

## **CARGO CONTAINER SOLUTION TO SEATTLE'S CAMPING CRISIS**

We will temporarily use 23 vacant empty plots of City-Owned land. Each site will have 22-25 40 x 8 x 8 shipping containers stacked in a u-shape with a roof and base. These containers are moveable, stackable, earthquake proof, already have a ladder (so they are up to fire code) and are very abundant in our area. They often end up in the waste stream.

The containers will be modeled into dorm-like lockable units. There will be 8-16 campers per container depending on the situation and size. Each unit inside the container will be 85-88 square feet each (this includes the divider walls). Two or three of the containers at each site will be used for showering, portable toilets, and cooking. Campers that are swept by the Navigation Team will be placed at a site that best matches the issues they are dealing with (whether it is drugs, mental illness, domestic abuse, ect). For example, we will not put the severely drug-addicted near the non-drug addicted and severely mentally ill.

There will be 8 employees at each site at all times. They don't necessarily need to live at the site and they will be paid an average annual salary of \$60,000. Campers will have 3-8 months (circumstantial) to live in the renovated container for free while also having a multitude of options to earn money. They can help build the containers for other sites, they can help clean the City's mess that camping has caused and/or they can do other odd jobs.

Funds will be deposited into their own account. However, they CANNOT access these funds until they exit the program with a job and enough money to secure one of the 'affordable' housing units that we have already built, and continue to build, throughout the city. I see the for-lease signs; I know there are vacancies.

They will not need funds while living at these sites because they already will have access to all the resources they need. The funds essentially serve as basically the exact opposite of a retirement fund. Funds act as individual savings accounts that are tax exempt so the individual will either lose it all if they don't exit the program or it will be held until they do.

We will also use the Washington State Apprenticeship program to train and pair campers with jobs they are capable of or are interested in. This will help meet the increased need for skilled workers that many industries are struggling with.

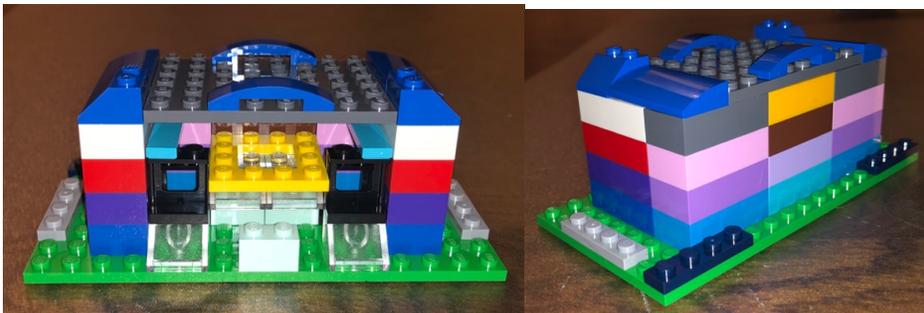
We will trade with tech companies. In lieu of a future head tax or another business tax, we will ask for their help and cooperation to set up the technological infrastructure, databases and analytics to support training and job placement for campers. I think businesses could do this much faster than the City of Seattle. We could also invite businesses to sponsor the program in return for free advertising by either naming a site after the business or advertising their name on the outside of a

container like a billboard. We could also give them a tax credit to show our gratitude for their cooperation. The projected cost is less than \$40 million and would IMMEDIATELY house all of our campers.

Some sites might be designed differently if they are for seniors or those who are disabled. The sites will not be in parks. The sites will be contained within a fence. Sites will be freely accessible to those in that specific site during open hours. Roommates would be either randomly selected or chosen upon individual preference. The units will have windows and doors that are magnetically accessible with a key card. This way we do not need to worry about keys getting lost or stolen and we will not have to change locks. Former campers will swipe in and swipe out, leaving a record of the exact time that they entered and exited to deter crime or abuse of the program.

This is not the four seasons. It is more of a college/trade school for campers that will fill the gap of current supplies and demands. This is an URGENT solution to a very long-standing EMERGENCY. I have spoken to hundreds of campers and they are ready when we are. It is very easy to be 'for or against' a policy. However, it is not easy to be against an idea unless there is a better one. I do not believe there is a better solution to this City's homelessness crisis.

Here is the 'LEGO' Prototype of one site!



**Here are the answers and questions I have received from the public regarding this idea this far:**

What's the ongoing drug testing policy?

The one issue I have with drug testing is that it is only effective to a certain extent for a certain amount of time. If people are refraining from drug use because they are being tested, I believe there is a higher likelihood that they will do drugs again once they are no longer tested. I have known a number of people who picked up a cocaine habit while on probation for their high school or college DUI's. Drugs like cocaine leave your system within few days. Drugs like marijuana or benzodiazepines, methadone, and suboxone remain in your system much longer and are often used to ease withdrawal symptoms and can result in positive drug testing results.

Will applicants also have to volunteer on the project (I.e. construction support and/or training)?

Yes. But they will be paid into a fund that will be accessible when they leave the program so that they can afford the 'affordable housing' we have already built. They will be exiting the program with a job that allows them to continuously afford that housing.

What will be the penalty for failing drug testing?

I feel that this decision should be left to the psychiatrists, physicians' assistants, nurses, and psychologists at the sites to decide depending on whether or not an individual needs prescription drugs to address mental health issues.

Why won't they pay rent or even a percentage of their wages?

They will be investing in their own future and a solution to our city's crisis. If the solution works and is successful there is a high likelihood that Seattle would be left with empty remodeled shipping container units built by the individuals living in them. We could profit by either selling the idea another city or renting them out for-profit. This way the program pays for itself and has the potential to generate revenue. Seattle's entire economy will be far more prosperous as more individuals are added to the middle class and are able to engage in active consumer spending.

How often will they report in after they leave the program to collect data of success rates and continue drug testing? Accountability is key.

Because part of this program involves partnering with companies via the Washington State Apprenticeship Program, we can collect data from the companies that train and hire these individuals. In the industrial and construction sector, drug tests are regularly conducted. I have talked to numerous companies of varying size who cannot find skilled welders or heavy equipment operators. The number one reason for employee turnover is failing a drug test. If their job and the future they have built depends on passing a drug test, I believe this will be self-policing in how it affects individuals after they exit. We could also set up support groups to help program graduates adapt to their new life.

Instead of using tax dollars exclusively, to your point of advertising, why not pitch companies to sponsor certain aspects?

This is a great idea. We could partner with companies and have them sponsor the program. We could advertise the companies on the containers in return or name the location after them. This is an excellent option.

Further—who's paying for this and how?

It will cost less than what is projected for the Fort Lawton plan, which only expects to house 600 people 8 years from now for \$90 million dollars. I am suggesting an idea could be sponsored by the City of Seattle and businesses of varying sizes to house up to 8,000-10,000 within 18 months for \$40 million dollars and has the potential to become profitable as long as everyone invests in the solution instead of the problem.

Where will they live afterwards?

They will live in the 'affordable housing' units we have already built and are continuing to build. At least 10% are vacant. They will have earned enough money to afford a deposit, first month's rent, last month's rent and a job showing current employment.

Is there a transition team with case managers to help them get placed into permanent low-income housing?

Yes. That is the entire point of the program.

What about crime in and near the sites?

No crime will be tolerated. Giving them the ability to lock their doors with a magnetic card and choose their roommate will secure their belongings. Magnetic cards will be used to swipe in and out which means there is a record of the exact time every individual swipes in or out.

How do you enforce rules to keep everyone safe?

You have 8 on-site employees at each site. They are not self-governed. They are like any other building. You have to follow the rules or you get evicted.

Where will the sites be located?

23 sites of vacant unused excess city owned land. There is a lot of it.

What consequences will there be to the people who refuse your solution and choose to live on the streets?

I have talked to hundreds of them and I have visited over a hundred of the camps. That is the reason I have not been able to knock on that many of your doors yet. I first needed to pitch this program to them to make sure it was feasible. They are ready and they are calling and texting me about it every day. They are also registering to vote. They want to be included. It is the fake campers that are selling the drugs and leasing the tents that are running these operations and profiting from exacerbating the problem. The majority feels that they are being held hostage.

Why not just pack them into the containers and then ship them out of the country?

That would be a major human rights violation.

Why do you insist on framing this a "camping" (camping - the activity of spending a vacation living in a camp, tent, or camper) problem?

They are at camps. They are living in tents. They are collecting rainwater or tapping the City's supply. They have generators. They know how to hack into the electric grid. Most are doing drugs. They are not working unless they are dealers or trafficking and they are frequently nomadic because they keep getting swept and moving. I have run into dozens of campers at up to 4 different camps within two months. This lifestyle is very exhausting. I don't like to go camping. Some do. The solo campers are usually veterans and you don't find them easily. They are far away from the group as hidden as they can be. That is camping.

My suggestion would be to mirror that as it's successful and focused on teaching to fish. Here are some things to consider: liability insurance, pets, children, background checks (are the locations close to schools, will there be offenders) etc.

Yes. Teach them how to fish and inspire them to want to learn if they don't want to. That is the entire point! If we keep giving them fish they will not pick up the fishing pole. If we give them a pond and a pole but no fish, they are going to NEED to learn how. If a fraction of them don't want to learn, fine. They will learn by watching those who do and succeed. Then, I think they will pick up the fishing pole.

Lastly, if this isn't done in partnership with KC Public Health and Harborview you may be shortchanging yourself from their vast experience dealing with the types of 'campers' you state will be 'grouped' together. You'll very likely need a few skilled clinicians (well above \$60K a year). The resources the current sites take just thru Medic One responses is pretty large. I appreciate that you invited feedback, disagreement and solutions.

This is a great point. I considered this, but remember it is an average. While people need experience, I believe that can come in a variety of forms. We could use medical students and partner with schools. We could use residents and partner with hospitals. We could conduct groundbreaking studies during the program and not before or after. We could also hire the first campers to successfully exit the program (they would be drug tested) and they would be very qualified to help people given they know the situation they are going through. If you go to any rehab, you will find that the staff is often composed of recovering addicts.

Why are you proposing putting drug addicts & mentally ill folks in residential neighborhoods?

I am not. There are many parcels that are not in residential neighborhoods. The ones in residential neighborhoods could be for those who are disabled, are veterans, are fleeing domestic violence and do not have a drug addiction or mental illness. There are more than 23 vacant lots right now.

Also, how do you propose getting all campers to comply?

This is what I have spent the last few months doing. I've asked them and pitched the idea before presenting the details to the public. They will comply. They love the idea.

Cooling/Heating: This is a great point. The containers will be renovated so they will have windows. I did a great deal of research on this prior. One of the companies that we could contract with I found on Craigslist back in January. I called the owner, Al Hayes on a Sunday at 7:45. The company is called Ocean Cargo Inc. They know how to do anything and everything to these containers. Shipping containers do get hot when they are placed in the sunlight, but it mostly has to do with whether the light waves hitting the container are reflected or absorbed. Some possible ways to address this are:

1. Putting a tent or hanging roof over the structure
2. Painting the tops and sides white
3. Putting a thin layer of mirrored plexiglass (there is a great very low-cost vendor in auburn who can route it into any size) and using mirrors is a developing technology that can maximize solar power (this might be more expensive, but would be more sustainable).
4. We could use a combination of solar and electric power to generate the electricity to heat the containers in the winter. They are also water-proof as they are designed to keep water out.

Access to Transportation:

Another excellent point! I know that companies like Amazon and Microsoft do have scheduled private buses that pick their employees up every morning in Seattle and drive them to Redmond or Bellevue. Further, the parcels listed are suggestions. I have found at least a dozen more and have also been contacting WSDOT to see whether or not we could coordinate this plan with them and maybe even build a prototype in the coming months to test it out before rolling it out on a larger scale. Anonymous city employees have told me that the Mayor is basically holding the City's vacant land hostage for years now but no one knows why and her office will not tell me. Further, while it is certainly necessary to have these sites located in areas that are accessible, I feel that there does need to be a balance between protecting children, families and local businesses from having the sites that house the most 'at-risk' individuals in close proximity. However, those who can be easily

rehabilitated (just out of luck, women and children fleeing domestic violence, veterans struggling to rejoin society after returning from war) could be placed in sites located on parcels that are very accessible to everything.

#### Cost:

Another great point! One thing I want to highlight is that I over-estimated this cost. The projected cost more than doubles the cost for a container to account for renovations. It might cost more. In fact, it is almost certain to cost more. That is why I DOUBLED the cost I had projected. With my metrics, the cost would be \$20 million. So I doubled it again. That left me at \$40 million dollars.

#### Staffing:

Once again, excellent point! I do not think we would need 8 people overnight. There would be structure to these sites (i.e. a curfew for weekends and weekdays). At a rehab, staffing goes down at least 50% during evenings. The 60k is an average so +/- \$30,000 depending on experience. We could use volunteers and those at existing non-profits. We could also use medical students. Students seeking a PHD could use this project as a basis for their thesis. We could partner with hospitals too. We could even partner with the Fire Department and SPD applicants and incorporate it into their training.

#### Sustainability/Environment:

One thing I really learned visiting all of these camps is that they really do not have the resources at any of the camps to stay clean and sanitary. They are given plastic trash bags from organizations, but they don't even have a bin or a can to put them in so they pile them up. Then the rats come and break the bags. They also do not have a port-a-potty. There is not a single camper I have talked to that has not asked me why someone will not give them a containers or a port-a-potty. The Navigation Team and I agree on this. I have had a lot of interaction with the Navigation Team because I get a phone call from either one of the Navigation officers or one of the campers every time there is a sweep now and we often show up at the same time. Just a few days ago I was visiting a camp and one of the campers asked me if it would possible to build a garden or have a greenhouse so they could have plants, be surrounded by nature, and learn about sustainable farming. Absolutely I said.