



Memorandum

TO: WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

FROM: ANN BECK, COMMUNITY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER

DATE: 09/09/24

RE: BELLIS FAIR PHASE I – OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

Whatcom County Health and Community Services staff will be bringing a contract forward to County Council for approval on September 10, 2024 on behalf of the Opportunity Council to support Phase I of a multi-family affordable housing project adjacent to the Bellis Fair Mall. When this phase is complete, the complex will include a total of 65 new units of affordable housing, including 3 studios, 36 one-bedroom units, 23 two-bedroom units, and 3 three-bedroom units. Of these units:

- 13 are reserved for families that are homeless on entry
- 13 for individuals with special needs
- 2 for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- 37 for other individuals

All residents will be at or below 60% Area Median Income (AMI) at time of entry.

▪ Funding Amount and Source

The total project budget is approximately \$38,000,000 of which the Department is requesting \$2,000,000 in exchange for a 50-year affordability covenant on the property. Funding for this contract is provided by HB 1590 funds. These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Whatcom County began collecting these funds in 2021 and a fund balance is available for this purchase. The use of these funds, per [RCW 82.14.532](#) is appropriate for the population served as well as the acquisition of and programs offered for this project.

Other funding partners include:

- City of Bellingham \$4,020,000
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) \$15,722,342
- Washington State Housing Trust Fund, \$5,000,000



- Federal Housing Trust Fund. \$3,053,892
- Connecting Housing to Infrastructure (CHIP), \$1,194,145
- Federal Appropriation, \$2,000,000
- Non-residential, ~\$5,000,000

Under the 'non-residential' category includes funding for the land from the City of Bellingham, and funding for a child care center.

Note this this project was nominated for funding by the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee.

▪ **Project Timeline**

The Opportunity Council, with support from the City of Bellingham, closed on the property this summer and now have site control. Ground breaking is imminent and the hope to have completed construction of this phase by April 2026.