

From: Tina McKim
Subject: Emergency shelter needed NOW!Tuesday,
Date: December 15, 2020 12:04:55 PM

Dear Homeless Strategies Workgroup,

I am baffled that the county has not purchased the 50 shelters currently available for delivery and set up by Christmas from the Pallet Shelter Company in Everett. The health authorities recommendation for social distancing has been in place since the start of the pandemic and the county has known all year that winter sheltering would be needed (as it is every year). At least one member of the workgroup investigated these shelters months ago and found them suitable and comparably priced the shelters currently being purchase from the company in Ferndale. We've seen how well tiny home programs (such as Homes Now's Unity village) work in keeping people safe and transitioned into permanent housing. We know that there around 1000 homeless people in our community and that that number is expected to rise significantly due to the pandemic. Bad weather exacerbates vulnerability to disease and hypothermia- none of this is new. Emergency shelter is needed NOW and in far greater numbers than the 150 shelters currently planned to roll out slowly. Once the temperatures drop again, more people will will seek out emergency shelter services. Not everyone can go to base camp or the mission- many are banned, have had their stuff stolen, were assaulted or worse. These people need shelter too. Please, please get emergency, socially distanced shelters up and running much faster before more people get sick, sicker or die.

Sincerely,
Tina McKim
Bellingham, WA