Viet Nguyen

CEP class of 2019

Senior Project Written Report

**Seattle Homeless Housing Guidelines**

**Abstract:**

The city of Seattle and King county has declared a state of emergency in 2015 for the crisis on people experiencing homeless. Since then, the contributing factor to stop the growth and lowering people living unsheltered on the streets has been never ending. As the problem becomes more transparent we see that affordable housing, job loss, addiction and employment gaps are the main contributing factors to homelessness. The issue here is that our secondary option for housing people have not been as successful as the City has planned it to be. Due to the lack of planning and guidelines for these housing units, majority of these individuals rather live on the street then to stay in these homes. Which is why for this project, the methodology will focus on inducting interviews, site visits, and guideline/case studies review. By looking at tiny homes villages, Black homes, and Desc housing I hope to highlight issues with homeless units and its health issues, Requirements for housing, exploration on its funding and how people feel about these homes. Which is why we have to ask ourselves, what factors make these units fail? And how can we create a plan or guideline to resolve these problems? The main focus for this project is housing units that can provide people facing homeless with long-term, free, properly designed housing for certain individuals. By looking into examples in Seattle and narrowing down to just three projects, the report will consist of a guideline on how to plan and design from the issues for people facing homeless.

**Background:**

**Goals and Product:**

I really wanted to address the issue of housing shelters and units in Seattle. The main goal here is to understand why emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing have not been successful as they promise. Even with all the professional input and additional funding we still see a huge flaw to this system. Seattle continues to supply its city with these units without realizing there has to be change in its guidelines and planning procedure. The main problem that I have figured out thus far in researching and through the case studies is that there is a lack of a cohesive system and communication.

Looking at existing housing unit and their design there has been a clear element that none of these companies or organization are working together. First, most of these units share the same issue that older projects failed to resolve. Which brings us back to all the problems that can be face when units are not well planned: people abandoning the unit, maintaining peoples mental health, waste of money, etc. Second, there seems to be a lack of communication when it comes to organization and companies but more importantly the people facing homelessness.

When planners and designers set to create a project, as far as my research goes, they don’t seem to set their feet on the idea of having input and suggestion from the people they are designing for. One great example of this is a housing unit in New York City. Where they designed a modern apartment, which incorporated stack boxes as rooms. This took away the elements of privacy and added the issue of close and cramp spaces. The idea behind this was to house as many people as possible. Not so much focus on resolving the issue itself of homeless.

Now this issue can be resolve even before getting to this state. Failed system such as the cost of living, health service, lack of high paying jobs, and our justice system is additional obstacle we must face for aiming towards a solution. However for this project, I will not focus much on these other system but instead how they can affect the planning and designing guidelines for these units. This project will be primarily focusing on two point(s): Negative reasons why these units are not being use or have the tendency to house people in short term and how can we include the mistake from these units so there can be a cohesive planning and designing guidelines for future housing unit project for the homeless.

The final product of this project will be a report, summarizing the case studies, to show the best practices that can be done in the planning and design process for these housing units. I want to focus on two or three project that has been completed in Seattle. So far the main ones I will be furthering my research on is the Block project, tiny homes, and the DESC’ housing. I will be looking into other shelters and units but for my focus of long-term, completely free, and single unit housing I will be just focusing on my top three choices.

Coming here at a young and being able to live in a house that my family work so hard for made me very grateful for everything that I have. Living in Tacoma it has allowed me to experience everything first hand with people facing homelessness. It made me curious why the place everyone back home dreamed about coming to for a better life was also a place that turn their heads when it comes to the less fortunate. Ever since then I always made the effort to understand and learn as much as I can with the homeless community. Beyond me this is something that affects everyone in any part of society. People are usually afraid on things they know little of, which is why they don’t understand how much attention this issue really needs.

**(Todays situation:)**

Currently, Seattle is providing about 5,000 housing units for the homeless community. When we bring emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re- housing and permanent supportive housing to the equation we are providing hundreds of more options to get people off the streets. However the rate of homeless population on the street has only increase. Which turns people attention

To how functional and long-term these programs can be. Many in the human- services field had conducted research on why these shelters and emergency housings are making little to few changes to the crisis.

These units and shelter faces the issue of not meeting the basic needs that comes with individual facing homeless. Planners and designers don’t realize how many are “physically disabled or have severe mental-health or substance-abuse issues” (Berner). Some of these units are just bunked beds in old and broken down buildings. They serve no role in helping individuals overcome any of their obstacles. They might have taken people of the streets but besides that they are only prolonging the problem. Studies has shown that we need long term housing that gets people the help they need in overcoming their mental-health.

People need more then just a bed and a roof over their head. In order to get back into society, I think there has to be a change in our planning and designing guidelines. Which is why I will be focusing on two or three projects that Seattle has already done and look at ways to include them in a final guideline report on everything that can be done right in this process.

**(History):**

This issue of homelessness has branch out to every major American city. It is difficult to really pinpoint the exact moment in history our society continue to function with the idea of having individuals to live on the streets. Studies indicate that the failure of many systems in society has force people to go into homelessness. A great example of this is the “Shacktown” history in Seattle.

In Seattle, Shacktown was developed in the early 1900’s. It was located in today’s west Pioneer Square in downtown, Seattle. Over the years when Seattle became an industrial center, the site itself was force to become an over crowed and urban space. As the industries continue to grow we then see the contribution of housing and other necessities for the people living there. This then lead to the issues of public housing being a huge health risk. This was mainly because there was a lack of responsibilities on “maintaining food safety and sewage disposal” (Banel). Preventing the spread of diseases was really the main concern. Health officials realize that these poorly designed and planned units were going to lead to outbreak of cholera and tuberculosis, and bubonic plague. So the city decided to displace these people from their homes and tried to destroy most of the units. The city had no obligation to find solutions or alternative housing for those folks. This poorly plan and design system of housing cause individuals to leave their homes, with no help from the city, and still be expected to function properly in society.

**Methodology:**

Look into the different types of housing units in Seattle (most known and successful). Really break down to focus on 2 to 3 project that shows potential in future development in bettering this system. My first major step will be looking into case studies and research on where we are at the moment with housing homeless units. Then I will be in contact with these units to further my research. Really conducting interviews and hand-on kind of works that allow me to see the benefits that this particular project has on the housing units. After completing that research part I will conduct a guideline and a report on how significance certain part of these project are. Which ultimately will lead into a final draft of what a housing unit should be compose of.

In order to finalize my complete report in planning a housing unit(s) I will be breaking up my task in three steps. The first step will be completely focusing on research and gather case studies on as much housing units as possible. This will allow me to see the different methods that are being use for these units. Ideally this part of the task is comparing and contrasting all the projects that are taking place in Seattle. After I’ve completed that I will be narrowing down to just two or three projects. Primary the ones that best fit under the categories of long-term, completely free, and single unit housing. The reason I picked these as the main focus for my project was because I believe these components are the major ones to set change in the homeless housing system.

The second step will involve meetings and interviews with the tenant and organizations of these units. After narrowing down these projects I plan to reach out so that I can come in contact with the planner, designer, tenant and staffs. Which will get me into the planning and designing perspective of each project. This stage will be the longest in my project due to the fact that setting up time for all of these will vary in terms of each individual interest in my project.

The final step will be comprised of a writing a report base on section one and two. Ideally the final product should make up about 50-60 pages of the report. I really want to start off with a wide topic and as the report continues, the report will be narrow down to just two or three case studies.

These are the steps I am proceeding to meet my vision and goals. However if I do complete a lot of these sections in advance I would want to create a design to show the proper unit(s) for homeless people in Seattle. This unit would ideal through its planning structure and design would resolve most of the issues that other units are facing currently. An example I have so far is that units lack locks, a simple fixture but this one element allows tenant to feel a sense of safety. This design could be an illustration or it could even be just elements I could mention in my report as well. As for now this is only in the beginning phases and will only be included if I have enough time.

**Weekly task:**

Week 1: January 16th to January 23rd

* Complete the all the research for each units
* Narrow down these units to the main ones I want to focus on
* Go into greater details for them in the report
* Look into case studies and report on these units
* Figure out how big and how many people these project affects
* The issue of whether or not the project is as big as I think it is
* Compel similar questions and factors to compare these units
* Look for a mentor

**Picking a unit:**

Narrowing down some of the units that I’ve done case studies on was probably one of the first things I had to do. Before getting further into my project I really had to see which one I would continue researching about. How I came about doing this was seeing which one had enough information for me to even conduct my report on as well as ones that fit under categories that I thought was key to answering my research question. Categories that I thought was most import was units that was built more than 10 years or so, units that are relatively new and of course something that was in the works of being built.

**Conducting Interview question:**

For this week I wanted to start off the long and intensive workload for interviews. I knew I wanted to do interviews for people that have experience these homes but I didn’t know how I was going to approach this matter. As I’ve volunteered and work with homeless people in the past I knew any topic about the matter was difficult to bring up.

Week 2: January 23rd to January 30th

* Start to email group and firms for interviews or come into contact with someone on the project/team
* Summarize the report and case studies
* Set a time for a site visit
* Issue: this might be a time frame issue where people can’t meet during this week
* Email stakeholder on the process and hopefully have the mentor all set

**Talking to Sara (Mentor):**

Sara works as a coordinator for the window of kindness as well as a leading role for what goes into a block home. She plays a huge part of where things come from, marketing the block homes as well as the window of kindness at the same time. Sara has convinced me enough to include the block units into my project. She was really the main reason why I wanted to pursue a focus in the crisis of homelessness working with her at the window of kindness. Our meeting narrowed down as well the tiny homes and to focus on the issue with those homes in the pass few months.

Week 3: January 30th to February 6th

* Finalize the meetings and interview time and place
* Make sure to set up further interviews following that one
* Develop interview questions and things to talk about before going in the interviews
* Ideally have completed 1-2 of the site visit.
* Summarize the notes and drawings from the visit and plan for a future visit.
* Finalize mentor

**Interview question(s):**

Figuring out what to ask was one of the hardest things that went into my interview process. A lot of my peers and people I worked with at the window brought up the issue of how to overcome barriers when asking sensitive questions. This was something that I definitely had to work over time with; I really needed to know how people came into the whole system of these units. So this week I finalize some questions:

* What are your first thoughts on public or private housing units?
* How have you been personal connected in this system yourself?
* How can units like the tiny homes and block home be improve so that resident can have a better and longer stay?

Week 4: February 6th to February 13th

* Formulate the data and create visual graphs and chart to show them
* Organize the research and make sure they are all answering the question in the report.
* Conduct tenant interviews and get other input from people that lived in these units
* Finish conducting the data and all the contact needed
* Create a section of the interview into one cohesive product

**Finalizing data:**

Before looking into the case studies and research on these units I’ve conduct a lot of info about who was being affected in the crisis of homelessness. So the final categories were age, reason why they became homeless, gender, race sheltered and unsheltered. These were then going to be put in an info graphics in my presentation (future task).

Week 5: February 13th to February 20th

* Create format and style for the report
* Review data and create the table and graph
* Update time for re-visiting interview and meetings

**Learning InDesign:**

Looking into how I was going to my report and what I found out was indesign was the best methods. I really wanted to make my report as something in the future could give to companies and organization for all the work that I completed. So getting familiar with InDesign was something I wanted to start before completed the other entire task.

**Info graphics example:**

Looking into ways I could visually represent a lot of the data collected. I didn’t want there to be a huge set of data on my presentation that requires reading. I thought it was going to be easier if I had things set so that people could just look at graph and tables so see what kind of data I collected.

Week 6: February 20th to February 27th

* Follow up with contacts and connection with the different projects
* Look into plans and other guidelines for the unit
* Come into contact with mentor for an update
* Start creating outlines for all the units in the report

Week 7: February 27th to March 6th

* Look into how these units compare to other each other
* Create section for the report
* Update on how things are going and what needs to be done in the future

Week 8: March 6th to March 13th

* Go into how these units are affecting the health issues
* Tie back to the interviews with this part
* Look into the proper design to resolve this issue
* Create a guideline for this part

**Stakeholder Analysis:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholders:** | **How are they impacted:** | **Significances on the project:** | **How are they involve:** |
| Block Project | Looking from an outside perspective on their units  See issues from different units around Seattle (such as tiny homes, and other small units). | Will provide me with the perspective and ideas from how they cam up with the housing units.  Seeing out the complete process of the projects and its ups and downs | Working with the team to build the housing units around Seattle  Allowing me to be there with the process of these units going up |
| Window of Kindness | People that come to there facilitates are people that are facing homelessness | Give perspective from people actually facing homeless and seeing what elements they want towards the planning and design process | Volunteering at the window to have homeless inputs on what their ideal unit should provide  Seeing if people have issues with other units or shelters in the pass. |
| Urban at UW | Provides resources for homeless individuals and encampment  Fewer individuals’ means fewer work they would have to put into. | Provide with different methods of communicating and assisting homeless encampments | Connection with previous UW projects to provide for the homeless communities here.  Students input on how to carefully handle for the population. |
| Low Income Housing Institute | Seeing other methods of different forms of housing units for homeless people. | Give a different approach to a more known housing unit in Seattle.  Seeing the outcomes that were set many years ago. | Volunteering at these homes and getting a better understanding the benefits to these units |

**Literature Review:**

Research question:

How can we take cohesive approach towards different single housing units in Seattle so that improvement can be made in the design and planning guidelines?

Introduction:

Since 2015, the city of Seattle and King county declared a state of emergency for the growing rate of homeless people, which forces city funding to increase by the millions. Since then, the contributing factor to solve homelessness has been never ending. I really want to address the issue of housing shelters and units in Seattle. The main goal is to understand why emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing have not been successful as they promised. Even with the understanding housing regulations to health issues, there is much needed to be study with how these units function.

**Background/data on current homeless situation:**

**Homelessness rose just a bit this year in the U.S. Here’s how Seattle compares.**

Despite millions of dollars being spent to help, the homeless population in Seattle, in 2014 the percentage has increased by 4%. Federal data shows the number of homeless people in Seattle has flared up 10 times the national average. According to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development the national percentage has increased by .3 this year.

In Seattle, we are spending about 90 million on trying to resolve this issue of homelessness, with local politicians fighting for future investment from federal government for affordable housing, we still need a change in our own system for their to be change. According to the consulting firm McKinsey & Company has predicted that King County needs “ another 14,000 affordable units for people experiencing homelessness and that annual spending would need to double to $410 million” (Greenstone) to even tackle the crisis. Even with the count’s Regional Affordable housing Task Force, their needs more than 100,000 new housing units affordable for the region’s lowest-income people by the year 2040 for there to be resolve.

**King County needs to spend $400 million a year to solve homeless crisis, new report says**

According to all the data, it seems like the biggest change that needed to be done was supporting affordable housing to solve the homelessness crisis. “The report estimates King County is short up to 14,000 units affordable for people experiencing homelessness” (Davila).

“In a [dramatic move last week](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/amazon/amazon-pauses-plans-for-seattle-office-towers-while-city-council-considers-business-tax/), Amazon announced it was pausing construction of a new downtown tower until city council voted on the tax. That maneuver, plus anger over what many residents see as excessive city spending and frustration with its management of homelessness, has [erupted into a fierce public debate](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/fury-and-frustration-erupt-over-proposed-head-tax-for-homelessness-services/).” (Myers)

The Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) have allowed us to focus on loosening the zoning laws that prohibit more dense housing. This will explain and further the understanding why most of these units are only permitted in certain areas. Especially the block project where having the units located in residential housing completely eliminate the zoningregulations.

**The Economics of homelessness in Seattle and King County: Maggie Stringfellow and Dilip Wagle**

There is this connection between the homeless rising and the rise of the fair-market rent. This idea that financial crisis of 2008 has lead to poverty and unemployment rising, making our control on the homelessness unstable. As this FMR takes the lead in being the main driving factor to the rise of homeless, we also see the unexpected causes such as loss of a job, poor health, and domestic violence.

“Ten years ago, our community had pockets of cheap motels and apartments. When you hit rock bottom, you could still find a roof. Today, there is no safe place for people to fall to. When crisis hits, you fall to the street.”

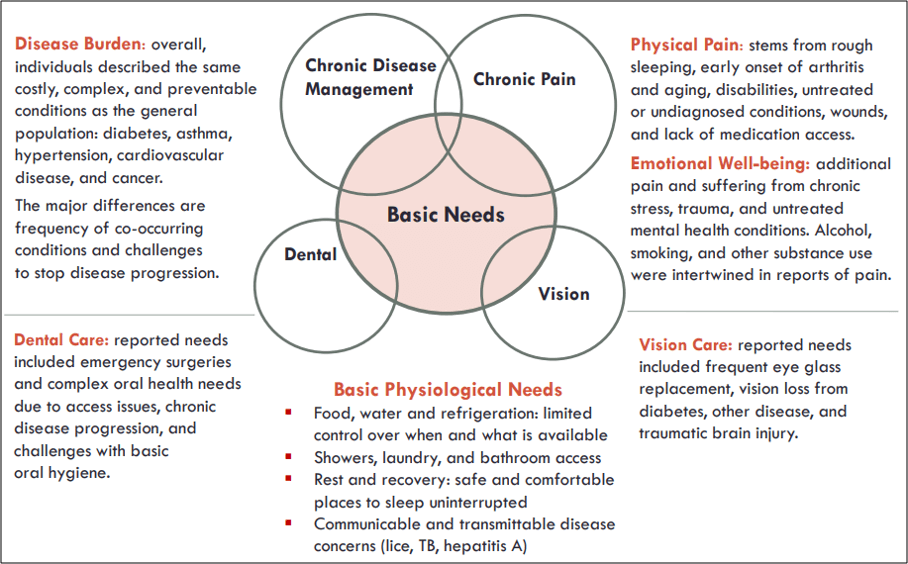
Now that we see the dynamics and result of how the construction industry had build more profitable and expensive homes. The city continued to see these developers supplying Seattle with expensive homes that then push out affordable and available housing for people. With this timeline we can see a corresponding with the rise of the homeless population.

We must also take into consideration how much work we have done with this crisis. It is important to note we have permanently housed 8,100 households in 2017. Even this the crisis has be sustain till today, we are figuring more on house to properly provide more affordable housing.

**Health Issues with homelessness:**

**The health care needs and challenges of Seattle’s homeless population**

The current system of health care in Seattle needs to tackle the “basic needs, chronic disease management, chronic pain, dental care, and vision care”. Looking at the physical pain in the chart, we can see that this is caused from sleeping on rough surfaces as well as being in conditions that are not well for their conditions. Wounds, injuries and disabilities should all be treated and be in an environment where they can successfully heal or be coped with. Besides that the basic needs of food, water, and most important control on what is available. Having these elements that bigger shelter can’t provide like rest and recovery with a safe and comfortable places to sleep that are not being interrupted. Another reason why my focus is tied into the more towards single units is that they do not face the problem of communicable and transmittable disease.



**Health issues reflecting from housings units**

It is a given that people facing homelessness also have a higher chance of developing health problem and a higher mortality rate and because of this they continue live on the streets. “One reason for the failure to obtain stable housing might be the number of perceived barriers imposed by housing agencies” (HF). Individuals are turned down because majority of these housing systems because they do not understand how to deal with these complex problems. We invest in about 34 million dollars on service/emergency infrastructure such as “emergency shelters, transitional housing, health care clinics, and abstinence-based substance-abuse treatment” (HF). However, homeless people are hesitant to use when it comes to these services due to the fact that it might lead to “revolving door of jail, medical detoxification, mandated abstinence-based treatment and failed attempts to obtain stable housing” (HF). This program for housing homeless people in shelters and units address the idea that handling the health issues while they are housed should be the top priority. This is a factor that applies for any unit or shelter that we face today in Seattle.

I believe that if we change the housing system with regards to how we treat homeless people with mental health, the success rate of these houses will increase. It’s hard to officially rid of such a hard issue but definitely where individuals sleep and live will affect that state. After addressing the major health issues that homeless people face, I will be looking into what design or planning methods we can include in a unit to address that problem. These housing units hold the potential promote physical and mental health. The reason why I am examining this issue is because good health for these individuals depends on how safe and free they feel. I will be incorporating the health issue homeless people face as well as how planning and design can lower the issue.

**Health care services and resources**

Conditions in Seattle can’t be resolve in these single units alone, however with the programs that is provided by these health care we can see that services and resources are provided throughout the city. There has even been an approach were these clinics are mobile and able to provide health care to all parts of Seattle. This is very important to for these single units or communities that are being formed through Seattle. The worry of proper health care isn’t an issue for where these units are being constructed no more. If we see the improvement of resources we can really focus on expanding further for these units. Ideally away from the city so that the mental problem faced with living in a busy city can be eliminated.

* [Crisis Connections open 24-hours at 1-866-427-4747](https://www.crisisconnections.org/)  
  Crisis Connections connects people in physical, emotional and financial crisis to services that will be of help. They help to reduce immediate emotional distress and defuse crises for individuals, families and the community; to reduce the immediate risk of violence to one's self and others; and to increase the ability of people to access the safety net, particularly for mental and emotional support services. 24-hour Crisis Line: 1-866-427-4747.
* [Community Information Line: Dial 2-1-1](http://crisisclinic.org/find-help/2-1-1-resources-and-information/)  
  King County 2-1-1 provides comprehensive information on food, shelter, housing, rent and utility assistance, legal assistance, financial assistance, governmental assistance programs, health care, employment, education and family support programs.
* [Kids Plus](https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/child-teen-health/kids-plus.aspx)  
  Provides assistance for children and their families experiencing homelessness. It provides support from a multi-disciplinary team of nursing, social work, chemical dependency, housing and eligibility specialists during times of transition.

**Healthcare for the Homeless Network (HCHN)**

Some of the major elements that come with healthcare while living homeless are hepatitis A, Wound infections, Shigella, flu’s and HIV. Rats/mice, people living outdoors or homeless, poor services in shelters and lack of urgency cause these for these individuals. Really people that don’t have any of these conditions are at a higher risk when they start to live outdoors or homeless. If we want to see this decrease in health issue we have to tackle the problem of housing them, eliminating the chances of being expose to these conditions.

**Requirements for housing:**

**Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**

Over the years, we have this ideal vision that a home should include a sprawling house with kitchen space, multiple guest rooms, etc. However, when it comes to building any form of unit it seems like the number-one requirement for it is having a roof and a bed. Which sounds like what housing homeless people should be, but if you want them to get back into society you would need to provide them with more than that. When you compare some of these units to the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs the units only meet the basic needs aspect. Looking at this will allow me to include a system that identify what kind of things units are lacking and meeting in their design and plan. Really before anything that can be attempted like the psychological needs and self-fulfillments needs there must be a basic need. These needs include security, safety, food, water, warmth and rest. All factors that can be easily are provided with these units that we will be looking over.

**What is Housing First?**

This notion of creating a home for vulnerable clients is something that needs to be engaged so that greater success can be done in resolving people living on the streets. DESC housing first model provides some of the basic understanding what we need to do in planning and how we can approach these units. The housing principles is a basic human right, as soon as we treated any more than that we will always see people livening on the street. Below is the seven standards of DESC’s housing first approach that helps summaries some of the goals in providing proper housing.

1. Move people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance.
2. The provider is obligated to bring robust support services to the housing. These services are predicated on assertive engagement, not coercion.
3. Continued tenancy is not dependent on participation in services.
4. Units are targeted to most disabled and vulnerable homeless members of the community.
5. Embraces harm reduction approach to addictions rather than mandating abstinence. At the same time, the provider must be prepared to support resident commitments to recovery.
6. Residents must have leases and tenant protections under the law.
7. Can be implemented as either a project-based or scattered site model.

**Case studies on units in Seattle:**

**Tiny Home Units**

Seattle continues to plan and expand its city supply of tiny homes. However is there really any planning being done if these homes are going three month without any management. According to the “low income-housing institute” (Davila) it is required that these sites have some sort of management. These units aren’t as promising as they are advertised; according to the LIHI they are promise with “electricity, overhead light and a heater”. However in some camps around Seattle it took them weeks to get electricity. With residences continuing to leave these homes for an unknown destination we still are seeing people turn away these units. Even the United States interagency council stated that these “have little impact on reducing homelessness” and is very “costly and difficult to manage”. Even with guidelines that seem to be strictly implemented can be seen to fall from having any actually effects on their project. Tiny homes is then taken and put into a more modern style of design, which is call modular units.

We see the potential of a very successful system here. These units not only provide shelter but a sense of belonging in the community. I definitely will be taking these components from these tiny homes. Besides the compacted space I believe people could actually have their needs filled in these units. With this idea it allows the expansion of affordability. Not only to the housing solutions for homeless people but for individuals on the edge in becoming so. This idea of allowing them to be apart of a community can really tackle a lot of issue with health in the homeless community. I believe this will be the starting ground to allowing homeless individual to have a better mindset on getting back on their feet. I will be taking the benefits from these units such as community garden, independent homes, neighborhood structure, and community engagement and will be incorporating them in my guidelines.

**LEGO Housing**

The descriptions used to identify the modular units are “components are assembled onsite, kind of like Legos” (Walters). This is another shelter that promises permanent housing for the homeless but we continue to see from other projects why this isn’t a simple statement to make. The project promises to house up to 200 people for 12 million dollars. “Projects will have 24/7 onsite services and will prioritize people with behavioral health needs and people exiting homelessness”. Ideally this is a project that focuses on resolving issues from previous units. It looks like these units are on track to really decreasing the need for them.

Permanent housing is definitely the route and focus I want to have for this project. I think the main take away from this is that putting together a unit system that is design in a modern style could appeal to more and more people in Seattle. Which ideally would get people being more comfortable and accepting of them. Which definitely would welcome more of them in different areas in Seattle. The main thing I am looking at here is how bad these units are design and why everything was rush due to the fact that they wanted to resolve the issue as soon as they can. But from this and many other sources I’ve learn that the issue of homeless takes time, it requires constant attention in all different types of field. Which is why in my plan I will indicate the time frame that is require for these units to be maintain.

**Block Project:**

The block project-driving factor is community aspect that is lacked in other shelters and units around Seattle. Their tasks to end homeless, by focusing on areas that people never really imagine building on. The project is design so that the community has a huge part on not only building the 125 sq ft home but also have a part in innovative leap forward on the issue of homeless.

The house itself is design to be completely off grid, something that really the houses around Seattle isn’t focus on at all. This ideal of being self-sufficient seems to be more success in today’s society, so really tackling two issue with one unit. It features a kitchen, bathroom, sleeping area, solar panels, greywater system, composting toilet, etc. They include most features of a home, which makes great case studies for how success single housing units can be. This will me my core focus on the case studies just because of how specific these units are. I really think this approach is the appropriated in decreasing the issue of homeless.



**Interviews:**

Interview Recs Hohbein:

Holbien, the founder of the Block project has shared that this idea is a key solution to social distance between people who have housing and people that don’t. Which means that many that volunteers their homes for this project follows the same rules and ideal. He believes if people that are given the chance to do well they will surely take it. This projected all started with him and his daughter with a dream to change the crisis of homelessness in Seattle. He wants to turn “not in my back yard’s” into “yes in my backyards”. This whole concept that we as a community just take into consideration that it is everyone’s problem. Holbien and his daughter are trained architect, they had all the skills and resources to do what they envision. Sara wanted to design a dignifying and sustainable unit for its resident. Which is why the 125 square footprints includes, a tiny bathroom is separated by a curtain from a cleverly designed living area with a cooktop and refrigerator, built-in shelves, and a pull-out bed and desk. Outside, there’s a locked storage space and a small covered porch that looks out on the couple’s compact backyard.

I’ve learned a lot from this interview but some of the main things is that this project requires efforts from all part of society. “Unlike many programs that offer housing to the homeless, there is no expectation that participants in this program move on to other housing”. City Council member Sally Bagshaw thinks this project will face many challenges. She’s realistic about the financial and psychological challenges the project will face in scaling up to anything approaching Hohlbein’s vision. Holbein hopes to see future organization and company to invest in future units. Soon have these units be made and brought in from off site. This is still a new project in Seattle so right now we see little to no problems for the unit.

Key interview questions: “*Does the Block Project allow residents to use illegal drugs?* No. Participants sign a legally binding contract that prohibits illegal drug use in the houses. *Will a violent felon or sex offender be moving in next door?* No. Insurance requirements prohibit it. *What happens if there’s a problem?* Each resident will have a case manager through a local service provider, and if an issue becomes truly intractable, the resident can be asked to leave. *Do they pay rent?* No. Facing Homelessness owns the homes and does not charge rent.” (Holbien)

Interview with Marjon Riekerk and Alexander Voorhoeve :

Marjon Reikerk and Alexander Voorhoeve is the host for the completion of the third block home. Like them and previous host they all share this common ground of wanting change on how to approach the crisis of homelessness. When you speak to any of these host you get the vibe that people are doing this out of the goodness of their hearts and nothing more. There is no reward or money that follows with hosting these units. If anything it takes up more time and effort for the common cause. However these kinds of homes do require little to no care. They were design so that we can have them in these homes for a long period of time without drastic change being done.

For Marjon and Alexander they felt like this was nothing more than “another friendly neighbor” but someone that faces different problem then them of course. Unlike small house villages, tent cities, low, medium, high-rise buildings for people these units are a permanent solution for keeping them off the street. There is a large match making process according the many of the different host. We see that these units only welcome people that match well with the host themselves. Which means a lot of time people with no criminal background or addiction are more likely to have access into these homes. Leaving a large margin of people that faces these issues.

**Conclusion:**

Looking at existing housing unit and their design there has been a clear element that none of these companies or organization are working together. Most of these units share the same issue that older projects failed to resolve. Which brings us back to all the problems that can be faced when units are not well planned; people abandoning the unit, maintaining people's mental health, waste of money, etc. There seems to be a lack of communication when it comes to organization and companies but more importantly the people facing homelessness. When planners and designers set to create a project, as far as my research goes, they don’t seem to set their feet on the idea of having input and suggestion from the people they are designing for.

**Final Findings:**

Tiny Villages has been a continuous project in Seattle for the last decade now. With the main goal to shortly house individuals till they are match with a suitable and long-term housing. These homes are very cost efficient, only costing up to 2,500 dollars per home. However majority of these materials are being donated so there is few funding that goes into actually building these homes. These homes also provide case management programs that connects resident in these home with resources and opportunity for work, housing, and health-care. They are given the supported needed to return into the real world. There are about 9 location around Seattle total with these camps. Making them one of the fastest and biggest solution Seattle has focus on in solving the crisis of homelessness. However over time Seattle has seen little to no change in the problem of homelessness. Some blame these homes but in reality they serve plenty in the community surrounding them. Many of them have lower crime rates where they’re located. Some are bringing the idea that this issue of homeless is not only just a problem for the city but a community problem as well. Meaning actions beyond the city needs to be done. I believe these portable homes will serve the right role in the crisis of homeless. As long as more care and thought is put into the community engagement, leadership roles, and of course strict rule that plays out with all the villages.

Block home has been a new project that takes Seattle by storm in the recent year. This project was brought to be by Rex Hohlbein and his daughter who are both architecture. With the support of many they decided there was change that needed to be done with the crisis of homelessness. They wanted to a different approach on how homeless housing units are planned and designed. So they created the block home, a durable, dignifying and sustainable house that fits 1-2 individuals. These units are located in the backyards of residents around Seattle. Making this a community involvement and connection project. With these homes there is no pressure for individuals to move into these homes to leave. Which mean that this project aims to solve the homeless crisis at its core. Which takes people off the street and into housing with the support of the community and as well the resources to feel like they belong. Turning no in my back yard into yes in my back yard. These homes cost about 35,000 dolor in materials but they are built to last much longer than most small units. As of right now there is about a hundred or so people sign up for their homes to host a unit. People are now taking charge in what we need to do to resolve the issue of homelessness. Some of the problem that faces these homes at the moment is that that process in building them takes longer than it should be. Volunteers are great but it does take time and a lot of effort to plan and organize a time for everyone to come. These Block homes are so very exclusive, there is a heavy match making process that takes place. This means that these units will not house people with addiction and criminal records as of right now. Making the group they’re target to be very exclusive.

**Next Steps:**

As of the data goes right now, I’ve completed what I need to set out to get for the Block Project and the Tiny Homes. I really want to spend more time on coming back to these homes but also look into other examples in Seattle on similar ideas on single housing units. I want to research more and look into different types of units in the past. Ideally with time after college I want to be able to spend some times researching and continuing to add to my guideline on successful or failed housing units. I do really want to finish the Desc’s housing plans for lego housing this summer. However with time off school and starting to find my place in the career world I think it will be a bit busy for me to complete that in the time of this summer. As for my design work I have completed that in the final poster and will be looking forward to adding them to my portfolio.

**Appendix**

**Relating Projects design/planning:**

Collins, Susan, and Seema Clifasefi. "Exploring Transitions Within a Project- based Housing First Setting: Qualitative Evaluation and Practice Implications." *HHS Public Access*, July 29, 2013.

Lee, Sharon. "Tiny Houses." Low Income Housing Institute. November 27, 2018. Accessed November 19, 2018. https://lihi.org/tiny-houses/.

DeMay, Daniel. "Seattle Opens New Apartments for Chronically Homeless." *SeattlePI*, July 17, 2018.

Walter, Kate. "King County Will Try Modular Housing to Shelter Homeless." *KUOW*, August 21, 2018.

"Advocate." DESC. Accessed December 05, 2018. https://www.desc.org/get- involved/advocate/.

**Context Research:**

Banel, Feliks. "A Look at Seattle’s Homeless ‘Shacktown’ History." *Mynorthwest*, June 29, 2016.

Johnson, John. "Addressing Homelessness." Fallen Firefighter Memorial - Fire. Accessed December 05, 2018. https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/about- us/initiatives/addressing-homelessness.

Murray, Edward, and Catherine Lester. "Homeless State of Emergency Implementation Plan." *City of Seattle, Human Services Department*, February 1, 2016.

Lee, Sharon. "Tiny Houses." Low Income Housing Institute. November 27, 2018. Accessed November 19, 2018. https://lihi.org/tiny-houses/.

**Background and data:**

“Home.” *The BLOCK Project*, the-block-project.org/home.

Walters, Kate. “Could Modular Housing Help Shelter King County's 12,000 Homeless?” *KUOW*, 22 Aug. 2018, www.kuow.org/stories/could-modular-housing-help-tackle-homelessness.

"Advocate." DESC. Accessed December 05, 2018. [https://www.desc.org/get- involved/advocate/](https://www.desc.org/get-%20involved/advocate/).

Mcleod, Saul. “Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.” *Simply Psychology*, Simply Psychology, 21 May 2018, www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html.

“Healthcare for the Homeless Network (HCHN).” *Healthcare for the Homeless Network (HCHN) - King County*, www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/locations/homeless-health/healthcare-for-the-homeless.aspx.

Collins, Susan, and Seema Clifasefi. "Exploring Transitions Within a Project- based Housing First Setting: Qualitative Evaluation and Practice Implications." *HHS Public Access*, July 29, 2013.

“The Health Care Needs and Challenges of Seattle's Homeless Population.” *State of Reform*, 19 July 2018, stateofreform.com/featured/2018/07/the-health-care-needs-and-challenges-of-seattles-homeless-population/.

“The Economics of Homelessness in Seattle and King County.” *McKinsey & Company*, www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-cities/the-economics-of-homelessness-in-seattle-and-king-county.

Davila, Vianna. “King County Needs to Spend $400 Million a Year to Solve Homeless Crisis, New Report Says.” *The Seattle Times*, The Seattle Times Company, 11 May 2018.

Greenstone, Scott. “Homelessness Rose Just a Bit This Year in the U.S. Here's How Seattle Compares.” *The Seattle Times*, The Seattle Times Company, 17 Dec. 2018.