



Memorandum

TO: JACK LOUWS
FROM: Anne Deacon
DATE: July 22, 2019
RE: **Council Update on activities related to Housing, Shelter and Domestic Violence Intervention Treatment**

During the August 7, 2019 County Council Public Works and Health Committee, an update will be provided on the following activities underway:

1. **Severe Weather Shelter:** The Health Department convened a brief series of subcommittee meetings chartered by the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee to focus on creating a plan for the coming winter. In the event that extreme cold and potentially life-threatening weather conditions are forecasted, guiding assumptions for shelters were agreed upon, copied here. An action plan has been developed that includes identifying community partners who are willing to contract with the county to provide shelter services during severe weather. The current action plan will be presented at the Health Committee showing activities that have been accomplished to date to address the public health concern of human exposure to severe cold weather.
2. **Substitute House Bill 1406:** During the recent state legislative session, this bill was passed and allows local governments to receive a sales tax rebate and dedicate the monies to housing development and rental assistance to low-income households. It is estimated that approximately \$660,000 to \$680,000 per year might be available countywide for these efforts. The Final Bill Report is attached here. The county has been in conversations with all seven cities about options to take advantage of this new funding opportunity and will provide information on current considerations.
3. The 2019 county budget designated \$111,000 to increase local access to Domestic Violence Intervention Treatment. The city of Bellingham has offered to partner with the county and contribute \$100,000. The county released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in an attempt to procure additional services. The county did not receive any proposals from providers that met our qualifications, and is therefore working with District Court Probation to develop other methods to procure treatment services from state certified treatment providers.

