Frazey  
Kathy Kershner

## WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

# Homeless Strategies Workgroup

---

## MEMO

Date: April 8, 2020  
To: Homeless Strategies Workgroup Members  
From: Councilmember Barry Buchanan  
RE: Homelessness Activities during COVID-19 Emergency

---

The Homeless Strategies Workgroup (HSW) has suspended all in-person future meetings in accordance with State Proclamation 20-28. Recent revised guidance from the Washington State Attorney General indicates that remote meetings should be restricted to only those regulatory agencies whose actions are essential to directly address the current COVID-19 emergency. Therefore, all future HSW meetings are postponed until further notice.

The County would like to continue to engage with HSW members. Twice a month, a memo update will be provided to HSW members and posted on the [HSW Meeting Information page](#). Updates will include activities of the Whatcom Unified Command efforts related to homeless populations.

Additionally, please email your feedback, ideas, and questions to Cathy Halka at [chalka@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:chalka@co.whatcom.wa.us) so that future memos may address topics of interest of HSW members.

### Non-Congregant Sheltering - Quarantine/Isolation Facility

The County entered into an agreement with the owners of the vacant (and for sale) Motel 6 property at 3701 Byron Avenue through May 6, 2020. The site will be used as a quarantine and isolation facility. The facility will open next week and is intended for those people who can't safely remain in their homes or who may not have the resources to stay safe. Each room has its own direct entry and includes a private bathroom and bed. There are a total of 60 rooms, of which 58 rooms will be available for non-congregate sheltering and 2 rooms will be used for office, supplies, and support services.

Under the supervision of Whatcom Unified Command and the Whatcom County Health Department, partner organizations Sea Mar Community Health Center and Lighthouse Mission Ministries will operate the facility and provide 24/7 staffing, laundry, food, cleaning, and various supplies. The cost of the facility over 3 months is estimated to be \$1,364,000.

Whatcom County is requesting approval for FEMA reimbursement of costs associated with the site.

Additionally, the County is currently conducting assessments of additional locations for future use as additional non-congregate sheltering locations.

*(Visit [www.whatcomcovid.com](http://www.whatcomcovid.com) for more information)*

#### Membership Expansion on Hold

On February 25, 2020, the Whatcom County Council approved [Resolution 2020-010](#), which created additional HSW membership positions (Special populations representing domestic violence, behavioral health, and/or elder care and medically fragile; Homeless children and families; Schools). Any membership changes to the Homeless Strategies Workgroup are on hold until such time as a quorum of the members can meet in person or remotely.