

2026 Shelter Expansion Council Bill (CB) 121184

Finance, Native Communities and Tribal Governments Committee

March 30th, 2026

Mayor's Office: Policy & Innovation



City of Seattle

Goal: 1,000 new units of shelter and emergency housing in 2026

Seattle is entering a period of major activity—from a busy summer season to FIFA 2026.

We must accelerate shelter expansion for more people to have a safe place indoors.

Issue Identification

- Service providers are burdened with navigating permits, negotiating lease terms, and finding land suitable for standing up new shelter programs.
- Many service providers lack background in real estate and working with brokers.
- Typical microshelter programs exceed 18k square feet, ranging from 20k to 55k square feet.
- 7-9 months of delay can occur just in site selection, permitting, and negotiating lease terms.



Policy Overview

Legislation that allows the Finance & Administration Services (FAS) Director greater flexibility in signing lease agreements relating to shelter programs.

- Increases the square footage limit from 18k square feet up to 65k square feet.
- Removes cost per square foot cap to allow market costs. The existing limit is tied to inflation and would otherwise be capped at \$9.50 per square foot.
- Enables the City to lease up sites and do initial prep work for raw land.

Impact: This would allow the city to select and prepare sites quickly to be turned over to shelter operators and significantly expedite the opening of new microshelter programs.



Average Square Footage of Active Microshelters

Table 1: Current micro-modular shelters*

Site	Square Feet	Units	District
Camp Second Chance	30,000	69	1
Georgetown	30,000	45	1
Henderson	24,500	42	2
Interbay	37,000	76	7
Maple Leaf	22,000	40	5
New Rosie's	21,000	37	5
Olympic Hills	22,000	45	5
Southend	21,500	40	2
TC Spirit	12,000	24	3
True Hope	13,500	33	3
Raven	8,500	22	6
Brighton	6,200	15	2
Junction Point	55,000	85	5
Whittier Heights	7,000	15	6
Average:	22,157	588	

*This list does not include the Nickelsville Central District or Northlake sites, as those two shelters operating under a different model than what is being proposed in the transmitted legislation.

Current process takes ~ 9-12 Months



Streamline provider selection

City selects service provider

Shift site preparation from provider to City

City gets sites to 'raw land'

- Site Selection
- Site Development
- Provider
- Selection
- Community Engagement

IDT-built process shrinks this to ~3-5 months

★ Shelter legislative package is **key** to unlocking this new process

City Sites Secured

City gets sites to 'raw land'

Develop site plan

Permitting & utilities coordination

Selects contractor to build site

Site development

Final inspections

HSD Selects Service Provider

Service Provider mobilizes

Operations begin

Community Engagement Site Selection

Community Engagement Design

Good Neighbor Agreement

- Site Selection
- Site Development
- Provider
- Selection Community Engagement



Questions and Discussion

Mayor's Office: Policy & Innovation



City of Seattle