

Reciprocity: Seattle's Housed Community Hosts a Network of Villages for Seattle's Unhoused Families

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University of Washington

Abstract

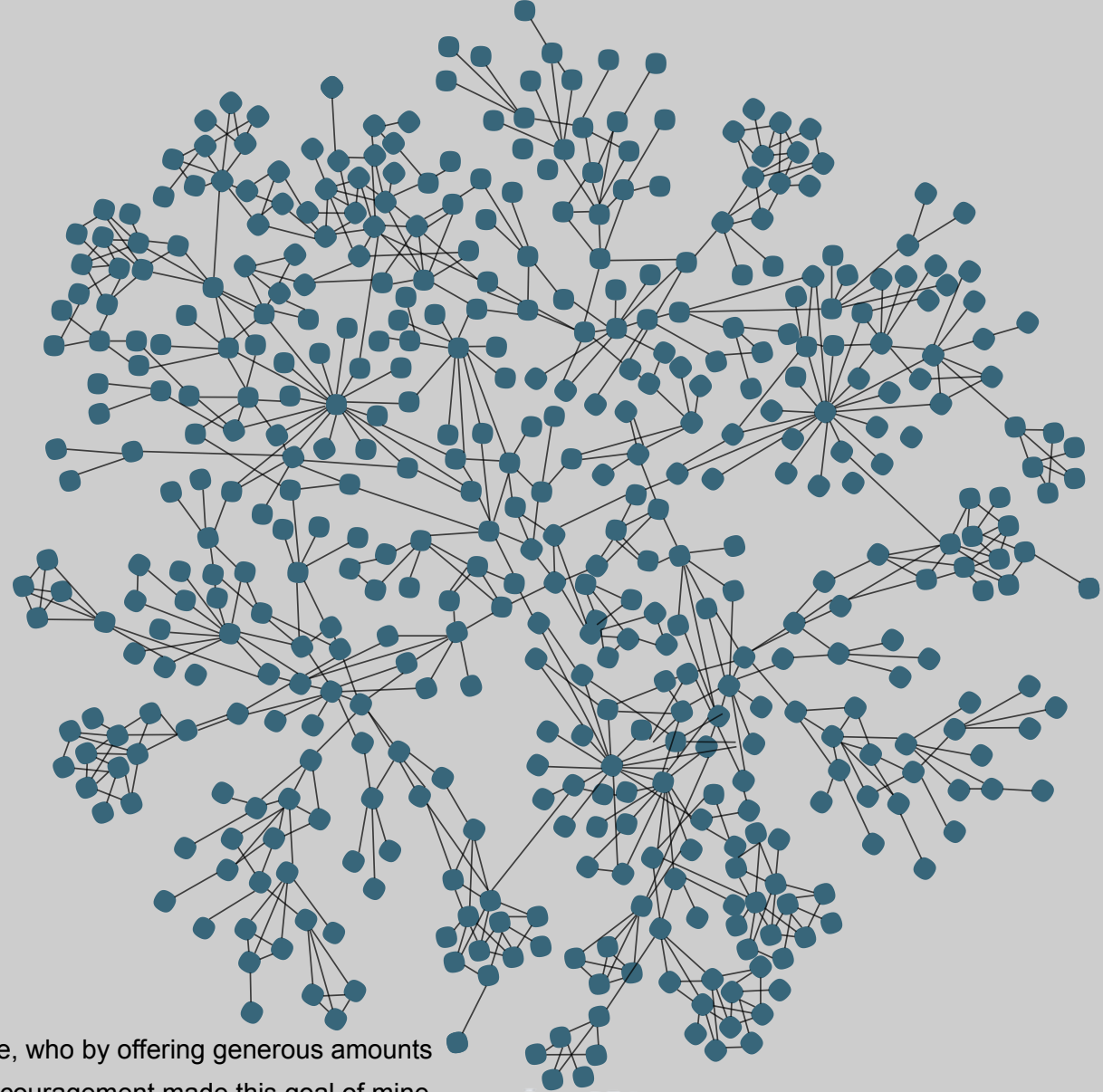
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Heather Reynolds Jenkins

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King County and the City of Seattle have been unable to reach their ten-year 2015 challenge to end homelessness; instead the rate of homelessness has increased 21% in the last year alone. Despite the difficulties in resolving homelessness here, other places faced with a similar homeless situation have been able to achieve much better results. Salt Lake City, through employing a Housing First program, has reduced chronic homelessness by 98%. Needy people are placed immediately into housing with the Housing First program, instead of having to resolve issues and qualify for housing, as in more traditional homeless housing programs.

Inspired by the success experienced in Utah, this thesis proposes a plan to specifically help homeless families in Seattle by installing temporary, modular, pop-up housing, interspersed throughout the neighborhoods of the city. This infusion of small living units will house families rapidly, reducing the amount of time they wait to find shelter. Neighborhood site locations not only offer the resources necessary to nurture healthy families, such as grocery stores, medical clinics, schools, community centers, friends and playgrounds, but also the chance to grow a supportive social network. This network, often missing in the lives of the homeless becomes a safety net that is vital in their successful transition to a healthier life. A hosting neighborhood gets the chance to establish friendships, offer mentorship and social support to struggling families through shared daily community activities. A large community space within the village can host neighborhood events and social service agency activities creating a place where homeless families find not only emergency shelter, but a way to successfully emerge from homelessness.



A sincere thank you to everyone, who by offering generous amounts of help, time, friendship and encouragement made this goal of mine a reality. A special thank you to my husband, Adrian, for his heroic patience and support and to Joe Ingram, who is an incredible example of one person making a huge difference in improving the lives of the homeless.

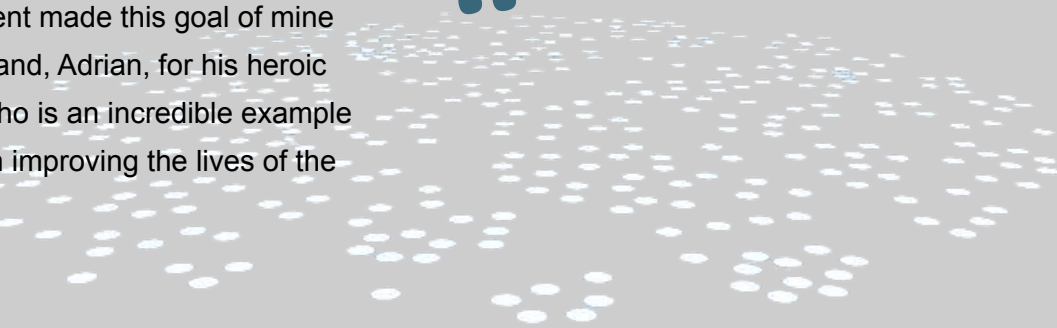


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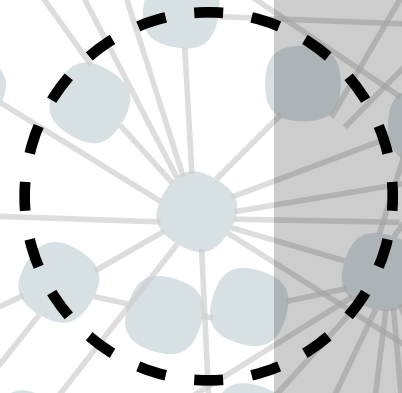
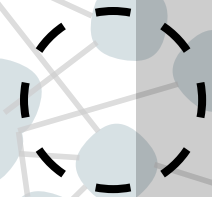
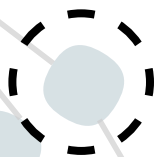




Figure 1 Operation Boatlift, NYC 911



Figure 2 Paris train heroes

Chapter 1 Americans Respond

Americans, at their best, have shown the ability to rally and rise to an occasion – having the courage, creativity and initiative to do the extraordinary in solving problems and providing relief when help is needed, often on a person by person basis. Following the September 11, 2001 disaster in New York City, as the twin towers crumbled and sirens wailed, countless people assisted those struggling to evacuate Manhattan. Operation Boatlift was able to evacuate thousands, using a spontaneous network, comprised simply of volunteer boat owners. In August 2015, Spencer Stone, Alek Skarlatos and Anthony Sadler recognized the danger facing themselves and their fellow passengers when a man armed with multiple weapons appeared in their train car on their way to Paris. Hundreds of lives were saved when they courageously sprang to action, disabling the gun man with the help of other passengers. These examples show the impact that individuals can have to make tough life situations better. The testimonies given by the people involved in these examples also attest to the difference their experiences and the opportunity to help,

made to them – how helping those in need, helped them find more purpose and meaning in their own life.

There are people in need of help everywhere – everyday. Large emergencies like the ones mentioned previously make headlines, but chances to make a difference are not limited to huge events. It is also often thought that severe need is usually found far from home, in third world countries, etc. The unfortunate truth is that hundreds of thousands of people are suffering daily in the United States from the lack of basics such as food, clothing and shelter. Homelessness is the cause of suffering for millions across the country. Governments and communities struggle to find an adequate response to the problem. Their plans often fall short due to lack of understanding, knowledge, resources and funding.

In Seattle, Washington, the struggle to help those experiencing homelessness has been an ongoing and difficult task for many years, much like other large cities around the United States. A wide range of people, organizations and churches find themselves working together to try to meet the needs of an overwhelming tide of homeless people. Homeless families are one segment of this homeless population and often have young children that they are trying to care for. Intact families struggle to use the current shelter system which often cannot meet their needs, either due to lack of space or a mismatch of needs to services offered.

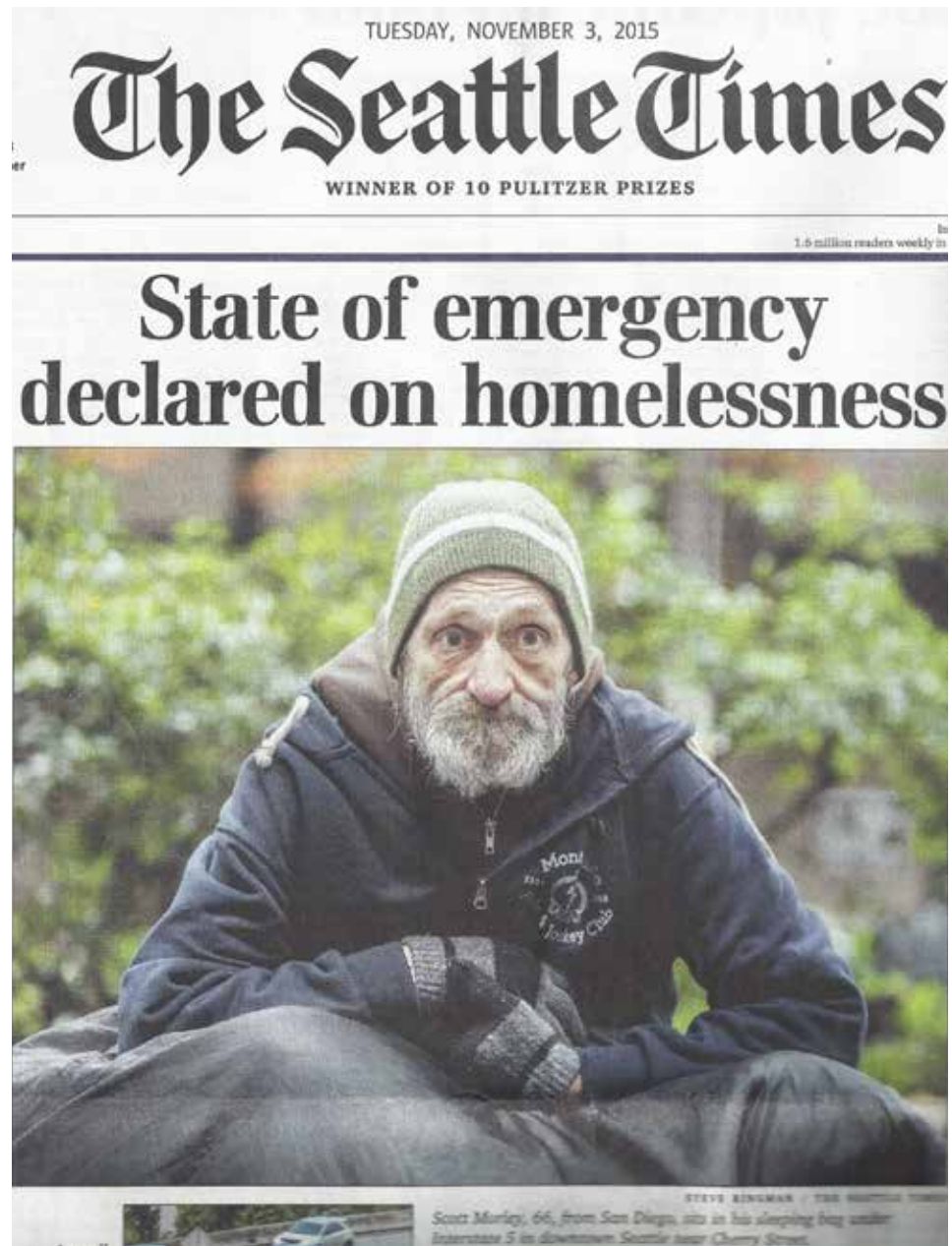


Figure 3 The Seattle Times announces the declaration of emergency, November 3, 2015.

This thesis proposes a uniting of the many parties that are currently trying to help the homeless, specifically homeless families - as well as engaging the public, by creating a network of housing villages hosted in urban neighborhoods of Seattle. Combining the efforts of government, city officials, community service agencies, faith communities, volunteers and neighborhood groups, a program of temporary urban housing and supportive community networking will be established, helping families with a hand up – giving them the necessary tools to escape homelessness.

Chapter 2 Homelessness is an Emergency

Homeless Advocacy in Seattle

Seattle, and King County in general, joined the fight to end homelessness in the early 2000's and committed in 2005 to end homelessness by 2015. Unfortunately, homelessness in Seattle has only increased – 21% from 2014 to 2015. According to the One Night Count that took place in King County in January 2015, there were approximately 3,772 people sleeping either unsheltered or in shelters and transitional housing in January 2015. [See image 6a] Having missed the goal of ending homelessness so dramatically, and with programs and allotted resources in the Seattle community stretched to a breaking point, Mayor Ed Murray was urged to declare a state of emergency on homelessness – following the example

of Los Angeles, Portland and Hawaii. The declaration was made November 2, 2015 by both Mayor Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine. This declaration allows the mayor the ability to make policy changes and funding allowances above the ordinary limits.

Each month in King County, about 3,000 people become newly homeless, according to state public-assistance records. By declaring a state of emergency, Seattle “will have more administrative authority and flexibility in contracting for services and distributing resources, [Mayor] Murray said.

The Seattle Times

The difficulties Seattle's homeless population experience in obtaining help, were featured on National Public Radio in February 2015. Not only have the numbers of people needing help increased, but a new system has been recently implemented to coordinate the resources of the community and create a single entry point for accessing help. To enter the new system, everyone must now apply for help through the Family Housing Connection portal run by Catholic Community Services. This allows a streamlined setup of information for all service providers. As can be expected, this new system has had issues to resolve as it has come online. Unfortunately as the bugs in the system are being worked out, the homeless are continuing to sleep outside and wait for help. By calling 211 (a clear reference



Figure 4 Homeless woman with children

to calling 911 – the widely known number to use in case of an emergency), a homeless family can begin the process of entering the system. What follows the call is not the swift emergency-like response expected. Instead, families are placed on a waiting list for shelter space to become available – often living in makeshift circumstances, possibly on the street, for years.



Figure 5 Family Housing Connection Webpage

Homelessness and Families

Homeless families, specifically families with young children are an especially vulnerable subgroup of the homeless population. Children and the elderly, as members of those families, don't have the resilience and the ability to defend themselves while living outside and in insecure circumstances. Families have fewer options in

finding temporary living arrangements. They require more space than single adults, as they try to stay together to support each other. It is difficult for a family to experience homelessness and find ways to resolve their problems, but even more difficult if they are forced apart during that time because of the challenge of finding enough space somewhere to accommodate them.

Shelters frequently are less than ideal for families. Shelters tend to specifically serve certain groups of the homeless population. There are shelters for single men, men with mental health conditions and men struggling with addictions. There are shelters for single women and women with children and a few that serve whole families. Often families choose to live in their cars instead, waiting for a placement in housing. Cars offer privacy, more security and consistency.

Shelters often feel insecure (large room dormitories) even to single adults, where the homeless will often sleep with their arms wrapped around their valuables to prevent them from being stolen during the night. Children and their parents need a safe place to sleep without worrying about being robbed or assaulted. Shelters also require their clients to vacate the facility by 8:00 or 9:00 am and not return until late afternoon or evening. All belongings must be taken away at that time. This is a hardship on those working (where do they securely put their things during the day?) and for families with young children, who must find a place to spend the day out of the weather.



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Figure 6a

Summary of the 2015 Unsheltered Homeless Count in Selected Areas of King County

	SEATTLE	KENT	NORTH END	EAST SIDE	SW KING CO.**	FEDERAL WAY	RENTON	NIGHT OWL BUSES	AUBURN	YAKIMA ISLAND**	TOTAL
Men	695	21	7	48	69	13	20	96	22	2	993
Women	165	6	1	24	14	4	1	10	5	0	230
Gender Unknown	1,944	101	40	55	126	88	58	0	98	8	2,518
Minor (under 18)	9	7	0	7	0	0	0	1	7	0	31
TOTAL	3,772	135	48	134	209	105	79	107	132	10	3,772
Benches	35	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	40
Parking Garages	31	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Cars/Trucks	776	44	32	18	88	81	37	0	54	8	1,138
Structures	641	11	8	2	38	3	10	0	19	0	732
Under Roadways	173	6	0	10	0	0	7	0	4	0	200
Doorways	306	3	0	1	4	4	3	0	0	0	324
City Parks	47	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	10	0	63
Bushes/ Undergrowth	94	28	1	10	4	6	6	0	31	0	180
Bus Stops	32	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	38
Alleys	26	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	31
Walking Around	303	19	4	2	21	8	6	0	11	1	378
Other	349	21	1	76	48	1	8	107	2	1	614
TOTAL	3,772	135	48	134	209	105	79	107	132	10	3,772

21% increase
 2015 3,772 people outside
 2014 3,123 people outside

**Yakima Island and Southwest King County are participating in the count for the first time in 2015

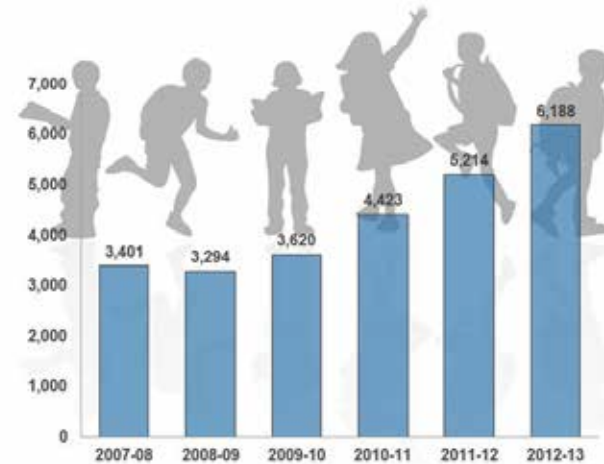
For more information contact the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness
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Figure 6b

Homeless Students, King County (2007-08 to 2012-13 school years)



Data Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

COMMUNITIES COUNT, 5/14

Figure 7

Rise In Number of Homeless Children



Figure 8

left: Figures 6a, b One Night Count data for King County, January 2015
 right: Figures 7, 8 Data on homeless children/students of Seattle Public Schools

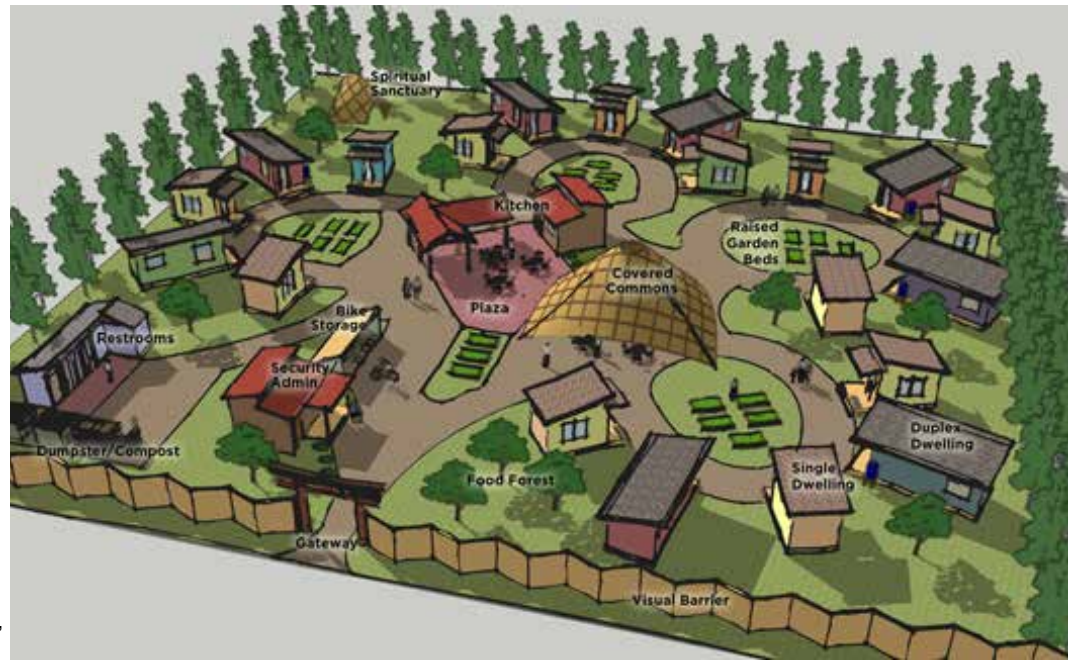
Children need stability and safety to do what they need to do - learn, grow and develop. Without a place to live, the energy required for doing those things is redirected to surviving and coping with their tenuous living situation. It is estimated that 1 in every thirty U.S. children is homeless - a population of 2.5 million homeless children. [Homeless Children in America Report, 2013 U.S. Census Data] Being homeless puts an enormous amount of stress on families - stress that negatively impacts a child's ability to develop good behavior and emotional regulation skills, as well as keep up with their peers in cognitive ability and establishing healthy social relationships. Often this stress augments already abusive living situations, taking an additional physical toll on the children and their mothers.

In Seattle, the numbers of homeless children enrolled in public schools is increasing rapidly - a clear indicator of the number of families struggling with homelessness. Mayor Murray stated that in 2015 there are 3,000 homeless children enrolled in city schools. Children suffering from homelessness face an uphill struggle at school to keep up their learning progress while maintaining their dignity around peers. At the end of each school day, they, like other children, need a quiet safe place to do homework with support from adults guiding them through their questions and problems. Infants and toddlers aren't counted in the school studies, but are impacted

by homelessness in an equal or greater way, since they don't necessarily have a "safe" place to go during the day. For families with children, childcare becomes a vital "hand up" service, providing some routine and normalcy to the day for the children and giving the parents the ability to seek employment to provide income for their families.

Response to Homelessness in Other US Cities

In considering what an ideal response strategy would look like in helping homeless families, a number of examples from other places in the United States have been selected for their unique ideas and successes, with the hope that elements from their programs will inform a better homeless response in Seattle. The city of Eugene, Oregon has experimented with different and intriguing ideas in their homeless response efforts. New York City has recently set up a new emergency housing response plan in the event of a disaster that will quickly help shelter homeless victims in their own neighborhoods. Salt Lake City, Utah has experienced remarkable success in its efforts to eliminate chronic homelessness. All of these cities show a desire to understand the needs of those lacking shelter and find innovative and effective ways to meet them.



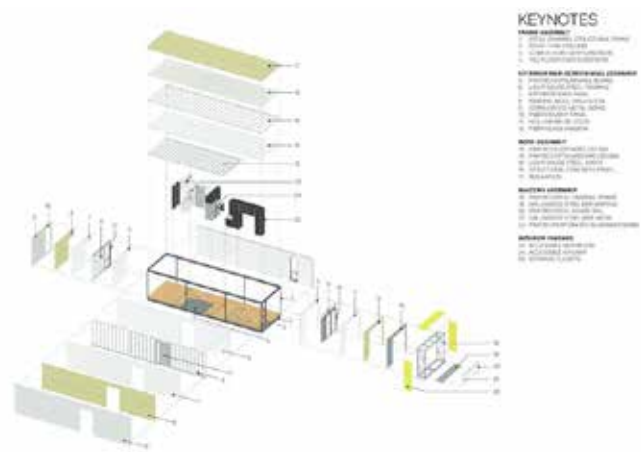
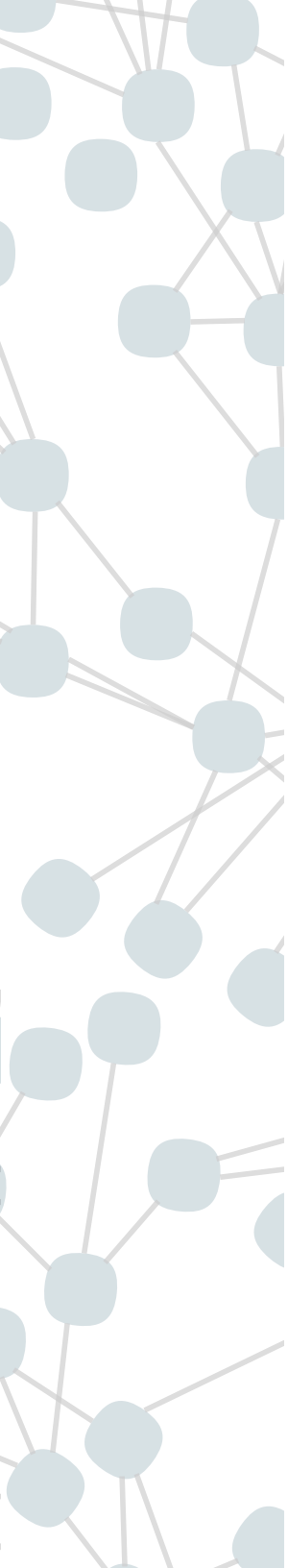
Figures 9a, b
Opportunity Village, Tiny
House Village in Eugene,
Oregon

Eugene, OR: Opportunity Village

A large homeless population in Eugene triggered concern for the town residents and led to a meeting on the subject by the city council. Andrew Heben, a newly graduated architecture student happened to be working in Eugene. Andrew had just completed his Master's thesis on homelessness and has since published a book, "Tent City Urbanism" that chronicles his experiences in researching the subject, living in tent cities and evaluating their successes, failures, organization and management. A committee was formed, that included Andrew as a member, to find a way to help the city's homeless. This effort eventually led to the creation of Opportunity Village. This story has a unique setting in that the city council and residents, wanted to find a good solution that would *help* the homeless – not simply "stamp out" the homeless. This attitude is not typically the premise in these circumstances. Land was found inside the city limits where a village could be established. This village is made up of tiny homes – homes made of prefabricated wood panels which volunteers and the homeless individuals could assemble together. These homes were designed to be moveable, and sit on cinder block foundations – avoiding the minimum size and restrictions for residences by falling into the trailer category. Since the land has been leased for a set period of time (1 to 2 years), the homes will be eventually moved and located in other

places, future village communities, backyards, etc.. The homes are very small (150-250 square feet) and provide secure sleeping space. The village has a yurt with a kitchen and community room where meetings are held and computers are available for use by the village residents. Bathrooms and showers are another common space, shared and maintained by residents. The results have been very positive. Residents are involved with the management of the village, participating as an important part of the governing board. Contracts are signed upon move-in that disallow bad behavior including violence and substance abuse. Residents who don't keep their agreement with the village will be asked to leave. Costs include rent - 30% of a resident's income and a modest fee for utilities with required volunteer hours for manning the front desk and other village upkeep.

Both city residents and the city council have been very pleased with the results. The homeless population has received the help it needs (shelter, dignity, a place to be, a sense of community) and city members were able to not only make the situation better, but also get to know the homeless residents, learn more about the homeless situation, making connections and friends. Additionally, these friendships provided an opportunity for job mentoring and networking to take place, helping some village residents find needed employment. [Heben, Tent City Urbanism]



Figures 10a, b
NYC Emergency Housing,
Garrison Architects

New York City, NY: Emergency Housing

When New York City was hit by Hurricane Sandy, an emergency response plan was in place and employed by the city to help residents evacuate and keep the population safe from the storm. Following the event, the city decided to enhance their plan for providing temporary housing for displaced residents following a disaster. They solicited help from local architects and have been developing a tier based plan of action to keep residents sheltered, preferably in their own neighborhoods using temporary housing.

Garrison Architects provided the design for a temporary pop-up apartment unit.[See Image 8] The plan to provide “urban interim housing” begins when residents’ homes are damaged and alternative shelter is needed. The city first seeks out available rental properties to use for temporary housing. Next considered are empty homes and vacant buildings that can be converted for use as temporary shelter. The final option is deploying these pop-up modular housing units through-out the city. These units will be installed on empty lots, filling the void places of the neighborhoods with temporary homes. This plan of action shows the importance of housing and the steps and expense that New York City feels are necessary and appropriate to provide for its displaced residents. [Dept of City Planning, City of New York, What if New York City . . .]

Utah’s Response to Homelessness: Housing First

In the state of Utah, a Housing First program has been implemented and has enabled them to achieve their goal of eliminating homelessness. Housing First is a strategy where the homeless are placed directly in housing from the outset. Then, after settling in, the problems, many of which have helped cause homelessness, are addressed and goals set to resolve those issues.

This approach is in stark contrast to the traditional model, where conditions must be met in order to qualify for housing. Addictions and other problems must be fixed before housing can be obtained – often creating too high a barrier to housing for someone living on the street. Some problems are very difficult to solve, such as addictions, when the struggling person is living without housing and general stability. The fear driving this traditional strategy is that if housing is offered to a homeless person, they will have no motivation to change their lives, resolve problems and live responsibly. Housing becomes an unappreciated handout. Luckily, the Housing First idea was experimented with and it was discovered that not only did the homeless make an effort to fix their problems, they could do so more easily and successfully once they had a place to live. It was also discovered that providing housing was actually cheaper compared to the traditional way – where costs were high due to emergency



Figure 11 State of Utah homeless housing data



Figure 12 New Yorker Housing First cartoon

Housing First principles:

- 1 Immediate access to housing with no housing readiness conditions
- 2 Consumer choice and self-determination
- 3 Recovery orientation
- 4 Individualized and person-driven supports
- 5 Social and community integration

room care and jail stays, which are alternate, but unfortunate, forms of housing. [Utah Housing and Community Development Division. Comprehensive Report on Homelessness – State of Utah.]



1811 Eastlake Ave Seattle, WA 98101

Figure 13 1811 Eastlake Complex

Housing First in Seattle

Seattle has also used the Housing First idea. A project at 1811 Eastlake was created in 2005, which provides housing for 75 single men and women who struggle with alcohol addiction. Residents are allowed to live at 1811 and still drink, while they stabilize their lives and health. Then, as part of the program, counseling and education programs are begun to help the residents take stock of their situation and make plans and goals on what needs to change to better their lives. The program partners with the Addictive Behaviors Research Center of the University of Washington and several studies have been completed on the results of the program.

At the beginning, many were skeptical that residents had the freedom to continue to drink while living at 1811. The studies showed that despite this freedom and the worry that the residents were being enabled in their addictions, alcohol consumption decreased by one third. It was also documented that it was less costly to fund the program than previously used methods. The annual cost to taxpayers to serve one chronically homeless alcoholic person was originally \$86,062 before the 1811 Eastlake program. The annual cost to serve one person in the program is \$13,440, a savings of \$4 million for the first year of operation. [JAMA research, April 2009] The program at 1811 Eastlake has been effective in helping homeless men and women escape lives on the street and make the leap to a healthier, safer and more productive way of living. This change for the better not only helps the former homeless person, but also helps their families, friends and the greater community – creating a positive impact across Seattle.

A larger Housing First program in Seattle could expand the work being done at 1811 Eastlake reaching a greater pool of the homeless population, including homeless families. Seattle is currently struggling with a severe lack of housing units(stats), especially affordable ones that allow residents to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing (30 AMI, average monthly income). A larger Housing First program will create a push for housing units

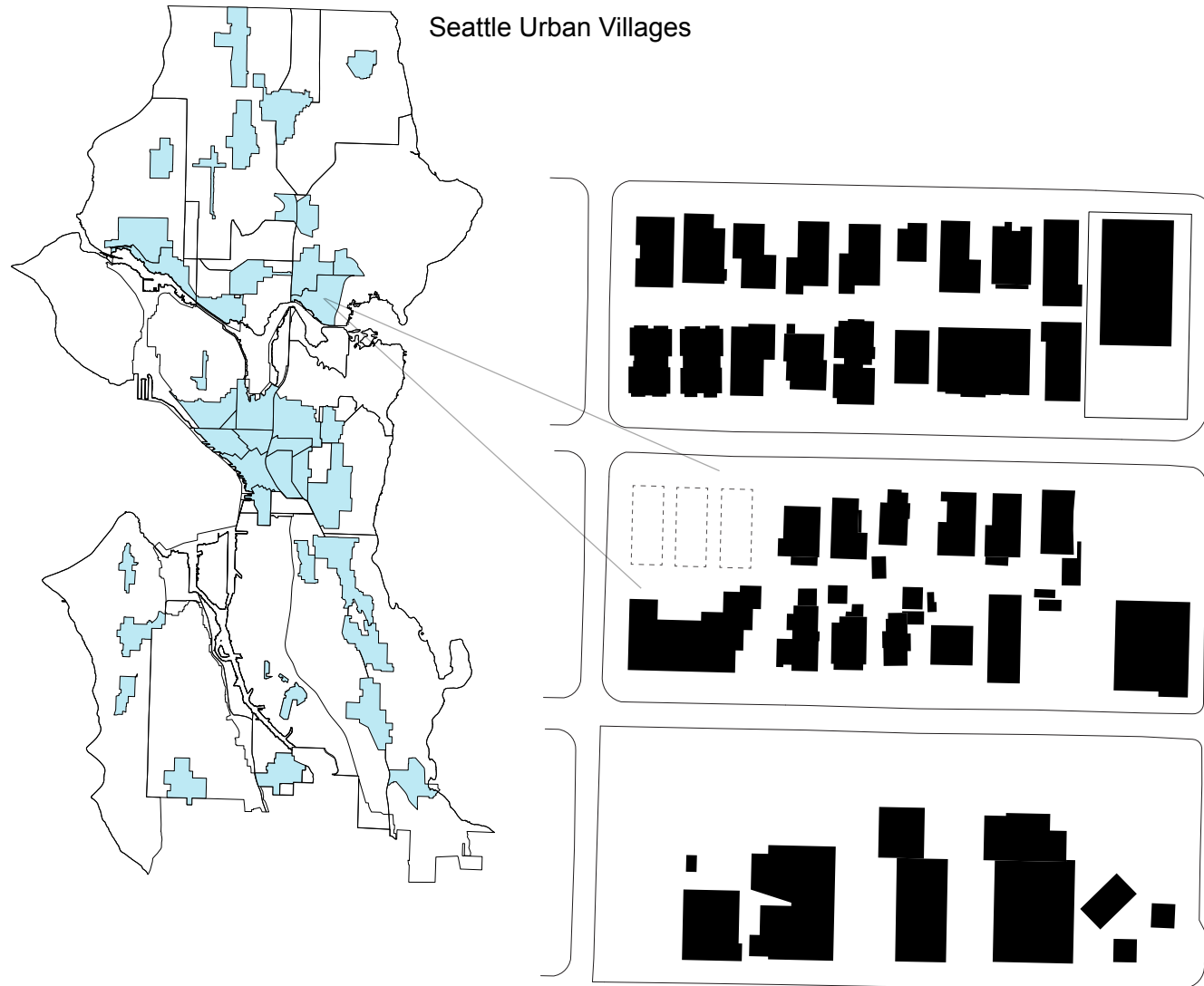


Figure 14 Typical urban site for housing villages diagram

Unused or underused lot serves as a temporary site for pop-up village.



to place people in, stimulating the production of more affordable housing. A 2011 Seattle Planning Commission report found that only 5% of homes sold that year in Seattle were family sized and affordable at the 80 AMI level. There were only 2% of market rate apartments that had 3 bedrooms or more, and only a small fraction of those were affordable at 80 AMI. [Housing Seattle, Seattle Planning Commission] Simply creating a supply of low cost housing eliminates the biggest part of this problem, since it is the lack of housing that technically creates home-lessness and raises its costs. Mayor Ed Murray said:

We are facing our worst housing affordability crisis in decades. My vision is a city where people who work in Seattle can afford to live here. Housing affordability is just one building block toward a more equitable city. It goes hand in hand with our efforts on raising the minimum wage, providing pre-school education for low income children, and increasing access to parks and transit. We all share a responsibility in making Seattle affordable. Together, this plan will take us there.

Location Matters: Neighborhood Urban Village Sites

The City of Seattle has most recently decided to create more sanctioned tent city encampment sites in an effort to provide more shelter space for the homeless. The places designated for this

purpose are typically owned by the city. It makes sense for the government to help with finding land and setting up infrastructure to help the homeless and this is definitely action taken in the right direction. The down side is that often these sites are distant from neighbors and services that people need to live well – especially homeless families. This thesis proposes that housing for homeless families be located in urban neighborhood villages, providing an ideal location for a variety of essential family needs: safety, community, food, neighborhood services like libraries and post offices, schools, medical facilities and public transportation.

Safety and Security

Having a house definitely increases a homeless family's safety. Tents do offer shelter from the weather, but they cannot offer security from other dangers, such as theft and assault. Another element of safety is living in a neighborhood that has a low crime rate. Families recovering from homelessness have many challenges to grapple with – worrying about the physical safety of their family on a day to day basis shouldn't be one of those challenges. Neighborhoods have more people nearby coming and going which increases the chance that those with the intent to commit crime will be seen and reported. Industrial sites without neighbors, as are some of the sites suggested by the City of Seattle, make it more difficult to feel safe.

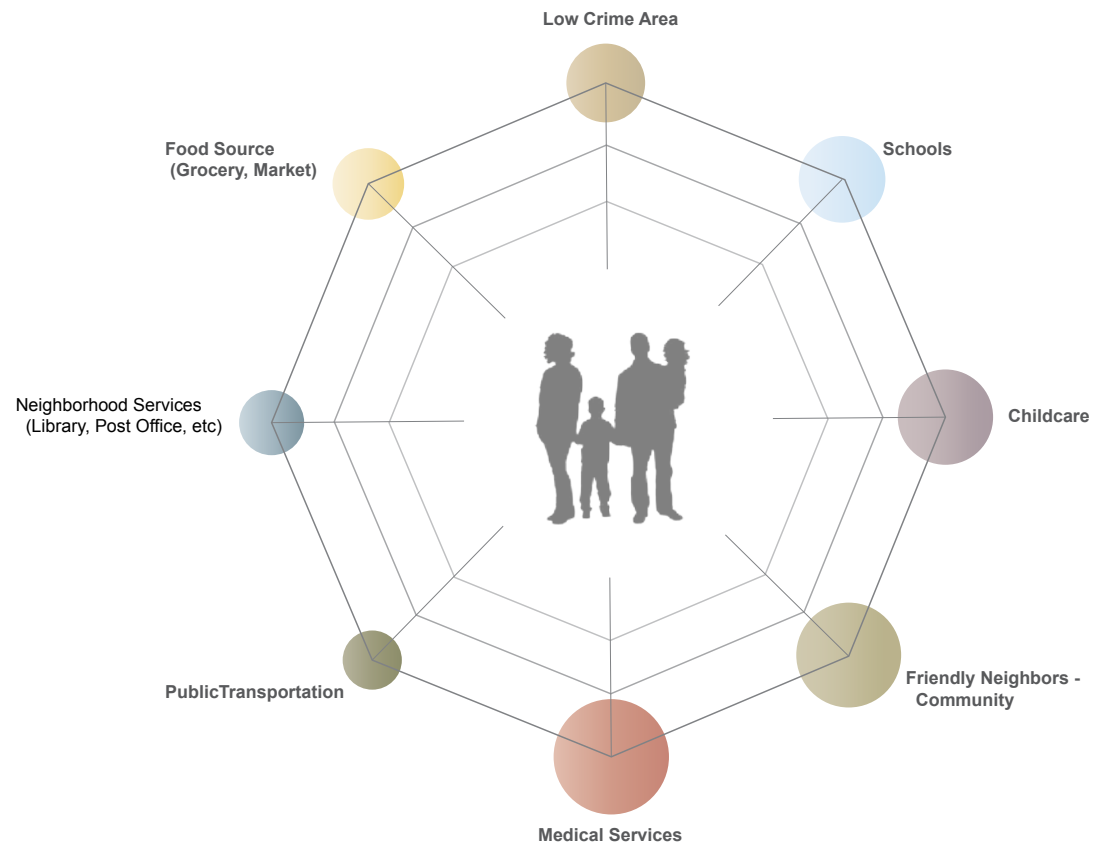
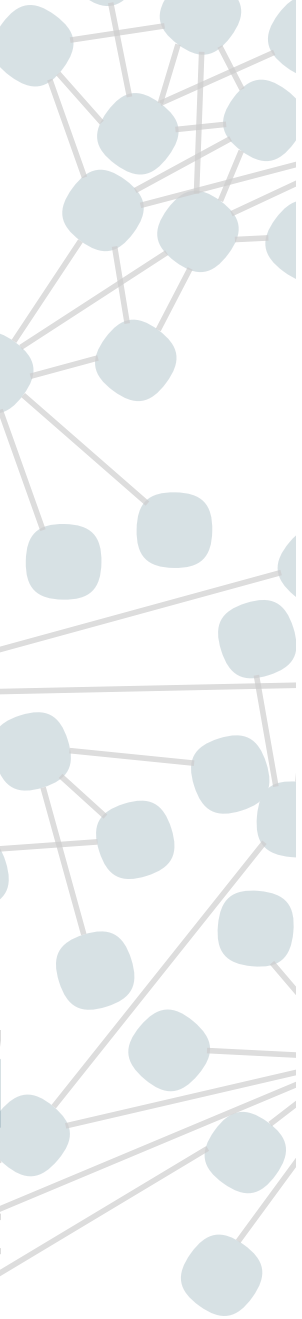


Figure 15 Neighborhood safety net. The amenities found in neighborhoods that help support families' needs.

Community

Homeless families need community. Communities watch out for each other, since few people can be truly self-reliant. The homeless are often in their predicament because they don't have a network of friends or relatives that they can get help from. Restoring that essential "safety net" of supportive people is a vital element in helping homeless families escape homelessness. They need to have a network, just as typical families do, that help support their needs – whether it is childcare, help in coping with the loss of a loved one, or problems in parenting.

Food

Access to healthy food is a key element in making a location a good site for housing. Too often the only food available is the kind found at convenience stores or fast food restaurants. Having simple healthy food nearby, even better if within walking distance, makes it easy for those with limited resources to live a healthy lifestyle and pass that knowledge and good living habits on to their children. Good health from good eating translates into lower healthcare costs, better student performance and more productive lives.

Services

Services found in neighborhoods, such as libraries, banks, post

offices, and drug stores, for example, make access to books, money deposits, mail and medications easy. Homeless families need access to these resources to provide for their families' needs. Having childcare facilities located nearby, support parents' efforts to provide for their children. Knowing their children are safe and well cared for, makes it possible for parents to direct their energy toward maintaining employment vital to earning an income.

Schools

Schools play an important role in a neighborhood. They bring families in the area together, to work toward a common goal - providing the best education possible for their children. This allows families who might not have otherwise interacted, to meet and become friends. It also fosters support for the importance of children, educational funding, academic achievement, literacy and planning for future goals. Many of these items are not things that homeless families can often afford to spend time on – all their energy is focused on survival. Being housed and included in a neighborhood where these values are prominently held, can help these families rediscover their importance.

Medical Services

Access to medical care is important for homeless families. Family members, especially children, should have checkups and

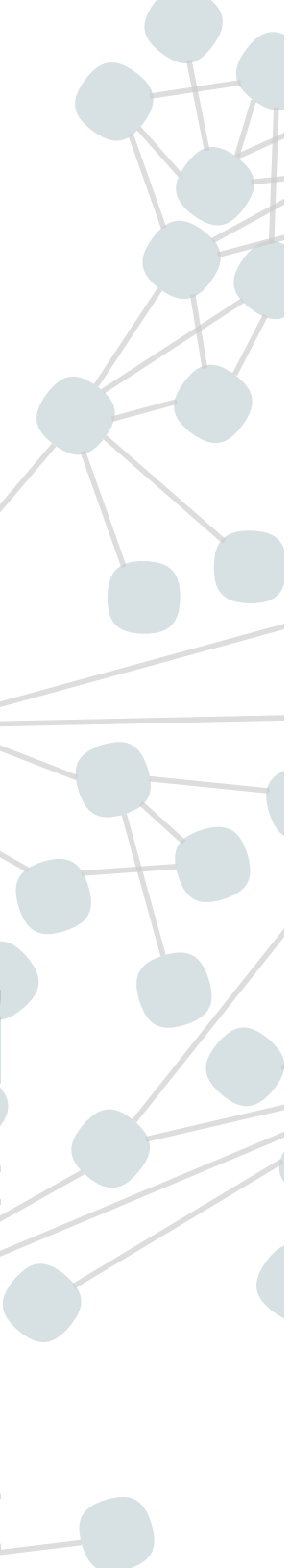


Figure 16 Kids at school



Figure 17 Girls learning about medical care

immunizations regularly. Often paying for care, making the trip to a facility, combined with arranging appointments around a work schedule using public transportation can be a difficult thing to make happen. Having a neighborhood clinic nearby makes it easier to get essential health maintenance done. Regular healthcare visits will reduce built-up problems over time and the higher costs required to fix them in the future.

Transportation

Mass transit is essential in reducing the costs of transportation for homeless families. It is expensive not only to own a car, but to afford parking costs in an urban setting. Having family housing located in a neighborhood where many essential services are within walking distance as well as having ready access to mass transit will reduce the amount of money required for getting family members to their activities, school and employment.

A Place to Be

Being homeless is a traumatic experience for most of the homeless population. This experience is compounded for families due to their vulnerability and their need to meet their children’s needs. Homeless families require stability and a place to be where they can be safe. Stability and a sense of security helps children grow and develop normally along with their peers, rather than directing all their energy

into survival behavior. Families need confidence that they can handle problems and reclaim a sense of dignity, recognizing that they are important and worthwhile. Having access to secure housing within a resource-rich, supportive neighborhood setting will fulfill the essential requirements of homeless families.

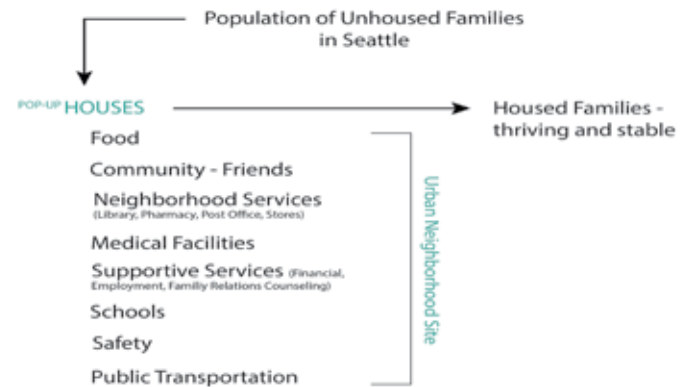


Figure 18 Thesis Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3 A Seattle Solution

Thesis Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this thesis is to explore the potential of “quick to assemble” pop-up housing as a method of rapidly increasing the amount of housing stock available to shelter homeless families in a way that meets their needs and allows the engagement of Seattle neighborhood communities.

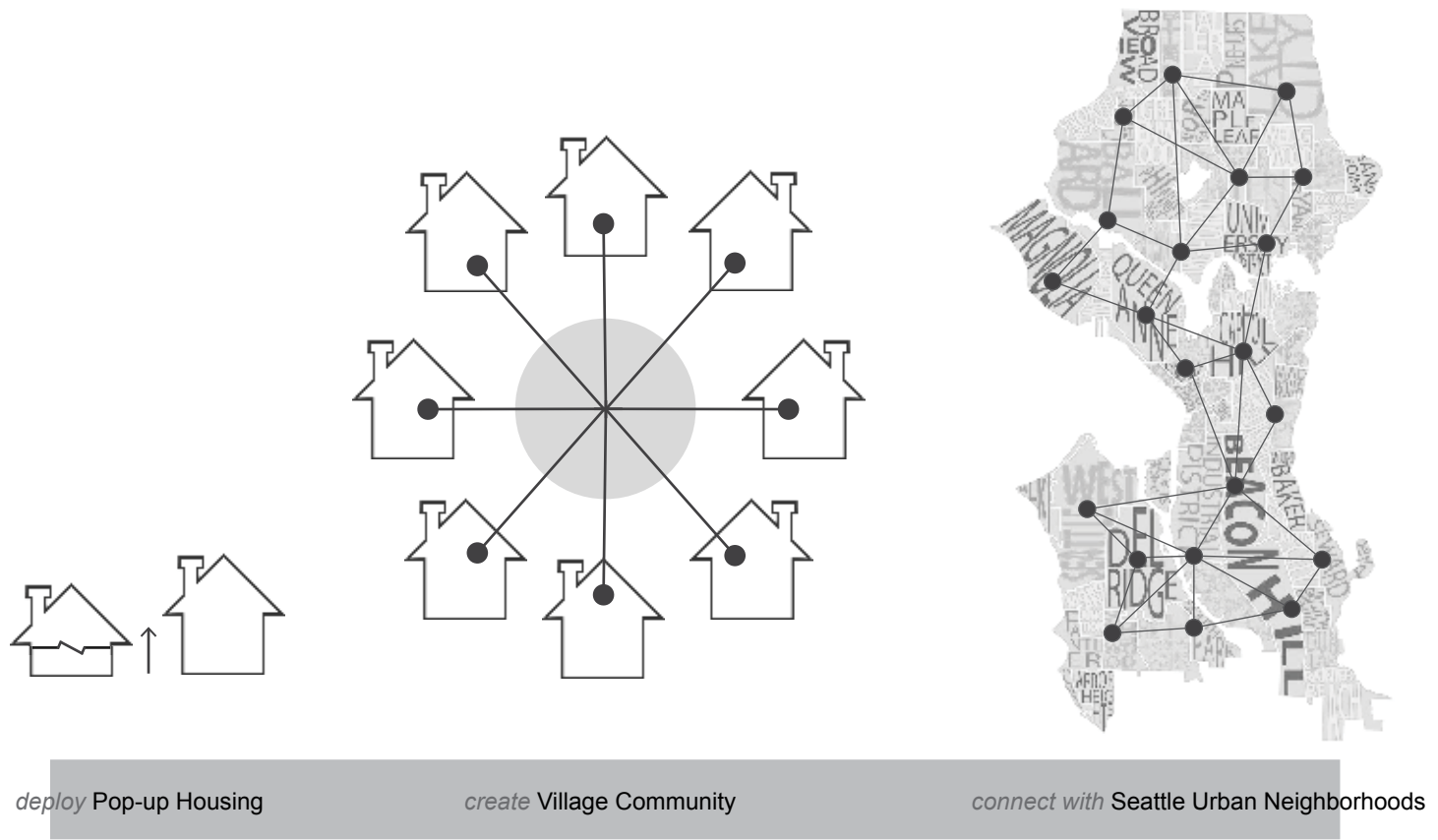


Figure 19 A group of pop-up houses form a village which then join other villages to create a network of housing throughout Seattle

This will be accomplished by:

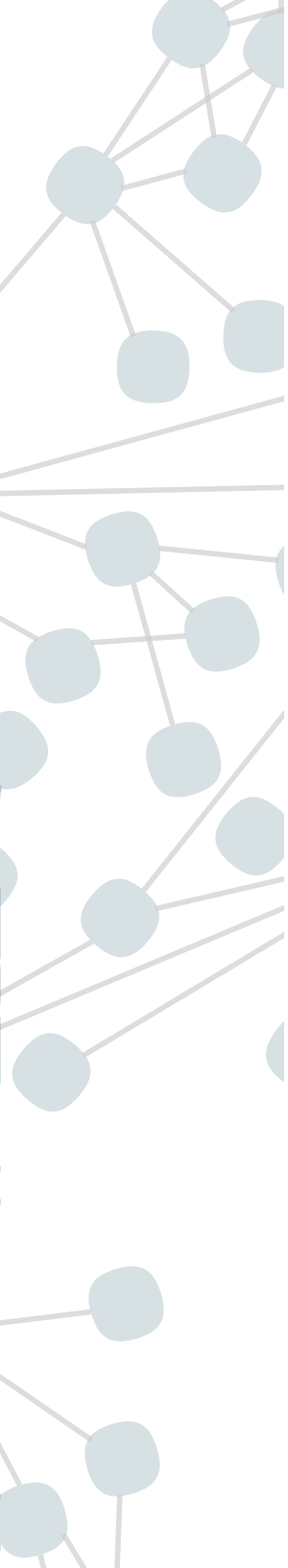
- Locating a network of potential sites in the urban village neighborhoods of Seattle.
- Developing a prototype, urban infill community based on modular, prefabricated living units.
- Designing public space within these modular developments to support community building functions such as meetings, events, small group gatherings and education events.
- Crafting physical connection points between the development and its host neighborhood.

Establishing a network of potential sites creates a system of temporary pop-up housing developments that can expand and contract depending on how much need there is for housing. This network allows a variety of neighborhoods to be involved with helping and mentoring homeless families. A range of locations accommodates the need some families may have to remain in a certain area. Perhaps a family was originally living in a specific neighborhood or has family and friends that live there. Locating the family near that existing support system is an ideal setup for their successful transition to housing.

A challenging aspect of helping homeless families find shelter is the time it takes for affordable housing to become available. Project timelines lag behind other market rate developments due to more involved code requirements for these projects and funding

complexities that come with combining government monies with private investment and donations. Establishing a system for pop-up housing will address these issues. Funding can be organized in the beginning for this ongoing program and not require recreating each time additional housing is needed. Prefabricated units can be prepared in advance in a factory and be quickly assembled on site as required. Team players and their roles in this plan will be laid out from the outset. Local government can contribute by finding property to host these developments and in aiding with code and land use challenges. It can also assist in infrastructure requirements like acquiring power, water service as well as how to address garbage collection and sewage treatment. Social service agencies offer support and counseling help and faith communities and neighbors organize outreach and ways to help families find the resources they need in their new living location. Having a response plan in place and team players assembled with a pre-agreed upon plan of action will significantly help Seattle's response to homelessness become agile and effective.

Sites to be used for these developments are typically unused or underused urban spaces frequently found in urban village areas of communities. The sites, whether owned by the city or by a private owner, will be leased for a short duration of time – 1 or 2 years, which is currently the system used for the city sanctioned tent



Potential Site Criteria:

- Access to healthy food
- Near elementary school and high school
- Serviced by public transportation
- Adjacent to neighborhood community and its amenities: community center, library, post office, drug store
- Medical care services
- Safe, family friendly neighborhood
- Parks close by site
- Childcare nearby or onsite

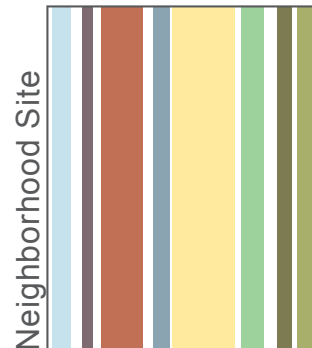


Figure 20 Neighborhood site amenities that support families

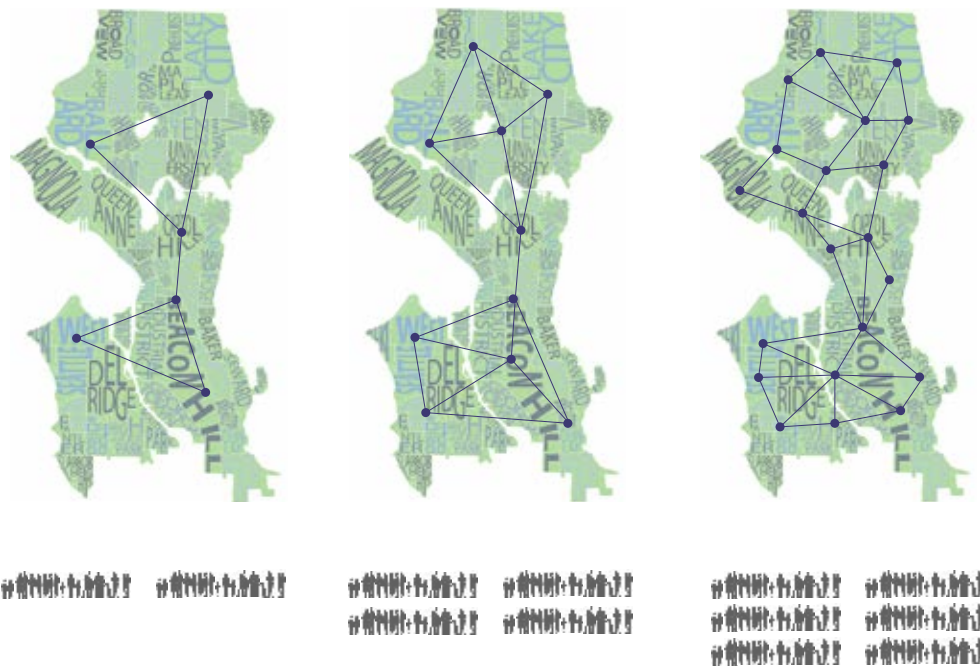


Figure 21 The village network can adjust to the size of the homeless population

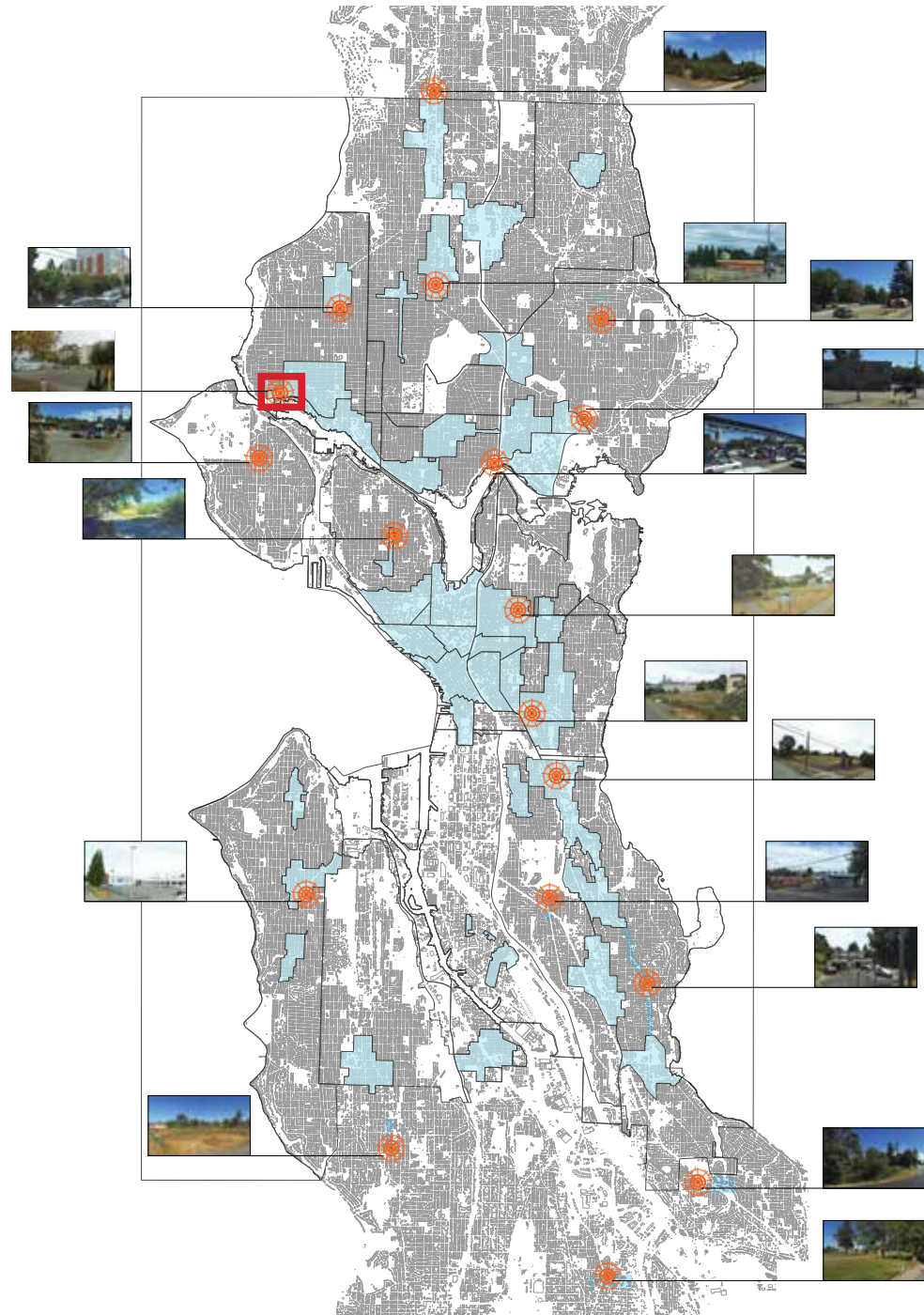
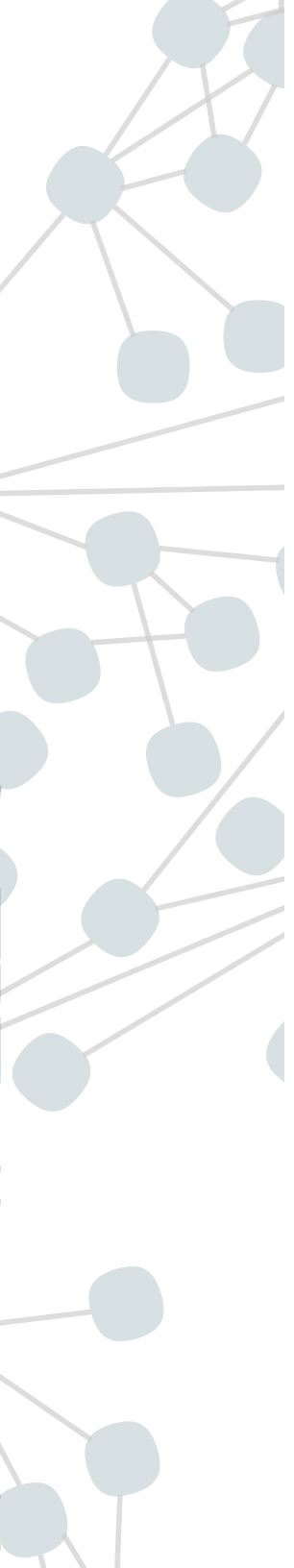


Figure 22 Potential village sites





Oversight

An encampment operator (organizations such as Nickelsville or SHARE) will oversee day-to-day management. Residents will volunteer time in helping maintain and run the village.

Residents

Homeless Families - entering through the Family Housing Connection portal and successfully passing a background check.

Rental cost will be 30% of residents' incomes and a flat fee for utilities.

Infrastructure

Water
Electricity
Sewer

City arranges hook-up work - a trade-off with the land owner for temporary, low cost use of their property.

Plumbing is only located in common buildings.



Support

Social service agencies
Village community
Neighborhood services
Community mentorship/
networking
Faith community outreach

Public vs Private

Community Kitchen
Meeting Space
Bathrooms/Showers
Outdoor Play area
Outdoor Circulation

Living Units

Land

Available unused or underused urban lots - city or privately owned. Land is leased for short term period, typically 1 or 2 years, but could be longer if needed.

Figure 23 Components of a village



N-Habit Belltown, 2014

[Affordable housing: wood frame, modular construction]



Patrick Place, 2014

[Affordable housing: wood frame, on-site construction]



Figure 24 Two different Seattle affordable housing projects show that modular construction allows for a speedier construction timeline and quicker delivery of housing.

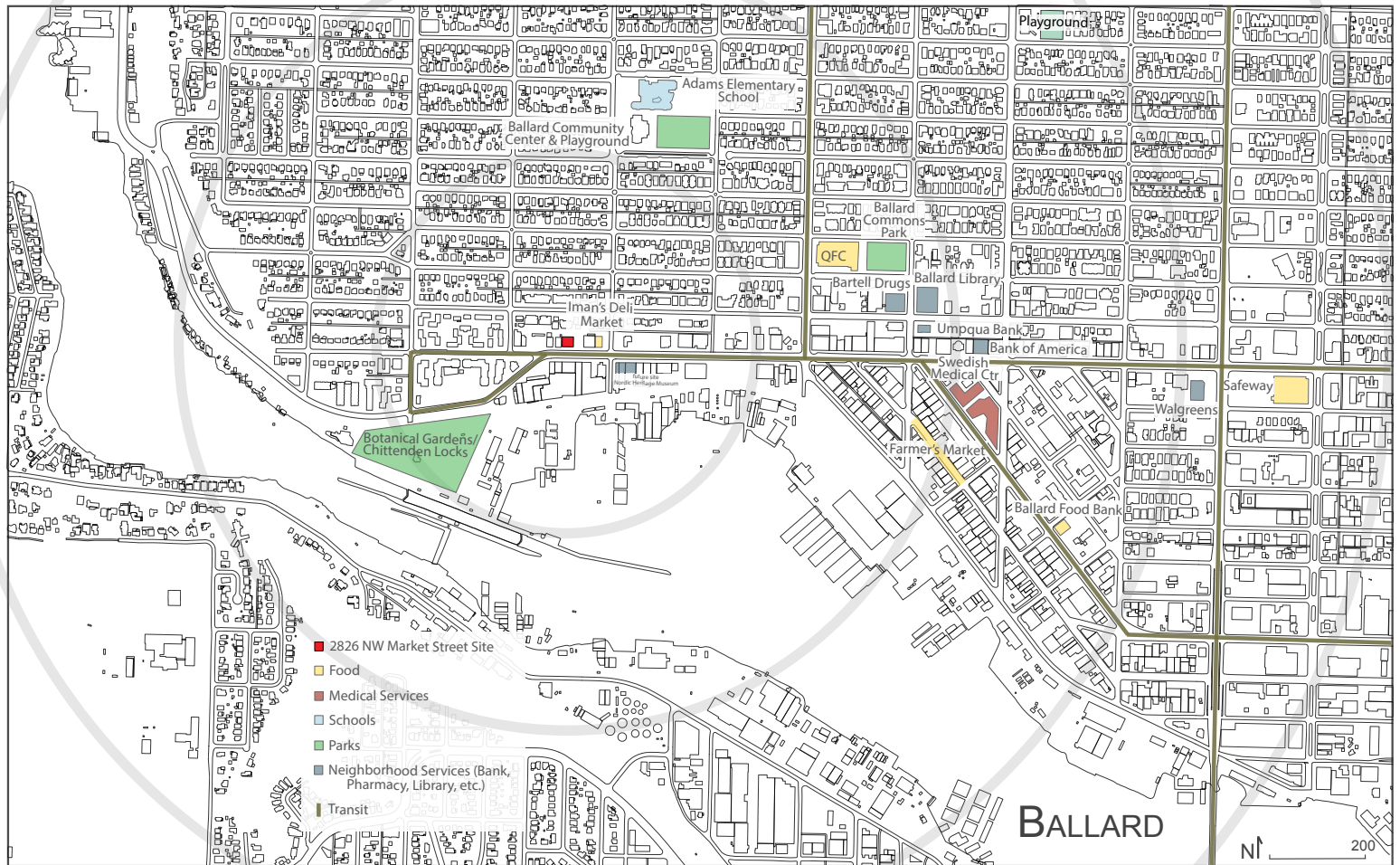


Figure 25 Map of Ballard, Washington with local amenities. Rings indicate a 5 minute walk distance.

encampments. This plan allows for a greater efficiency of land use. An urban lot can be used for this short term purpose while awaiting development at some point in the future.

Prototype Site

The site specifically selected for this thesis is 2826 NW Market Street in Ballard, Washington. This is one of Mayor Murray's preferred sites for a new sanctioned tent encampment and the first to be established. The mayor is at a critical point where new homelessness policy is obviously needed. He is currently operating with past strategies of permitting tent cities in an effort to make some gesture toward helping the homeless. The site was chosen for this thesis because it is the first location of this "fresh effort" to do more to help meet the needs of the homeless and is positioned to be a precedent for the additional sites that are being considered and prepared. The 100 by 95 foot site is owned by Seattle City Light and still has substation equipment in the northwest corner. The soil was polluted with heavy metals - cadmium and lead, and dieldrin, an insecticide used during the 1950s to the 1970s. The site required cleanup which was completed by the city during the summer of 2015. Occupancy as a sanctioned encampment site was given final official approval by the city and opened for occupancy in mid-November 2015.

The site is bordered by the Sloop Tavern on the west edge and a parking lot for a Veterans of Foreign Wars Post on the east. There is an alley easement along the north edge that is steeply sloped and vegetated. This easement area rises 12 feet to a densely occupied residential neighborhood. The neighbors to the north of the alley easement live in a 4 story condominium building which overlooks the site and has a view of the water, looking toward downtown Seattle. Across NW Market Street from the site to the south, is a large Self-Storage warehouse complex with two cafés housed within its street face – the Kiss Café and the Portage Bay Café. Nearby are other shops and a market on the corner of 28th Avenue NW. Further down NW Market Street to the west are the Hiram Chittenden Locks, where water traffic crosses back and forth between the salt water of Puget Sound to the fresh water of Lake Union and Lake Washington - a favorite area attraction for tourists visiting Seattle.

Ballard is well known as the home of a concentrated Scandinavian population and hosts the Nordic Heritage Museum. It has long been involved in the fishing industry which has operated on Salmon Bay and continues that tradition today with businesses like Trident Seafoods. The site is located in an industrial buffer area that makes up the transition space between the marina boat businesses and warehouses to the south and the completely residential neighborhoods immediately to the north. The main business region

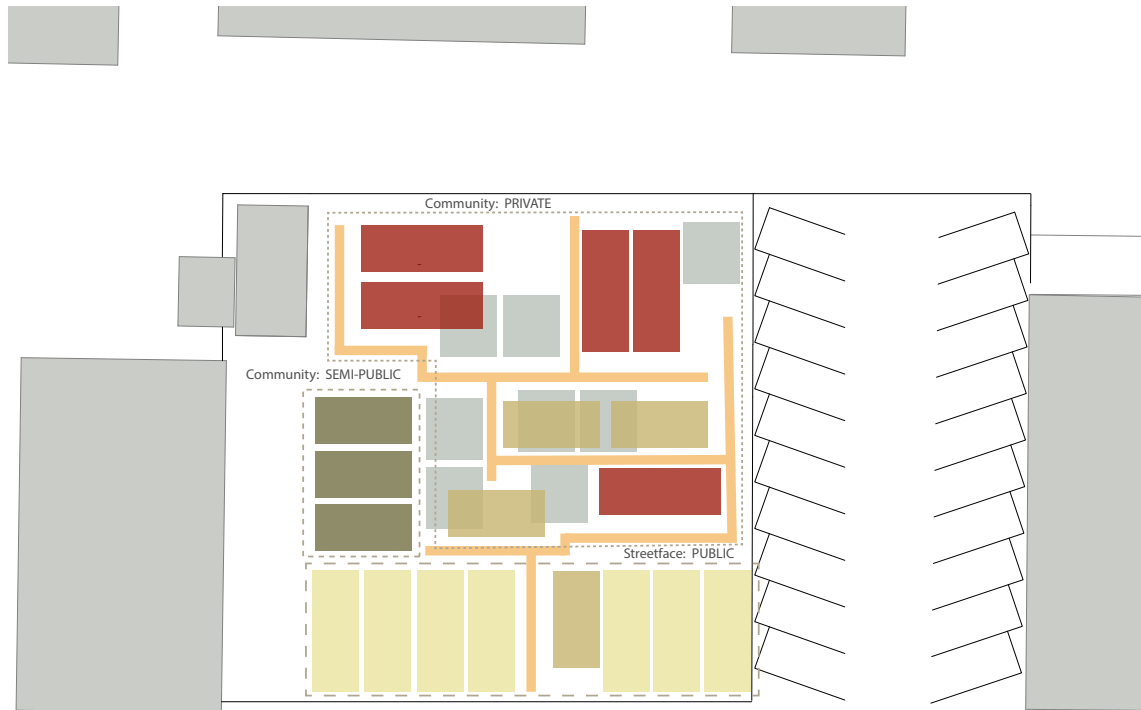


Figure 26 Site concept



Figures 27a, b Photos of Portage Bay Cafe across the street from the site.

of Ballard is located several blocks to the east where a mix of older buildings and businesses can be found along with much newer high rise development that is rapidly increasing the residential density of downtown Ballard. A metro transit route, #44 connects the site to this business area and allows further transit connections to be made to north and south lines that travel directly into Seattle.

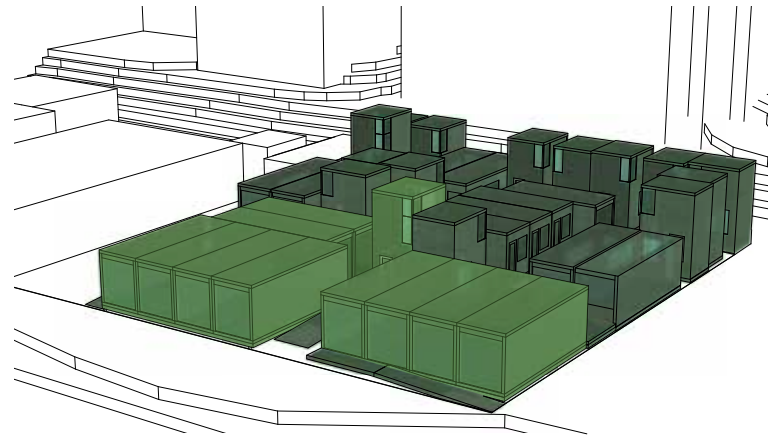
Housing Program

The program for this project involves building a collection of modular houses on the site that will pair up with communal spaces to provide for the living needs of a group of homeless families. These houses will serve as the private space for the development and will be arranged in vertical groups to maximize the site's capacity. The public spaces will flow around these residences and contain a common kitchen, dining and living spaces along with common bathrooms and showers, with the expectation that residents will spend most of their non-sleeping time in these spaces while onsite. Most of these areas will be covered or indoors due to the climate in Seattle, but some will be left open to invite nature into the setting and to capture air from the breezes commonly present in the Seattle area due to its proximity to the water. These areas, both indoors and outdoors will invite community bond building through time spent using them together whether in community meetings, play time for children, educational opportunities or networking. In this way the

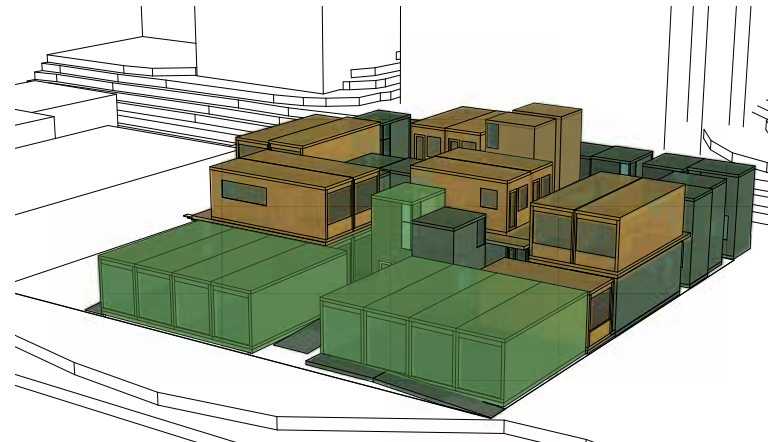
development will promote creating connections among the people who live there, connections that will serve as a safety net, supporting them as they work through their problems on the way to a better future.

The private areas of these developments are made up mostly of individual residential units and interstitial spaces between those units. Both the units and these leftover spaces are quite small. The units consist mostly of space that can be used for both living and sleeping and range from 160 to 200 square feet. The pathways through the community allow opportunities for play and conversation, aiming to strengthen community relationships. Pathways create niches of space that can be "claimed" by community members who live adjacent to them. These pathway spaces may change over time, as the village physically adjusts to the number of people who need to live there.

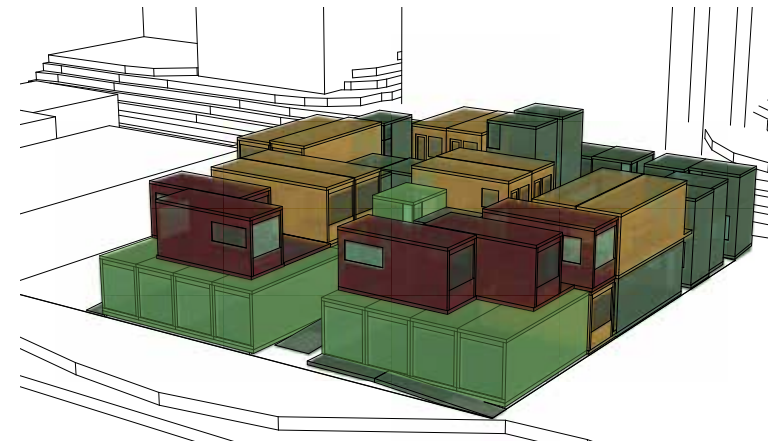
Not only is the development of community important within the village, but with the surrounding neighborhood as well. Methods to easily access neighborhood resources through points of connection will be established in the site plan. Access opportunities to the site principally lie along NW Market Street, due to the undeveloped alley easement. There is the opportunity, however, of coming and going from the site by moving through the VFW parking lot along the east edge given openings in the building massing. The design



Stage 1 - 22 units



Stage 2 - 35 units



Stage 3 - 40 units

Figure 28 Stages of village capacity

will also explore ways that the neighborhood community can join with residents in using the site – primarily sharing the open play area along the west edge, the community room with kitchen and the childcare space – all located along the street face of Market Street.

All structures for this project, both the residential units and the shared spaces, will be modular and prefabricated moveable structures that can be used to form a village that is flexible – both in the overall number of villages setup across the city as well as in how each village is individually configured. This flexibility will accommodate the temporary availability of sites along with the changing numbers of the homeless population. The simpleness of the structures should keep the cost of the units and their finishes down – around \$1800 - \$2000. The village will develop through stages: the first stage has 22 units in addition to the common buildings, stage 2 has 35 units and stage 3 has 40. For this specific site, there is a limit of 52 people that can live there. Considering that the resident population is made up of homeless families, fewer than 52 units will be needed in this location.

Village System

In a typical scenario, a homeless family would be placed at the site using Seattle's Family Housing Connection portal and the follow-up housing assessment. This initial site will be set up for maximum

capacity to address the large numbers of homeless families currently waiting for housing in Seattle. Due to the small size of the private units assigned to each family, units just accommodate basic sleeping and living activities. Cooking will take place in the communal kitchen, which shares space with areas used for dining, community meetings, education activities as well as computer use. Because this project focuses on families, spaces for children will be included in the design. Areas for play and after school activities and homework will be included in the common areas shared by the development. Bathrooms and shower areas will also be used by the entire village as well. In sharing these spaces, the residents will have the opportunity to grow relationships and hopefully gain a new community family that can rally around and support each other, both adults and children.

Methods

The research conducted for this thesis will use a positivist approach. Data will be gathered from sources monitoring the demographics of homelessness and the success of current programs, based on the number of people who escape their homeless condition or continue to live a life of homelessness. The needs of homeless families will be looked at in an aggregate and generalized way to identify common, key needs to be satisfied by living and social spaces, housing location, available services, etc.



Figure 29 Homeless Family

Assumptions

Below is a list of my assumptions in approaching this project:

- Homeless families want to be in housing, and not living on the street or in tents.
- Funding processes and possibilities for affordable housing can change depending on politics, the economy and the leadership of the local community. The prevalent funding and land use arrangement used for encampments in the Seattle area will be assumed as the standard for this project.
- Community residents, given clear, direct ways to help and the obvious ability to make a difference, will join in to make things better, rather than be antagonistic – easing the process to find locations for creating adequate amounts of affordable temporary housing.

Limits

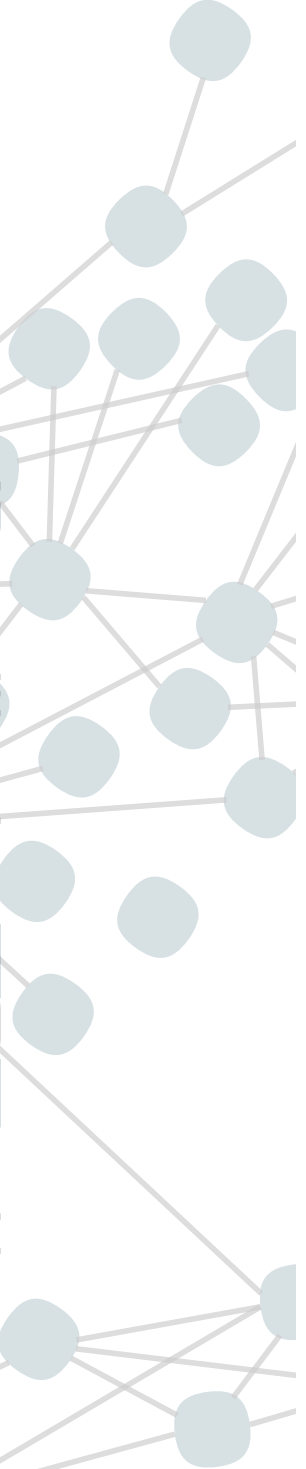
Economic forces that impact the price of land and the rate of development of urban spaces would impact this idea and change its feasibility. It is also difficult to really know how effective the housing strategy would be in reality.

Summary

Housing homeless families rapidly, in neighborhood urban village communities will bring together a portfolio of resources that will help lift families out of their unhoused and vulnerable place on the streets. Once sheltered in neighborhood locations, these families will have access to all the healthy aspects of neighborhood living that serve to support families, such as healthy food sources, friends, schools, medical facilities, libraries, childcare, and access to public transportation. The neighborhood location as the preferred site also creates a prime opportunity for regular people to take an active role in helping families who are homeless.

Chapter 4 Responsive in Design

Homelessness has long been a crisis for those experiencing it. In King County the numbers of those experiencing homeless have risen to emergency levels. Housing options are extremely limited in Seattle, especially affordable housing options, making it difficult to find and keep housing for those with low incomes. Clearly homes are needed for the homeless. Homeless families have an especially critical need to obtain housing quickly in order to protect vulnerable members like young children. Despite the tireless efforts of many people and organizations to help, the need still far outstrips the resources and effectiveness of currently used homeless intervention programs in Seattle.



Tiny House Village [Opportunity Village, Eugene, OR]

- Privacy
- Low cost
- Small size
- Secure personal space
- Fosters community relationships
- Autonomy - retain some control/choice in day to day life
- Shared common spaces, bathrooms, showers



Pop-up Emergency Housing [New York City, NY]

- Rapid deployment
- Quick assembly
- Urban in-fill location
- Fill emergent need for shelter
- Responsive plan in place



Slum [Kampala, Uganda]

- Informally planned, response to need
- Efficient use of space
- Supportive community
- Innovative use of resources



Urban homeless housing solution



Figure 30 Sources of design influence

It is difficult for Seattle to establish effective programs to help the homeless, such as Housing First, when critical pieces of the Housing First operating program are missing – in this case, affordable housing. Because of the significant potential this program has to make life better for those experiencing homelessness, as shown in Salt Lake City and here in Seattle (1811 Eastlake Housing), it makes sense to seek ways to bring that program to life in Seattle in a far reaching way. Combining that idea with the scheme developed in New York City to use pop-up emergency housing to temporarily fill gaps in the housing supply, leads to the conclusion that using pop-up housing on vacant lots in Seattle can fill a critical gap in Seattle's affordable housing supply, helping homeless families quickly obtain the shelter they desperately need.

This chapter will look at a prototype design based on this conclusion, sited at 2826 NW Market Street. Aspects of the design, the arrangement of buildings, spaces and its ability to meet the needs of homeless families that will be living there will be summarized.

Pieces of the Solution

Using the strong ideas found in the previously mentioned case studies, this new prototype village is composed of small units similar to the tiny houses of Eugene and the quickly deployed modular pop-up housing of New York City. The site plan isn't locked into a single

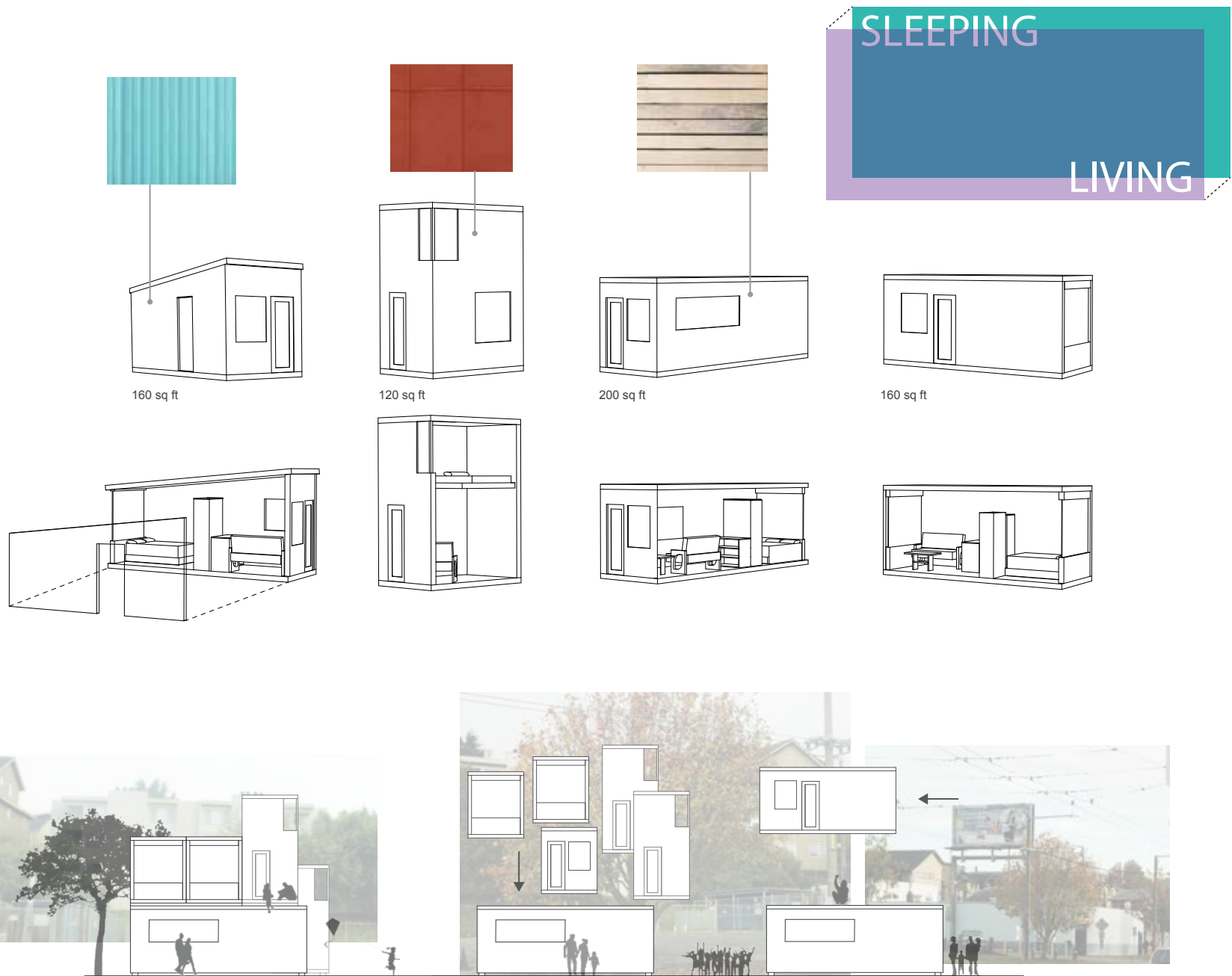
strict arrangement of its buildings, opening up the possibility for the site to be responsive to the needs of its residents and make use of the strengths of each individual site.

Residential Units

Units planned for this prototype development will be a mix of prefabricated modular units of several different designs. These units will have a wood frame structural system and be built assembly-line style in a factory. They will arrive at individual sites by truck. Each of the three main unit types will have a unique siding material, wood composite panels for the vertical units, corrugated metal for the smallest rectangular units and horizontal wood siding for the large units and communal buildings. Unit size ranges from 150 square feet to 200 square feet. The units can be used one for each small family or combined together to create clusters that can accommodate larger families. The units are used for living activities and sleeping. Each unit will sit on concrete strip footings (ground level) or a subfloor layer that lies on top of the lower unit and carries electricity hookup equipment.

Site Plan

The site plan layout is flexible and can be arranged to fill different levels of housing need – through consecutive stages of increasing capacity. The first stage configuration of living units keeps mostly



SLEEPING
LIVING

160 sq ft

120 sq ft

200 sq ft

160 sq ft

Figure 31 Unit types and stacking concept



Figure 32 Site plan with ground floor plans

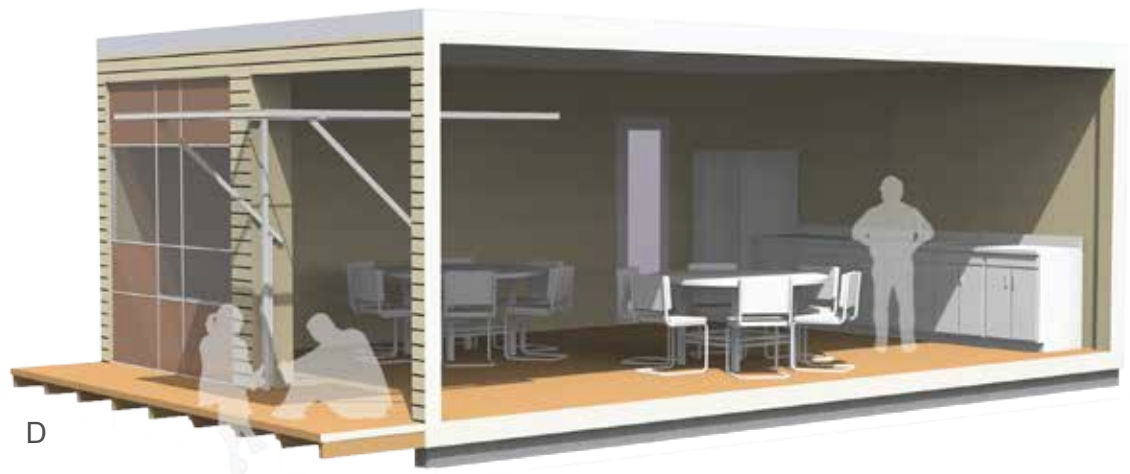
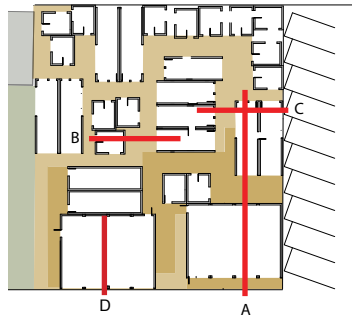


Figure 33 Section studies of interstitial space and communal kitchen building

to the ground level, but as more capacity is needed, the units will eventually get stacked and arranged in a second story layer. Paths will develop as these stages progress, shaping the flow and interaction that occurs on the site between residents and sowing the seeds of community relationships. Stairs will be assembled and placed at key points to provide vertical circulation. Vertical units can be modified to house stairs. The few unbuilt areas of the site will be vegetated; the access strip to the Seattle City light equipment along the west edge will be covered in grass – giving children a place to play, and the paths throughout the site will be covered in wood chips to eliminate mud problems and use a material that will breakdown over time and create a layer of compost for the site.

Due to the site's position along a commercial street front and located between other businesses, public and semi-public uses will be positioned along the street edge of the site. These buildings will occupy the streetface with windows that double as garage doors, which can be opened, linking village activities to the neighborhood. This will create pedestrian interest in an area that has long been an empty lot. The on-site childcare, located on this edge, to the east, will serve not only village residents, but community neighbors as well. The village community meeting space and kitchen, is found on the west side of the street edge. This space will be used not only for cooking and eating, but for community meetings, neighborhood

activities and consultations with local service agencies working to support the residents. Behind this street face layer, are the community bathrooms and shower space – spaces reserved for resident use and use by the childcare facility.

Connections

Primary access to the site is through the NW Market Street edge on the south, where the pedestrian sidewalk links commercial businesses along the street. NW Market Street connects the site to both downtown Ballard and the Hiram Chittenden locks via Metro bus route #44 and then from downtown Ballard to Seattle. Food can be easily accessed by foot or using bus route #44 to reach either the Farmer's Market or the large grocery stores on 15th Ave. NW. The Ballard Food Bank is located about six blocks away following NW Market Street and then turning left on Leary Ave NW. Adams Elementary School is located around the corner and up five blocks to the north, with Ballard High School just five blocks further to the east. The Ballard Playground and community Center is found next to Adams Elementary School and Ballard Commons Park is located two and a half blocks to the northeast, directly across from the Ballard Public Library. Swedish Medical Center is located four blocks away to the east, within the downtown area. All these services and amenities are within walking distance as well as accessible by bus or bicycle.



Figure 34 Comparison Views
top: NW Market Street view of
site with newly built encampment
as of 11/2015
bottom: NW Market Street view
of proposed housing village



Figure 35 View from NW Market Street



Figure 36 Section Perspective View, looking west.
Larger community spaces are on the left, along the street. Spaces get smaller and more private, toward the right.

The site is surrounded by neighborhoods to the north, making neighborhood get togethers and playdates easy to arrange. The community center or library will bring village residents and neighbors together, encouraging relationships to develop. Churches committed to helping the homeless, such as Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, will find neighborhood sites closer and easier to visit, making it simpler to offer outreach, support and encourage networking opportunities.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

Rapidly obtaining and deploying housing for the homeless is critical in keeping people alive and in lessening the impact of homelessness now and in the future. Homeless people placed in homes are no longer homeless – a notion at the heart of the Housing First program. Once housed, homeless families can start taking steps to achieve permanent stability and health - significantly brightening future prospects for themselves and their children. Augmenting the good effects of having a place to live, is locating this place in a neighborhood where resources abound to help homeless families. Access to food, health care, schools, libraries, parks and community centers help families obtain education, recreation and create a healthy lifestyle. Equally important is having a neighborhood social network – friends to share life with – an important opportunity for both adults and children.

In considering the elements important in creating homeless housing at the right time and location, cost and timeliness factors emerge as the most prominent challenge. Money is limited and needs to be stretched as far as it can go in serving the homeless community. Funding arrangements and construction take a lot of time and cause a lot of desperate waiting for those who are need of housing. In response to these issues, this thesis proposes, first implementing a village system - a program that is developed and worked out ahead of time, ready to be set in motion when needed. This system will use land on a temporary basis, reducing the time and cost of buying urban property. It also proposes employing modular pop-up housing as living units. This not only saves on construction costs by being built in a factory, but allows the village to be assembled quickly – in 2 weekends compared to an entire year. [See image N Habit vs Patrick Place] Saving time and money, a preplanned village system of modular pop-up buildings will address those two issues and deliver housing to families in need of shelter.

The thesis design prototype a plan and system that can be applied to many sites. The site layout is only one version of a large number of possibilities for arranging these temporary units. The dynamic flexibility and immediacy built into this village scheme attempts to respond to the emergent nature of the situation homeless families find themselves in. An analogous situation is having hungry people



Figure 37 View inside village pathways

wait for food while a food bank is planned, designed and built – assuring the needy that food will be coming soon. While agreeing that having a nice food bank, well-planned and organized is a good thing, keeping people from starving is even better. Food can be handed out using a less perfect system as a temporary stop-gap until a better system is in place. Likewise, small, temporary, simple housing units, such as proposed in this thesis can be used to shelter homeless families, filling the time gap required to have affordable housing funded, planned, designed and finally constructed.

Homelessness is a difficult problem that has resisted being solved easily. This doesn't necessarily mean there isn't a way to solve it – and certainly doesn't mean that there isn't something we can do to lessen the impacts on those affected. It is a big problem that will require creativeness, innovation and changes in stodgy building codes that will allow ways for the homeless to provide for themselves (such as allowing tiny homes as legitimate living structures). Pop-up housing villages located in urban neighborhoods will create an opportunity for “regular” American people to take action and help empower homeless families to exit homelessness for good.



Figure 38 View of west edge of village

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