

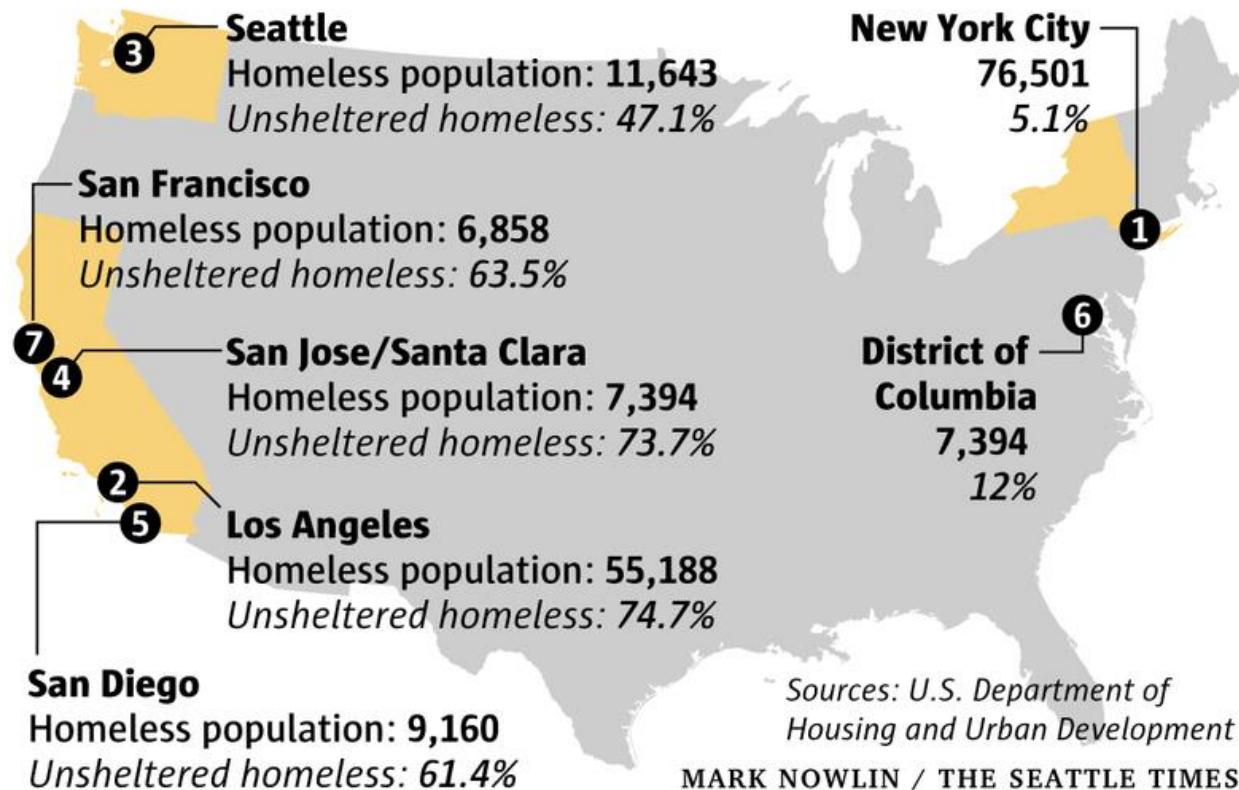
# Challenges and Opportunities Designing for the Formerly Homeless



# Seattle is third in U.S. for homeless population

Seattle-King County has the third-largest homeless population in the U.S. in 2017, as it has for several years. Seattle, like other booming West Coast cities, saw a rise in homeless people sleeping outside.

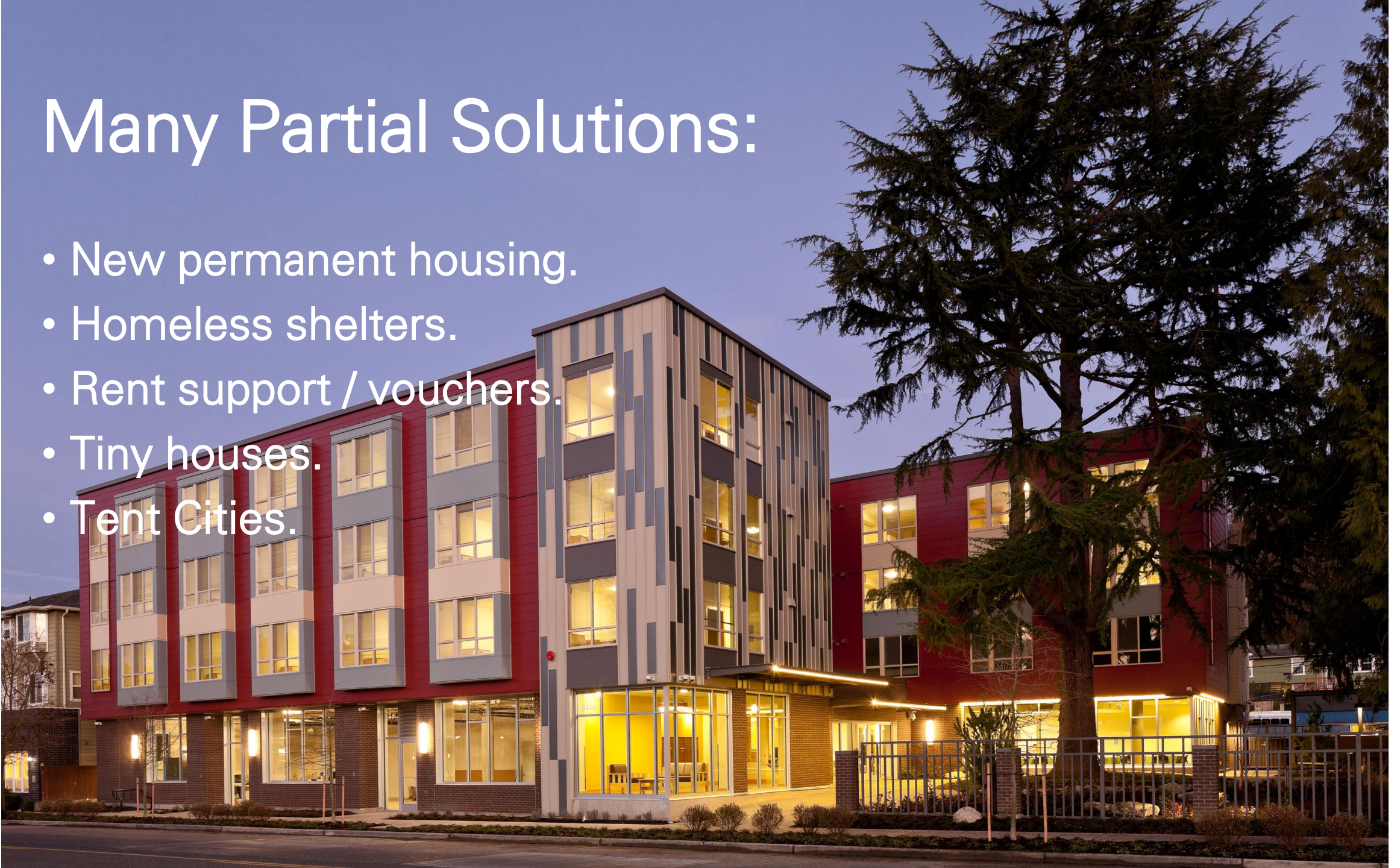
## TOP 7 CITIES WITH MOST HOMELESS POPULATION





# Many Partial Solutions:

- New permanent housing.
- Homeless shelters.
- Rent support / vouchers.
- Tiny houses.
- Tent Cities.







New Permanent Housing



# Housing First

- Concept developed by DESC, Skid Row Housing, Pathways to Housing.
- Accept Formerly Homeless “as-is”.
- Stabilize people’s mental and physical health after they are housed.
- Help people transition away from life on the streets.
- Work towards achieving long term mental health or addiction recovery goals.
- No time limit on the process.





# Transition from Homelessness

- 24 Hour Clinical Staff.
- Respite rooms to help people in crisis.
- Temperature regulation – limiting temperature controls.
- Difficulties with plumbing and water use.
- Preventing misuse of ovens.



# Outdoor Space

- Extremely important for this population.
- Accommodate smoking.



- Multiple small seating areas.
- Provide a small sheltered area.
- Multiple access points – avoid choke points.

# Accessibility

- Poor health often leads to reduced mobility.
- Homeless population aging.  
Average age over 50
- Grab bars at toilets on 100% of units.
- Accessible sinks on 100% of units.
- Audio / visual alarms in 25% of units







# Community Spaces

- Try to draw out people from units.
- Build community.
- Allow clinical staff to interact with residents.
- Locate staff offices adjacent to community spaces.



# Storage

- Most arrive with few possessions, but possessions are valued.
- Provide built in storage shelves for small belongings – so belongings can be stored in sight.
- Do not provide storage lockers.
- Temporary storage for belongings for people in transitions.





# Homeless Shelters



# Shelters

Shelter design has unique limitations.

- Usually adaptive re-use of existing buildings.
- Often in “non-leasable” spaces.
- Severe budget constraints.
- Shelters are used by a high volume of people.
- Many regulations limit use.







# Design Features

- Very durable materials – epoxy flooring.
- Engineered attachments for counters, grab bars, partitions.
- Maximize ventilation and drainage.
- Maximize light – but control light in sleeping areas.
- Open spaces with lines of sight if possible.
- Provide secure storage space or containers for belongings.



# Code Barriers for Shelters

Building Code change to classify shelters as residential occupancy. This adds requirements:

- Typically triggers requirement for structural improvements in existing buildings
- Full NFPA-13 sprinkler system.
- Upgraded smoke detector and fire alarm system.
- One-hour rated fire partitions around sleeping spaces.
- Most existing spaces CANNOT be used as shelters without expensive modifications.







# Seattle Response

- City of Seattle has recognized the barriers to providing shelter.
- Emergency Shelter Draft Director's Rule dated 4/3/15.
- Maximum of 50 people.
- Limited hours of operation.
- Overnight fire watch.
- No cooking.
- Smoke detectors required.
- No smoking, drug use, drinking.
- Notify fire department of use.



# Fire / Life Safety versus Living Unsheltered?

