

Snohomish County Residential Treatment Facility

Frequently asked questions – April 2022

Background

What kind of facility is being built in Snohomish County?

- The residential treatment facility will provide 16-beds for evaluation and treatment services. The Health Care Authority will provide ongoing maintenance of the facility. A second 16-bed facility may be built on the site in the future.
- The facility will serve individuals who are civilly committed on 90- or 180-day orders, and it will enable people to receive mental health treatment closer to their home, family, and community. The purpose is for this facility to become a part of the community as a resource, a partner, and a good neighbor.

Why is this facility being built in Snohomish County?

- For one of the largest counties in the state, Snohomish does not have adequate capacity to serve community members with behavioral health needs. As of March 2022, there are only six beds in the county contracted by HCA to provide this type of treatment. When people receive inpatient care closer to their home, it allows them to maintain and build community connections that support their recovery.
- This is part of a statewide effort to build community-based behavioral health capacity. We need a continuum of services that can prevent individuals from being committed to state hospitals and can support people in their recovery after treatment.

The posted notice calls out two buildings with 16 patients each. Other documentation states that 3 buildings with 16 patients each is planned. Which is correct?

- The first phase is one building with 16 beds, the second phase includes an additional building with 16 beds.

Why did the residents of Stanwood not find out about the proposed residential treatment facility until February of 2022?

- The feasibility of the site needed to be reviewed prior to public notification and an appropriate public notification process is being followed.

Were any other sites considered?

- The site was selected for this project as guided by the Snohomish County Code requirements and in consideration of property that was available to Tulalip Tribes to comply with the Compact requirements.
- [Read the Tax Sharing Compact Requirement document.](#)

Where can I find the "Tulalip Tribe Memorandum of Understanding" as related to this project?

- You can [read the MOU](#) with the Tax Sharing Compact Document

When will the Hearing Examiner meeting happen?

- Snohomish County will schedule the hearing as a part of the conditional use permit process. The meeting will be scheduled for late summer or early fall of 2022.

What is the timeline for this project?

- The project team is seeking conditional use permit approval by mid-2022. We plan for the facility to open in 2024.

Impacts to the Stanwood community

Where will the facility be located?

- 29919 80th Ave, NW, Stanwood.

How will this facility impact traffic?

- Traffic impact will be minimal.
- The majority of the traffic will be generated by staff coming to work and leaving at the end of their shift.
- The project includes an eight-foot-wide paved shoulder the full width of the parcel, and vehicles exiting the parking facility will be allowed right turns only.
- Due to the fact that this is a 90-to-180-day facility, intakes occur at scheduled times and are significantly less frequent than with facilities who house patients with a shorter commitment.

What are the design considerations for sewer and water services for the new facility?

- On-site water and sewer infrastructure is being engineered to serve the needs of the proposed residential treatment facilities.
- Water service will be provided by a new Group A Community Water Well designed and constructed in accordance with the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water Standards and Requirements.
- The water system will be operated and maintained by a qualified Satellite Management Agency (SMA).
- Soil investigations have confirmed the feasibility of an on-site septic drain field for adequate disposal of pre-treated sewer discharge from the proposed buildings.
- The system is being engineered and designed in accordance with Snohomish Health District Standards and Requirements to serve sewer needs.

How are wetlands, stormwater, and endangered species being considered?

- Wetlands have been mapped on either side of the primary drainage running through the site.
- The project proposes buffer enhancement to meet the requirements of Snohomish County Code. Stormwater discharges leaving the developed site will be managed and released to maintain the wetland hydrology in accordance with the Snohomish County Drainage Manual.
- There are no endangered species known to be on or near the site. Snohomish County is within the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds. Migrating species of geese and ducks can be found in lakes, ponds, wetlands and waterways of the area and that should continue to function in the same manner subsequent to development.

Is this project a permitted use within the Snohomish County zoning regulations?

- Snohomish County Code (SCC) 30.91H.095 defines this project as a Level II Health and Social Service Facility (HSSF). This use is permitted in the R-5 zone through a conditional use review process per SCC 30.22.110.
 - *A Level II HSSF means a use which is licensed or regulated by the state to provide emergency medical treatment on a 24-hour per day basis or which houses persons in an institutional setting that provides chronic care or medical service on regular recurring basis to its residents. 30.91H.095 (2)*

What is the status of the Conditional Use Permit process?

- The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application, which has been submitted to Snohomish County, includes detailed response to each of the CUP Criteria required by the County. A public hearing will be held as part of the process by the Snohomish County Hearing Examiner.
- The date of the hearing will be scheduled by Snohomish County.
- Other permits for the facility will be submitted as required by Snohomish County and other applicable authorities having jurisdiction.

How will the new facility be designed to fit into the community setting?

- The development is limited to 5 acres within the site, leaving the remaining 10 acres in its current state of pastures, residential structures, horse barns and other outbuildings.
- The proposed buildings are being designed as single-story structures with residential components such as sloped roofs, window design and spacings, and finish materials that are similarly found in residential construction.
- In addition to landscaping that will be provided around the base of the buildings, the wetland buffer enhancement will provide additional landscaping to meld the project into the site.

A 20' wide landscaped buffer will also be provided along the eastern edge and street edge landscaping with frontage improvements are also included in the proposed development

Patient population

Who will this facility serve?

This location will serve people ages 18 and older who are court-ordered for long-term civil commitment for 90 or 180 days under the state's [Involuntary Treatment Act](#). These are community members who are experiencing mental health conditions such as mood and thought disorders. They may also have substance use disorders as a secondary diagnosis. **These are not individuals involved in the criminal court system.**

Most commonly, individuals are placed in treatment this way when a loved one calls a crisis line or 911 and is connected with a designated crisis responder (DCR). The DCR assesses whether the individual meets civil commitment criteria. If the individual does meet the criteria:

- The individual will be committed to an E&T or hospital for a 120-hour evaluation.
- **The Snohomish County community -based facility will only treat people for 90-or-180-day commitments.**
- The goal is to stabilize the patient sufficiently so that they can return to the community as quickly as possible. Discharge planning begins as soon as the patient is admitted.

What is the exact involuntary commitment process for RCW 71.5?

- [RCW 71.05](#) explains the involuntary commitment process in detail.

Will the population of the facility be predominantly composed of Native Americans? And will the patients be civilly committed as a result of being involved with the court system?

- This facility is for all Snohomish County residents and will be focused on the designated crisis responder process for placement.
- If the facility has an available bed, it is possible that someone from outside the county may be admitted.
- Individuals committed to the facility are not placed as a result of involvement in the facility are not involved in the criminal court system.
- The Tulalip Tribes of Washington will be given admission priority; however, the facility will not be predominantly composed of patients from the Tribal populations.

What kind of treatment will this facility provide?

- Treatment is individualized and may include counseling, medication management, and other rehabilitative services (for example, building independent living skills.)

What does it mean that this is a secure facility?

- Individuals who are getting treatment under the Involuntary Treatment Act will not be able to leave the facility on their own. The facility will be secure and locked.
- Individuals receiving treatment here may be considered a danger to themselves or others or unable to take care of their own needs. It is important to understand that people living with serious mental illness are far more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators.

What happens to people once they complete their treatment?

- The treatment team at the facility will work with the residents to create individualized discharge plans to ensure their needs are met in their community. Discharge plans include linkages with outpatient counseling, medication management, case management, and medical care, as well as housing supports, when needed.
- The facility team, managed care hospital liaisons, and peer bridgers work with discharging residents and their loved ones to help ensure a well-coordinated handoff to a pre-arranged housing location, typically close to their original county residences.

Safety

What does the word "elope" mean in the context of a secure behavioral health facility?

- The word "elope" in the context of a secure behavioral health facility is to leave the secure portion of the facility prior to discharge at the time of treatment completion.
- It is extremely rare that there would be an elopement.
- It is a secure facility and will have well-trained staff.

How will the facility maintain a safe environment?

- The proposed residential treatment facility is a 90- to 180-day civil commitment facility and is a locked facility.
- Patients can move about freely inside of the unit, but they are not allowed to leave until they have completed their treatment.
- All exterior doors are locked. The outdoor areas are securely enclosed with anti-climb walls that are twelve feet tall.
- The facility is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- The building interior has clear sightlines, and no hidden corners so that patients are always monitored, and staff safety is protected.
- Staff are trained in de-escalation strategies and emergency management processes to minimize calls to law enforcement and the fire department.
- The circulation areas have extra width to allow patients to walk and reduce unwanted patient interaction and reduce aggression.
- A seclusion room is included in the facility to if it is necessary to temporarily restrain a patient.
- At the main entry and exit points there is a sally-port. The sally-port functions as a secure vestibule where there are two doors in a series, and they are programmed so that both doors cannot be open at the same time.
- If one door is opened, there is a second locked door to prevent elopement.
- The construction of the building is hardened construction. In each patient room there is a ½ thick impact resistant third windowpane to prevent elopement by breaking a window. Other areas are secured with security glazing.

How do I learn more?

- Visit www.hca.wa.gov/snohomish-facility. HCA is committed to providing opportunities for the community to learn more and ask questions throughout the building process.
- [Watch the March 22 Town Hall](#)
- [Read the Town Hall slides](#)