North Star Joint City Councils, Mayors, & County Commissioners Meeting Agenda

Nov. 6, 2025 | 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
In-person: Skagit County Public Health Department,
Chinook Conference Room, 301 Valley Mall Way, Suite 110 in Mount Vernon

You can attend in person or remote through Zoom by telephone 1 (253) 215-8782, Meeting ID: 871 8000 1980, Code: 143573 or: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87180001980?pwd=eEVGUGkxZ3NkQkhYSnhBMEo2RTQrdz09

Meeting Goals:

- Discuss next steps for joint regional projects utilizing opioid settlement funds.
- Review updates on the draft Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and discuss next steps.
- Explore 2026 joint meetings & collaboration ideas.
- Share updates across jurisdictions.

1. Dinner & Networking *(15 minutes)* – 6:00 p.m.

2. Welcome & Agenda Overview *(10 minutes)* – 6:15 p.m.
- Call to order and roll call
- Meeting goals and agenda overview

3. Public Comments *(5 minutes)* – 6:25 p.m.

4. Opioid Settlement Funds –Joint Regional Proposals *(30 minutes)* – 6:30 p.m.
- Recap progress to date
- Discuss proposed next steps for fund allocations

5. Draft Interlocal Agreement (ILA) - Formalizing North Star (20 minutes) – 7:00 p.m.
- Review updates from legal review
- Discuss final details & plans for council action

6. 2026 Joint Meetings *(15 minutes)* – 7:20 p.m.
- Gauge interest in joint meetings for 2026
- Review and discuss proposed collaboration Ideas

7. Roundtable: Jurisdictional Cross-Sharing *(20 minutes)* – 7:40 p.m.
- Updates from City Councils, Mayors, and County partners

8. Summary & Next Steps *(5 minutes)* – 7:55 p.m.
- Review action items and adjourn meeting

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, THE CITY OF ANACORTES, THE CITY OF BURLINGTON, THE CITY OF SEDRO-WOOLLEY AND SKAGIT COUNTY FORMALIZING THE NORTH STAR COLLABORATIVE

This Agreement is made and entered into pursuant to the authority provided to each party by state law including but not limited to Chapter 39.34 RCW (Interlocal Cooperation Act), between the City of Mount Vernon, ~~WA~~ a municipal corporation of the State of Washington; the City of Anacortes, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington ~~WA~~; the City of Burlington, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington ~~WA~~; the City of Sedro-Woolley, a municipal corporation of the State of Washington ~~WA~~; and Skagit County, a political subdivision of the State of Washington; collectively referred to as "the Parties".

RECITALS

WHEREAS homelessness, housing instability, and behavioral health challenges have long impacted Skagit County, and;

WHEREAS, in July 2022, the Skagit County Commissioners and the Mayors of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley signed the "*Skagit County North Star Project Call to Action*" (Exhibit A), committing to a collaborative public-private partnership to evaluate and improve systems of care; and

WHEREAS, since July 2022, these elected officials have worked together informally as the North Star Leadership Team, and in partnership with City Councils, acting on behalf of all Skagit County residents; and

WHEREAS, the North Star Leadership Team adopted the "*Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being*" as a shared planning framework and committed to using data-driven strategies to improve outcomes for residents; and

WHEREAS the North Star Leadership Team is committed to working together to develop strategies and gather information to help inform their legislative authorities and support coordinated, data-informed decisions that reflect the needs of the people they serve; and

WHEREAS, RCW 39.34.030(4) allows for the creation of joint boards to administer collaborative efforts, provided that all participating public agencies are represented and no separate legal entity is formed; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that a joint and cooperative undertaking to coordinate services, pool resources, and connect fragmented systems across jurisdictions improves the delivery of services, enhances outcomes, and has more impact; and

WHEREAS, formalizing the Parties' participation as North Star will enhance our ability to collectively address homelessness, housing instability, and behavioral health challenges – complex issues that affect all our communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

I. PURPOSE: The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a strategic framework for regional collaboration among the Parties to address homelessness, housing instability, and behavioral health challenges, including mental health and substance use disorders. This framework supports a coordinated, systems-level approach focused on measurable outcomes, transparent reporting, shared data, aligned policy, and coordinated investments.

The Parties acknowledge that solving homelessness, housing instability, and behavioral health issues in our communities requires strong, engaged ***leadership*** from all levels of government.

II. VISION:

We envision a Skagit County where:

1. No one in our communities has to live in their car or on the street, and everyone has access to safe, stable housing.
2. Everyone has access to timely, effective, and coordinated behavioral health services, including prevention, crisis outreach, response, intervention, treatment, and long-term recovery support services.
3. Key partners and the community know about North Star and are engaged in fulfilling the vision.

III. OBJECTIVES:

To achieve this vision, the Parties will implement the following objectives:

1. Reduce unsheltered and chronic homelessness by facilitating affordable housing and using evidence-based solutions.
2. Improve coordination across jurisdictions between housing and behavioral health systems.
3. Prioritize prevention alongside urgent services, such as crisis response and stabilization.
4. Coordinate inter-jurisdictional work to ensure crises are addressed effectively, humanely, and with dignity.
5. Build a recovery-oriented community that balances urgent needs with early, cost-effective prevention, long-term support and strong community connection.
6. Coordinate local policies and resources to maximize collective impact.
7. Strengthen joint legislative advocacy at the state and federal levels.
8. Use data to track progress, ensure ongoing improvement and promote transparency.
9. Include the voices of people with lived experience in program development, implementation, and evaluation.

IV. COMMITMENT AND SCOPE OF WORK:

The Parties agree to:

1. Align strategies, local policies, funding priorities, and resources across systems and agencies to support common interests and maximize impact whenever practical and feasible.
2. Collaborate on regional strategies, policy recommendations, legislative asks, funding requests and advocacy whenever practical and feasible.
3. Coordinate planning and service delivery across areas such as housing, land use regulations, comprehensive plans, co-response programs, and recovery support services.
4. Promote a recovery-oriented system of care that supports long-term recovery beyond acute treatment, addressing the needs of all age groups, including youth, young adults, families and older adults.
5. Coordinate investments in prevention and long-term support where the investments make the most impact and lead to meaningful outcomes. Ensure a balance between prevention, urgent services, early support, and transition services.
6. Implement shared data systems, common measures, and public dashboards to support informed decision-making, accountability, and ongoing improvement.
7. Promote transparency through inclusive decision-making and regular reporting. Develop an annual report that highlights accomplishments, challenges, and future priorities, and acknowledges the Parties' opt-out provisions.

V. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The governance shall be through the Leadership Team ~~a~~is the primary coordinating body, providing strategic direction and collaborative oversight for this initiative. The Leadership Team is composed of the mayors of the four cities and the county commissioners (one County Commissioner will be appointed to serve).

1. Each Party will appoint one voting member and one alternate. Alternates may vote only in the absence of the voting member.
2. The Leadership Team may establish workgroups or advisory bodies to ensure that individuals, professionals, people with lived experience, or entities with relevant subject matter expertise contribute knowledge and ideas.
3. Recommendations will be made by consensus. If, after good faith efforts, a consensus cannot be reached on a decision, any Party may formally object, thereby exercising its right to veto the proposed action. If a Party is absent with notice, a minimum of three members must be present to proceed.
4. The Leadership Team may adopt bylaws to guide its operations.

VI. NON-DELEGATON:

Commented [NT1]: I find this confusing? Is the leadership team the governing board, or is each city appointing a different voting member? Should this be each mayor is a voting member, but the parties may authorize one alternate each?

Commented [MM2R1]: Nikki, yes the leadership team is the governing body. I made an edit to make that clearer. Please feel free to propose alternative language.

Commented [NT3]: To the legislative bodies? If the County Commissioners are all on the leadership team, are they alternating meetings so as not to create an OPMA issue?

Commented [MM4R3]: Only one County Commissioner will serve on the leadership team - with an alternate appointed.

This Agreement does not create a separate legal entity or delegate any decision-making authority of the Parties. The North Star Collaborative is purely advisory. **All funding, policy, and contractual decisions remain solely with each party's legislative authority.**

VII. TERM & TERMINATION:

This Agreement takes effect upon the last Party's signature and remains in effect until terminated by written agreement of three or more Parties, or automatically after three years of inactivity. Any Party may withdraw with 30 days' written notice.

VIII. TREATMENT OF ASSETS AND PROPERTY:

No fixed assets or personal or real property will be jointly or cooperatively, acquired, held, used, or disposed of pursuant to this Agreement. There is no financing provided for the operation of the Leadership Team and no budget provided by this Agreement.

IX. INDEMNIFICATION:

Each party agrees to be responsible and assume liability for its own wrongful and/or negligent acts or omissions or those of their officials, officers, agents, or employees to the fullest extent required by law, and further agrees to save, indemnify, defend, and hold the other party harmless from any such liability. It is further provided that no liability shall attach to any party by reason of entering into this Agreement except as expressly provided herein.

X. CHANGES, MODIFICATIONS, AMENDMENTS AND WAIVERS:

The Agreement may be changed, modified, amended or waived only by written agreement executed by the Parties. Waiver or breach of any term or condition of this Agreement shall not be considered a waiver of any prior or subsequent breach.

XI. SEVERABILITY:

In the event any term or condition of this Agreement or application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other terms, conditions or applications of this Agreement which can be given effect without the invalid term, condition, or application. To this end the terms and conditions of this Agreement are declared severable.

XII. ENTIRE AGREEMENT:

This Agreement contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties. All items incorporated herein by reference are attached. No other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this Agreement shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the parties hereto.

XIII. COUNTERPARTS:

This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, and in such event, the counterpart signatures shall be assembled and shall together constitute a complete agreement.

XIV. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. This Agreement shall be deemed to be made and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington jurisdiction and venue for any action arising out of this Agreement shall be in Skagit County, Washington.

2. The captions in this Agreement are for convenience only and do not in any way limit or amplify the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Agreement has been executed by each party on the date set forth on each signature page.

Dated: this ____ day of __________, 2025

APPROVED:

CITY OF ANACORTES

____
Matthew Miller, Mayor

Approved as to Form:

____
_______, City Attorney

Attest:

____
__________, City Clerk

Dated: this ____ day of __________, 2025

APPROVED:

CITY OF BURLINGTON

____

Bill Aslett, Mayor

Approved as to Form:

____

________, City Attorney

Attest:

____

___________, City Clerk

Dated: this ____ day of __________, 2025

APPROVED:

CITY OF MOUNT VERNON

____
Peter Donovan, Mayor

Approved as to Form:

____
________, City Attorney

Attest:

____
____________, City Clerk

Dated: this ____ day of __________, 2025

APPROVED:

CITY OF SEDRO-WOOLLEY

____
Julia Johnson, Mayor

Approved as to Form:

____
Nikki Thompson, City Attorney

Attest:

____
Kelly Kohnken, City Clerk

DATED this _____ day of _______________, 2025

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON

____
Lisa Janicki, Chair

____
Ron Wesen, Commissioner

____
Peter Browning, Commissioner

Attest:

____
Clerk of the Board

____
County Administrator

Approved as to form:

____
Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Approved as to indemnification:

____
Risk Manager

Approved as to budget:

____
Budget & Finance Director

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VI. NON-DELEGATON:

North Star

Joint City Councils, Mayors & County Commissioners Meeting

November 6, 2025

North Star
All Skagit Thriving

Dinner &
Networking
6:00pm - 6:15pm

Call to Order

Welcome & Overview

Meeting Goals

- Discuss Next Steps on Opioid Settlement funding proposals.
- Review updates on the draft Interlocal Agreement (ILA).
- Explore 2026 joint meetings & collaboration ideas.
- Share updates across jurisdictions.

Opioid Settlement Funds - Next Steps

Goals for Today

- Share city discussions to date.
- Provide additional program detail shared with some councils.
- Financial update.
- Seek direction on process and timeline moving forward.

Background - Recap

- As of June 2025 - $2.6 million received from eight settlements in all jurisdictions.
- Funds may be used for opioid abatement and recovery efforts.
- Joint regional proposal includes funds received prior to June 2025.
- Proposal excludes recent payments and most recent settlements with manufacturers and the Purdue & Sackler Family.

City Council Meeting Updates

Jurisdiction	Meetings
Anacortes	Sept. 15
Burlington	Sept. 11 Sept. 25
Mount Vernon	Sept. 10 Sept. 17
Sedro-Woolley	Sept. 10 Oct. 8

Feedback from City Councils

Anacortes	• Interest in regional collaboration and in supporting all three program areas. • Looking for a model that would clearly outline outcomes and deliverables.
Burlington	• Two City Council meetings, with the second focused on more detailed about each of the proposed projects • Appears to be interest in collaboration, and Councilmembers specifically requested additional information on bridge housing.
Mount Vernon	• Following 2nd discussion, appears to be support for three projects, along with interest in collaboration. • As in Anacortes, Councilmembers expressed desire to assess funding as they work through their 2026 budget.
Sedro-Woolley	• Most interested in STAR Center.

Options for Joint Investments

Projects Requiring 2-Year Commitment

- Detox Bridge Housing
- Additional Recovery Housing

One-time Investment Opportunities

- Supplement start-up funds for the STAR Center

Options for Regional Investments

Proposed allocation of the $2.6 mil:

Joint projects - 80%

City -specific allocations - 20%

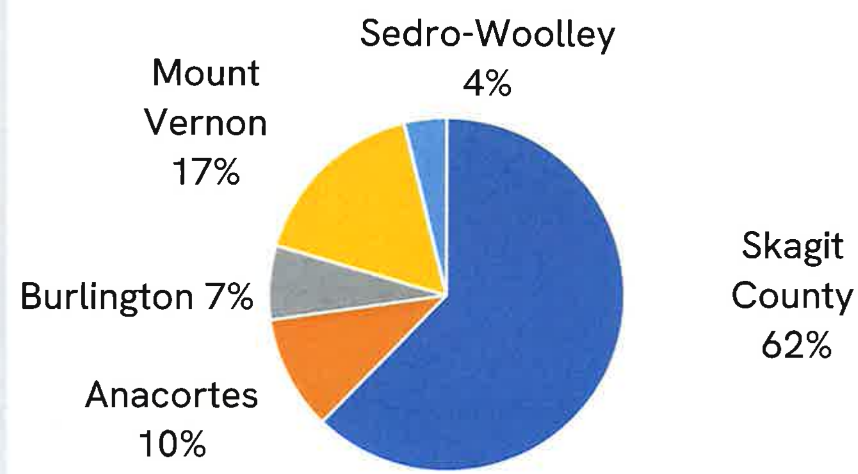
Priorities:

Skagit STAR Center Start-up

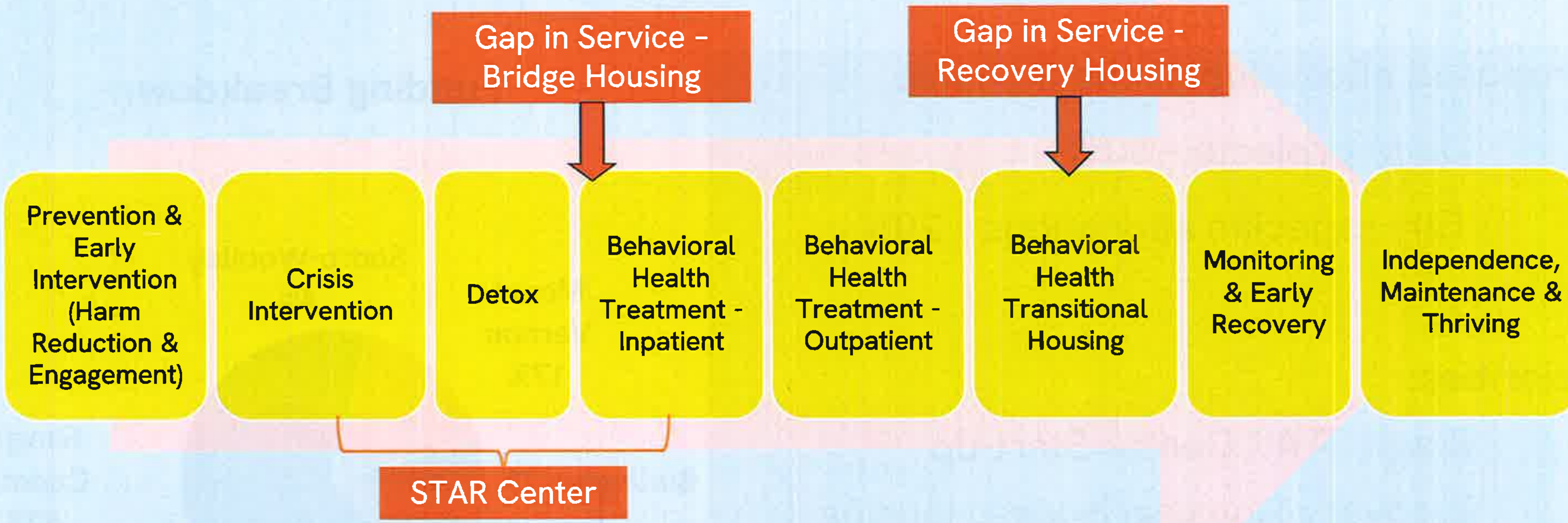
Recovery Housing/Bridge Housing

Recovery Support Services

Funding Breakdown



Behavioral Health Treatment & Recovery Continuum



- 22% of the estimated 800+people in the Housing Interest Pool waitlist have an SUD related condition.
- Medicaid data tells us that 15% of low-income adults have a substance use disorder.

STAR Center - Funding Detail

Unit	Crisis Stabilization	WM - Detox	Co-occurring Treatment
Primary Revenue Source	Jan-Jun '26: MCOs (insurance plans) July '26: BHASO	MCO billings BHASO for uninsured	Primarily MCO Billings
1st Year Start-up Needs	$1.7 million	$900,000	$400,000

STAR Center Projected Timeline

- Substantial Construction Completion in 2025
- Ribbon cutting December 16, 2025
- Move in expected Feb 1, 2026
- Pioneer is Contracting with insurers now
  - Balancing starting ASAP with financial/operating sustainability and opening at full capacity
  - $1.3 million of $3 million start-up has been secured
  - Working towards a Feb/March opening date; contracting and hiring are biggest risks to timetable

Settlement Revenue Updates

- Original request tied to settlement funds received through mid-2025: $2.6 million
- Collective funds now $2.995 million, not including Purdue/Sackler, estimated at $1 million
- Total future funds: $6.25 million

Updates, Timing & Next Steps

- **Sep. 2025** — Initial City Council Meetings & Updates
- **Oct.-Nov. 2025** — Anticipated City Council Decisions
- **Dec. 2025 - Jan. 2026** — Agreements with Cities to Pool or Direct Funds
- **Jan.-Mar. 2026** — Agreements with Providers & Requests For Proposals

Process - Options for Pooling Funds

1. Direct Allocation to Service Provider
2. Two-Step Council Action: Set-Aside, RFP, Final Action
3. One Step Council Action: Allocation with Specific Parameters.

Two-Step Process Example

Council Action to Set-Aside Funds

Joint RFP Process and Recommendations to Allocate Funds

Return To City Councils For Final Allocations

Next Steps & Direction Needed:

- Further Discussion
- Anticipated City Councils Action

North Star - Interlocal Agreement

Goals for tonight:

- Summarize updates made following attorney review.
- Ensure all parties share a consistent understanding of the ILA.
- Discuss final revisions as needed.
- Identify next steps.

Overall Edits Overview

- Minor legal and stylistic adjustments for clarity and consistency.
- Added specificity in legal citations (RCW references).
- Strengthened legal phrasing for enforceability and risk protection.
- Simplified and standardized wording across jurisdictions.
- Ensured consistent references to Parties, Leadership Team, and North Star Collaborative.

Summary: Intent Maintained, Clarity Improved

- What stayed the same:
  - Vision, Purpose, and Objectives remain intact
  - Collaborative and advisory structure unchanged
  - Core commitments preserved

- What improved:
  - Legal precision
  - Consistency
  - Governance clarity

Next Steps

- Final review and adoption by all legislative bodies

2026 Joint Meeting

Jurisdictional Cross Sharing

Summary & Next Steps, Adjourn