

# Group Living Advisory Committee

## Shelter Subgroup Meeting 1, Phase 3

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 4:00 – 7:00 PM

Location: Webb Municipal Building, Room 4.I.4

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### Attendees

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terrell Curtis

Michael Henry

John Hayden

Polly Kyle obo Robin Kniech

#### DENVER PROJECT STAFF MEMBERS

Andrew Webb

Kyle Dalton

Edson Ibanez

Will Lindsey

#### FACILITATOR

Meagan Picard

### Meeting Summary

#### 1. WELCOME AND CHECK-IN; MEETING AGENDA, OBJECTIVES AND HOUSEKEEPING

Meagan Picard opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and shared the meeting agenda, objectives and agreements. Participants checked in, sharing hopes they have for this meeting:

- Clear information
- Gather good suggestions
- Able to respond to specific proposals
- Turn corner to more human treatment of people who are experiencing homelessness
- Don't let other cities' approaches limit us

#### 2. PEER CITIES REVIEW

Andrew Webb presented findings from staff's review of peer cities' zoning code changes, including an observation that many cities are similar to Denver where old regulations have been carried forward and insubstantially amended over time. Peer Cities with recent shelter changes include Portland, San Jose, Los Angeles and Minneapolis.

Committee member reflections included:

- In favor of a requirement for proximity to public transportation, like in Portland
- In favor of 1 person per 200 sf, like in Minneapolis.

- Not in favor of a method that puts people who are experiencing homelessness in industrial zones
  - The committee discussed the need to review available land outside industrial areas, especially given different perceptions of what is actually available – planned for later in the agenda.

### 3. PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF SHELTER TYPES

Andrew presented current regulations and a new revised table of shelter types and related proposed DZC regulations. During initial discussion, it was clarified that emergency declarations are not the same as temporary shelters; emergency declarations allow existing shelters to expand capacity in emergency situations, and temporary shelters currently may be operated by religious assemblies for 120 days or less. Some discussion followed on the proposed change to a ZPSE instead of ZPIN process of notification and was tabled for a future meeting, along with Transitional/Community Corrections Subgroups.

Once oriented to the table, discussion and decisions followed on two changes related to smaller and temporary shelters:

1. **Incentivizing small/temporary shelters.** Currently, only religious assembly uses (places of worship) are incentivized by the allowance for a small shelter (8 or less) or temporary shelter with no guest limit (120 days or less) with very little regulation. Intent of current regulation is to incentivize smaller shelters that are very small or only operate during parts of the year with a simpler process and fewer use limitations like spacing and density. This proposal would extend similar incentives to any organization that wants to operate a shelter for 130 days or less or serve 8 or fewer guests. The committee considered potential for abuses by bad actors if extending to other types of operators and determined that this change is unlikely to do so.

**Consensus recommendation: approve change as proposed.**

2. **Population caps for temporary shelters.** Currently, religious assemblies can operate temporary shelters with no population cap. This proposal would extend that same allowance to all operators for shelters operated for 130 days or less per year. Committee members disagreed with the proposal, primarily because they believe a cap is needed to ensure that service provided is adequate for the population. However, they also do not want to limit smaller operators from being able to provide shelter. Any recommended limits will need to be vetted with faith-based operators, and staff noted that the city will likely be proactive in getting these uses permitted under new zoning rules (effectively just registering to allow for better data on where these temporary shelters are located and can be done online). The committee wanted to ensure very low barriers, including no fee for permitting these uses.

**Consensus recommendation:** A cap of 100 guests or less was determined to be the optimal population cap for temporary shelters, following what are known to be best practices in shelter provision. Unless religious assembly operators disagree (project team will seek their input), and the group agreed to forward this recommendation as their final decision on this proposed change.

#### 4. REGULATING LARGE, PERMANENT SHELTERS

The committee considered multiple alternatives for regulating large, permanent shelters, including considerations for which combination of regulations would work best to achieve committee goals. Goals were affirmed as achieving equitable distribution across neighborhoods in order to limit negative impacts within any neighborhood while increasing access to shelter services, specifically increasing capacity to meet demand for these services.

To build understanding of the current situation as well as potential impacts of different proposed changes, committee members reviewed maps of existing shelters with additional information on population density limits and availability by council district. During this process, discrepancies between DZC guidelines and reality (given emergency declarations and other issues) were identified:

- Concentration of poverty in Five Points isn't appropriately represented in this mapping exercise.
- Crossroads isn't mapped in Council District 1 because it is zoned as a transitional shelter
- Emergency Declaration is allowing far more than 200 per facility, including Samaritan House and Lawrence Street

The group recognized the need to verify the ACTUAL population numbers per facility, and staff agreed to update the Delores Project location, determine if guests are staying overnight at the Red Cross shelter, and do analysis of:

- Average seasonal numbers (Winter vs. Summer) with high and low numbers over the 200-person cap (update maps accordingly)
- Number of Emergency Declarations issued
- Number of guests bussed to central sites for daytime services (Transportation of shelter guests to and from facilities throughout the day means number of beds/guests per facility is not accurately measuring the population.)

The following table summarizes committee members' key points related to proposed alternatives for regulating large shelters – limiting their impact on neighborhoods while increasing capacity to meet the demand for shelter services.

<b>Alternative* regulations as proposed by staff</b>	<b>1. No population cap</b>	<b>2. Expand allowable zone districts</b>	<b>3. Establish new geographic buffers</b>	<b>4. Focus on incentivizing small shelters instead of large shelter regulation changes</b>
<b>Alternative regulations as tentatively recommended by Committee</b>	Do not pursue this alternative.	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Mile area</li> <li>• Major corridors like Colfax and Colorado</li> </ul>	Different size buffers for Large and Medium shelters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep 2,000 feet between large shelters &amp; no more</li> </ul>	Clarified and preferred: New proposed system should incentivize small AND medium

Alternative* regulations as proposed by staff	1. No population cap	2. Expand allowable zone districts	3. Establish new geographic buffers	4. Focus on incentivizing small shelters instead of large shelter regulation changes
			<p>than 2 within 4,000 feet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add 1,500 feet between medium shelters &amp; no more than 2 within 3,000 feet</li> </ul>	
<b>Potential to decrease/limit negative impacts</b>	Proposal raises concern that populations will continue to be served by historic centers of poverty	Helpful if feasible for providers	4,000-foot buffer would prevent the continued concentration in District 9	Helpful if feasible for providers – smaller shelters are more desirable for neighborhoods
<b>Potential to increase access to shelter services</b>		Smaller shelters along corridors like Colfax and Colorado would shelter a substantial amount of the population		Good improvement if feasible for providers
<b>Provider feasibility</b>		Providers could make use of existing buildings for small and medium shelters		Need to discuss with providers, who would likely need additional \$\$ to operate smaller shelters rather than expanding capacity at existing sites. Volunteers for shelter operations are also needed.
<b>Other regulations needed in combination</b>	Emergency declarations need to be addressed. Does a change to the definition of Emergency need to be made?	Incentivize smaller shelters	Incentivize smaller shelters: consider changing medium definition to 8-50 guests instead of 8-100	City funding?

Alternative* regulations as proposed by staff	1. No population cap	2. Expand allowable zone districts	3. Establish new geographic buffers	4. Focus on incentivizing small shelters instead of large shelter regulation changes
			Address emergency declarations	
<b>Additional information needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is Los Angeles using Emergency Declarations?</li> <li>• How many guests are being served per facility under emergency declarations?</li> <li>• Is it only weather/natural disasters?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map City and DHA owned land/properties (vacant vs developed)</li> <li>• Map impacts of allowing shelters in all zone districts along high frequency transit corridors, specifically the MX-2/2x and CMP-2 zone districts.</li> </ul>		

*\*Note: Staff also reviewed the potential for changing geographic boundaries from council districts to something else for regulating population density. No workable options could be found because all others are subject to change, just as council districts are.*

Meagan asked the group if any of these alternatives would help to *improve* the situation in high concentration neighborhoods, versus just preventing *further* concentration. Committee members seemed to think efforts to limit use of emergency declarations in large shelters (most importantly via increase in shelter capacity through smaller shelters if feasible for providers) and some way to address bussing to services (not in scope of this project – keep on bike rack) would help to make actual improvements.

5. GRATITUDE, NEXT STEPS AND CLOSE

Andrew noted that staff will gather additional information/data as discussed and produce map updates to inform next discussions on above section. Decisions on these changes will be sought at next meeting. With that, Meagan thanked everyone and closed the meeting.