

West Seattle Pallet Shelter Proposal

*The Mayor's goal is 1,000 new shelter units in 2026. This is a proposal for **50 of them on a parcel the City already owns**, in the place where the City cleared an encampment in April and the encampment came back inside a day. Anything Helps knows the people living on that block by name, has served them for years, and is paid by Medicaid to keep doing it. The case management on this site costs the City nothing and depends on no City appropriation. We are asking for the ground and the permit, and for no program money.*

What happened in April, and what happens next

In mid-April the City cleared the encampment at Rotary Viewpoint Park on 35th Avenue SW, took down roughly sixteen tents, hauled out two and a half tons of debris, and reported connecting **five people** with shelter and one with case management services, while declining to answer when reporters asked how many people had been living there in the first place.

More than a dozen people were back the next day, and two tents went up under the totem pole in the middle of the park. Displacing a person rarely changes where they will be for long, but it can change how long they will live. Five days after the removal, a man died at that park of acute combined drug intoxication. **He was a client of ours.** He had been swept several times before, and each sweep left him holding less than the sweep before it, until there was nothing left for the City to take from him.

The repeated displacement contributed to his death.

The largest study of its kind, published in *JAMA* in 2023, backs up that statement. It explains what happens to unsheltered people who inject drugs in American cities when those cities displace them frequently:

"Involuntary displacement of people experiencing homelessness substantially increases drug-related morbidity and mortality. These findings have implications for the practice of involuntary displacement, as well as policies such as access to housing and supportive services, that could mitigate these harms."

Barocas JA, Nall SK, Axelrath S, et al. Population-Level Health Effects of Involuntary Displacement of People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Who Inject Drugs in US Cities. *JAMA*. 2023;329(17):1478-1486. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.4800

Anything Helps wrote to the Mayor's office and to Councilmember Saka's office in the days leading up to that removal, asking for a delay and a coordinated transition plan instead:

The practical problem with a removal right now is that it will not reduce the number of people in this area. For a removal to produce a lasting result, people need to be offered an alternative they perceive as a net gain in their situation, and the City does not currently have the resources in place to do that. Most people will return to the same location within days because they seek safety from the familiarity of the people and places around them.

Mike Mathias, Anything Helps Executive Director to Councilmember Sakas office, April 13, 2026

The missing piece in that letter, an alternative people accept, can be built on the same block for a fraction of what this cycle has already cost: the same ground was cleared in 2022, worked again by the Unified Care Team in 2025, and cleared again this April, with every pass costing money, producing about a week of quiet, and returning the site to exactly where it started.

There is no shelter left on this part of the peninsula

The congregate shelter in the converted American Legion hall on SW Alaska Street, two and a half blocks from the park, **has closed, and it is not coming back**. Its operators have been clear that they will not run it again. A day center is under discussion for that building, which would be a welcome service and would still leave these people without a place to sleep and their case managers without an address to find them at.

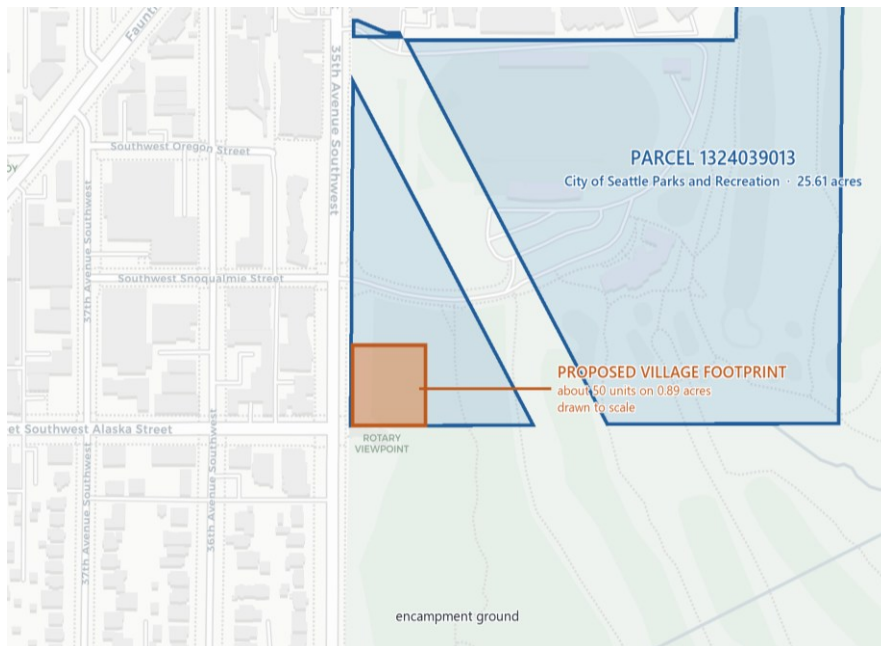
Anything Helps was that shelter's longest-standing service partner: while it operated it was a hall floor with mats and cots, we eventually withdrew our own staff over safety concerns after two years of trying to get consistent policies enforced there, and neighbors wrote to the City and to us about conditions in and around it. The nearest capacity in West Seattle sits at the far southeast edge near Myers Way, more than four miles from the Junction. It is an RV safe lot plus twenty tiny homes. Whatever can be made available there is likely the alternative against which the next removal will currently be measured.

Aside from the West Seattle Food Bank and the Clothing Bank, there are no services for people experiencing homelessness in West Seattle now that the Legion Hall has stopped operating. **The absence of resources combined with the persistence of the encampment is proof that the majority of these people are locals**. They are here because it is home, and our outreach staff know these people well enough to say so with confidence: they come from West Seattle, White Center and Burien. This is where they grew up, where their families are, and where they know which areas are safe for them.

Our Proposal

If familiarity is the entire draw, then a sweep **cannot** remove them. Arresting them **cannot** displace them either – they live in a completely different reality than you or I right now, and the law is simply not a

deterrent to them. It is **our job** to act as ambassadors and negotiators to determine what it might take to make those rules matter to them again. A village here would allow us to do exactly that – our jobs.



Parcel 1324039013 in blue is owned by the City. The **orange square is the proposed village footprint drawn to scale**, about 0.89 acres at the southwest corner of the parcel where it meets 35th Avenue SW and the encampment ground. SW Alaska Street runs west from that corner.

Parcel number	1324039013
Site address	4421 35th Avenue SW, Seattle, WA 98126
Property name	West Seattle Golf Club & Stadium
Taxpayer of record	Seattle City of DPR (Department of Parks and Recreation)

Source: King County Assessor, eReal Property record for parcel 1324039013, retrieved July 31, 2026.

We are asking for the corner that touches the problem. That adjacency is the operational and PR benefit: the people who reside there would not have to leave the place they have already shown through three removals that they will not leave, and the City gets to point to a different action they've taken to address it.

Parks has been planning West Seattle's second off-leash dog area on this same parcel, and a dog park opened two hundred yards from an unresolved and persistent encampment will not feel safe or get used, so resolving the encampment first is the right move – it's what makes the dog park usable on the day it opens. We are asking Parks to sequence it in that order, and for the city to treat this as a temporary site. As mentioned earlier, the people residing at this site are locals, meaning resolving the issue with housing and services for this population should resolve the issue locally, and the shelter would no longer be necessary.

Who is actually there

Anything Helps carries **63 unsheltered clients in the West Seattle region** right now, and every one of them has a name, a story, an assigned case manager and a documented service history that we can produce on request. Every client gives an address at intake, and **Forty-two of the 63 gave this block as their address**. Thirty of them named the actual park the City cleared in April:

Address the client gave us at intake	People
Totem Pole Outlook Park, the encampment itself	30
3618 SW Alaska Street or the 35th and Alaska corner	12
Elsewhere in West Seattle	21

Forty-nine of the 63 are already enrolled in our Foundational Community Supports Supportive Housing and Employment programs, so the payer relationship exists today and does not need to be built. Most of them enrolled during 2025, which makes these relationships measurable in years and incredibly durable.

What we have already done, and what is left to do

Between June 2025 and this week our team has delivered **1,253 billable services** to these 63 people, of which **1,220 are paid Medicaid claims**, meaning documented, audited and reimbursed rather than self-reported, and together they amount to **788 hours** of face-to-face work, 814 housing-focused services and 439 employment-focused services. Reading across the case notes, the work breaks down like this:

Work already done, from the case notes	People
Housing application started or advanced, including coordinated entry and mini-VAT	25
Identity documents secured: state ID, birth certificate, Social Security card	24
Enrolled in Benefits: ABD, SSI, Basic Food, DSHS	29
Medical or behavioral health treatment enrollment and coordination	28
Employment support and resume work	28
Referred to detox, treatment or an inpatient hospital	17
Successful Diversion, family reunification	15
Transportation, including rides to appointments	16
Delivered a tent	22

Twenty-two of these 63 people have been handed a tent by one of our own case managers, across 134 separate documented occasions. A tent is the only thing we have to give a person at the moment they need somewhere to sleep. **Our staff are Medicaid-funded housing professionals, and one of their most common physical interventions on this block is a tent.**

Every service note ends with the next step the case manager committed to, and they all require us to be able to locate them in a consistent manner. Displacing them hinders progress by changing priorities:

"CM will follow up with the housing specialist regarding the status of the Birch Grove housing application."

"CM will follow up on the Client's efforts to acquire their ID, understanding its necessity for securing permanent residency."

"CM will coordinate with the Client to schedule an appointment for ABD enrollment."

"CM will deliver the requested tent to the Client on Saturday to support their housing stability."

"CM will continue efforts to establish a communication method with the client, as they reported not having a phone or email they were willing to share, which poses a barrier to consistent interpersonal connection and service coordination."

Verbatim next-step commitments from the most recent case note on five of these clients, July 2026

The open items are almost entirely logistical: an application to track, a document to obtain, a benefit to enroll, a person to locate. Every one of them requires us to be able to locate them in order to complete it. After a sweep, our case managers spend hours of time relocating people, and that is hours we can't bill for. This effects our ability to pay them and causes our clients to lose out on time-sensitive opportunities like treatment beds or housing nominations that might become available. When we are able to locate them, they often require another tent, a new phone, and another ID – all work we've already done, because the City discarded them, they were forced to stay in an unsafe or unfamiliar location and their possessions got stolen, or they were thrown in jail for stealing items they were attempting to replace after theirs were discarded during the sweep. It is simply an absolute disruption with an enormous cost and zero benefit to continually displace these people like this.

What the City would be paying for

A village is not free to operate. The City would carry the site operations: utilities, water and waste, hygiene facilities, site staffing, security and maintenance. Those costs are real and they belong in the City's number from the start.

Anything Helps removes the case management line from that ledger. We are a contracted provider under **Foundational Community Supports**, Washington's Medicaid program administered by the Health Care Authority through Wellpoint, and our case management, housing navigation and employment support are already funded, at no cost to the City, and depend on no City contract, no City appropriation and no grant cycle.

Under current Foundational Community Supports authorization limits each enrolled client carries up to 30 days of Supportive Housing at \$145 per day and 120 fifteen-minute units of Supported Employment at \$40 per unit within every 180-day authorization period, which comes to \$9,150 per person per six months. A full 50-unit site therefore carries **roughly \$458,000 every six months**, about \$915,000 a year. The City does not appropriate that money, does not administer it, and does not have to defend it in a budget cycle.

Why us specifically

We have done exactly this before, and it worked

In 2021 Anything Helps resolved the Bitter Lake encampment at Julia Lee Park in North Seattle under a Seattle Public Schools contract: ninety-two people were on the by-name list, sixty-seven of them ended with a housing or shelter outcome, which is **73 percent**, and the total project cost was **\$63,308.55**. The

operational roster from that project still exists, and we can produce it line by line, person by person, outcome by outcome.

We do not warehouse people

We have no intention of keeping anyone in shelter, because we do not believe in long shelter stays. A unit here is a staging point for a lease, and every day somebody spends in one is a day we are working to end. Across our caseload today **183 Anything Helps clients are housed or holding a new lease**, and our practice is to nominate aggressively into permanent housing through Coordinated Entry and every other path we can reach. A village at 35th and Alaska is the front door of a pipeline we already operate.

We stay with people after they move

When a client of ours gets housed the case manager goes with them and stays for as long as it takes, and if they get evicted we stay through that too, which is what keeps landlords accepting our referrals and what keeps a village moving instead of filling up and stopping.

Employment support is already running

Our Supported Employment program is funded and staffed today and is billed inside the same client interaction as housing support, so it needs no additional money and no separate staffing plan.

How a temporary site keeps the neighborhood on your side

We are proposing a temporary installation with a defined end, and the program model that makes that end credible is the one we built at Bitter Lake, which has three working parts.

A by-name list

Everyone on site is enrolled by name from day one, which produces a finite population rather than an open-ended one. A finite population is what lets the City state a target closure date and be held to it, and what lets the City demonstrate that every person present received a real and lawful offer.

A phased, time-limited structure

The model runs on Critical Time Intervention, a recognized practice built around a fixed transition period, inside a disaster-response posture borrowed from FEMA's Disaster Case Management model, and both of those are designed to end. Success is measured by exits into housing and by length of stay.

Community meetings as part of the program

Our model treats the whole neighborhood as the client. The frustration around an encampment is real and it is energy, and the job is to redirect that energy away from the people in the tents and toward the barriers keeping them there. We have been working in this neighborhood for over a year, we have the relationships, we will run the meetings ourselves, and we will sign the good-neighbor agreement the City's shelter legislation requires.

Why now

The stated goal is 1,000 new units in 2026, with 500 by mid-June. The mid-June target was missed, and publicly announced sites total roughly 300. Fifty units on land the City already owns, with the services already paid for and the residents already identified, is the fastest remaining fifty on the board.

- **The people are still enrolled.** Their Medicaid authorizations are active now. A caseload this stable in this small a geography does not stay assembled indefinitely.
- **The ground will not stay quiet.** It has not for four years.

What we are asking for

1. A meeting to discuss this in further detail, presumably including the Parks staff that manage this parcel.
2. A transitional encampment interim use permit under SMC 23.42.056 on parcel 1324039013, for about 50 units on the 0.89-acre corner at 35th Avenue SW, pending an approved site survey.

Thank you for considering our proposal, and for your efforts to address homelessness in Seattle.



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