

Group Living Advisory Committee – Shelter for the Homeless Subgroup Meeting #3

Date and Time: Tuesday, May 22, 2018, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Location: Webb Municipal Building

Attendees

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terrell Curtis
Michael Henry
John Hayden
Mimi Florance

DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Robin Kniech

DENVER STAFF MEMBERS

Andrew Webb
Kyle Dalton

FACILITATOR

Meagan Picard

Meeting Summary

1. WELCOME

Meagan Picard opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and shared the meeting agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Staff presentation: draft problem statement
3. Problem statement discussion
4. Next steps and close

2. STAFF PRESENTATION: DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENT

Andrew gave an overview of the draft problem statement created based on previous subcommittee discussions and staff input. Concerns were immediately raised about a lack of reflection on neighborhood impact, concentration of shelters in some neighborhoods and “housing” language used rather than “shelter”, and some assumptions were raised that needed to be clarified before diving into the problem statement.

Meagan reminded the group of the process agreements made and the agreed upon success factors then opened discussion to clarify assumptions:

- Assumption 1: It seemed to some members that there is an intent to do away with spacing and density regulations. Councilmember Kniech clarified that this is not the city’s intent. Rather, the city recognizes it’s a problem and can’t continue to operate outside the law as

written in DZC (all large shelters operating with emergency exceptions to DZC) but is not recommending a solution. Meagan reminded the group that we are trying to clarify the problems now; solutions will come next. The issue was clarified further that the problem statement does not acknowledge that concentration of poverty is a problem.

- Assumption 2: Problem statement should include more about all problems with homelessness (besides impacts to people experiencing homelessness, concentrations also increase 911 calls and unsanitary conditions). It was clarified that the focus of this group is on how shelters are regulated in the DZC. Since other issues beyond that scope are also important, a “bike rack” was started to capture those issues to share with others in the city that can work on them. Issues on the bike rack from this meeting included:
 - Non-resident service method in large shelters (buses drop off hundreds of people at one site for services) creates additional pressure and challenges in those neighborhoods.
 - Bad property/building management at various facilities creates additional negative impacts in neighborhoods.
 - Learn more about PSH in non-zoning context?
- Assumption 3: Neighborhood concerns interpreted as wanting to close shelters in the neighborhood where there is a legacy concentration of shelters and services, which the city doesn’t want to do. It was clarified that this is not neighborhood representatives’ intent; the desire is to prevent further growth where there is already legacy concentration. It was also acknowledged that we can learn from and improve that situation. The DZC-related problem is that it has been too difficult to open shelters elsewhere, so pressure stays in one area.

Also during this discussion, it was determined that goal #5 needed to be updated to add “equity across neighborhoods” to the end of the sentence for clarity of intent.

3. DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENT EDITS

- Recommended change to problem statement element #2: Barriers in DZC inhibit creation in new areas throughout the city has exacerbated concentration of legacy services.
- Recommended changes to problem statement element #3: Include these elements:
 - Spacing, density and bed count regulations have resulted in over-reliance on emergency declaration, which creates transparency problems and may result in unintended consequences
 - Council district is not the right geographic unit for density and spacing requirements (solution to consider in future: radius, census tract; consider grandfathering; consider best practices from IACH and others)
 - Bed count may not be the right unit either (solution to consider in future: person count); creates inhumane impact, such as people sleeping on mats rather than beds
 - Definition of uses is a problem (clarify in element #1?)
- Recommended changes to problem statement element #4: Add to description:
 - Clarification about religious assembly regulations
 - Separate out each component of this issue for clarity, e.g. “purpose unclear,” “method challenging,” “public meeting requirement is onerous.” Committee members noted that the public meetings are a good to have but regulations need to

be re-worked. (Solution to consider in future: consider city's marijuana code as best practice.)

- Recommended changes were not agreed upon for #5. Discussion included:
 - Active apartment buildings add to neighborhoods; not seen in PSH buildings, though the 911 call rate is high.
 - Consider: should PSH be included in spacing and density regulations? It was acknowledged that it is part of the continuum of care, but including PSH may be illegal.
 - Vulnerable populations (less than 30% AMI) live in these buildings, but legally, the city needs to be blind to “who” lives in a building, regarding race, income, health, etc.
 - Owners are obligated to ensure that services are available and attractive to residents via contract between the owner and funder, which varies based on resident characteristics (e.g. veterans, community corrections, etc.).
 - The big issue that the group honed in on was the impacts on a community as a result of the concentration of poverty, and it was noted that the Supreme Court ruled that intentional concentration of poverty in minority neighborhoods is illegal. Part of the concern is that concentration of poverty erodes neighborhood amenities like parks, grocery stores, etc. – these things go away, eroding quality of life in the neighborhood. (Suggested solution in future, related to discussion about #2 above: use census tract as the geographic unit for spacing/density.)

Further PSH discussion was tabled and will continue at the next meeting, where we will review the next draft of the problem statement and seek consensus prior to the full committee meeting.

4. MEETING CLOSING

Next meeting: Date and Time TBD: Andrew will send Doodle poll for a meeting likely during the week of June 4. When scheduled, it will be held at the Webb Municipal Building. He will also send an updated draft for review next week and will soon send a save the date notice for the public meeting on June 26.