



Peter Browning

Commissioner, Skagit County

Lisa Janicki

Commissioner, Skagit County

Ron Wesen

Commissioner, Skagit County

Bill Aslett

Mayor, City of Burlington

Peter Donovan

Mayor, City of Mount Vernon

Julia Johnson

Mayor, City of Sedro-Woolley

Matt Miller

Mayor, City of Anacortes

August 12, 2024

Mayor Peter Donovan
City of Mount Vernon
910 Cleveland Avenue
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

RE: Skagit Friendship House Funding Request Letter of Support

Dear Mayor Donovan,

The North Star Leadership Team writes to support the Skagit Friendship House funding request through the City of Mount Vernon Affordable Housing Sales Tax Grant. The funding will provide needed support for ongoing operations at the Skagit First Step Shelter (SFSS), a low-barrier, housing-first facility providing 45 pallet cabins for emergency housing in the City of Burlington.

[North Star](#) is a community wide effort bringing together local government, behavioral health and housing providers, and the nonprofit community to provide effective care and services to those who need it most. Our public-private partnership has been incredibly successful in securing resources and implementing solutions to tackle some of the most complex issues facing Skagit County. We recognize there is a large need for shelter space in our community and SFSS is an important piece of the shelter community in Skagit. SFSS provides housing to homeless individuals regardless of substance abuse, mental health, medical issues, or other trauma-induced situations and in 2023 the facility was able to successfully transition 59 individuals into permanent housing. North Star supports SFSS because of its record of success in our community with the populations who need it most.

SFSS is the only available shelter facility in Skagit County with a housing-first model and provides first responders with a place to drop off individuals in need of immediate housing. First responders have testified to the importance of having a resource like SFSS in our community and how vital it is to be able to transition homeless individuals into permanent housing. For first responders the alternative to a shelter like SFSS would be to drop off chronically homeless individuals in a hospital emergency room or the jail, both of which are much more expensive and take up needed space and resources for the intended users. In 2023, first responders dropped off 308 individuals for shelter at SFSS. Of the 308 drop offs, 175 were from either the Mount Vernon Police Department or Mount Vernon Integrated Outreach Services.



www.northstarskagit.org

In order for North Star to achieve its goal of reducing homelessness in Skagit County, we need facilities like the Skagit First Step Shelter to provide space for the chronically homeless population in Skagit County. The facility has seen excellent success with its shelter model in our community and we strongly support their funding request from the City of Mount Vernon.

Sincerely,

NORTH STAR LEADERSHIP TEAM




Peter Browning, Commissioner
Skagit County




Lisa Janicki, Commissioner
Skagit County



Ron Wesen, Commissioner
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