



Homelessness Solutions Policy Framework

May 17, 2023

Goals and Principles



Our Temperament

“Innovations from well-intentioned observers from afar risk competing with the true pursuit of “rare, brief and non-recurring” homelessness.”

Source: *Technical.ly* - “The problem with homelessness ‘innovation’” – Andrew Huff



Our Approach

- We are not experts in homelessness, but studied issue extensively with impacted business leaders, residents, service providers, and unhoused individuals, while also conducting our own literature and onsite research
- We are offering a broad outline for addressing community impacts, while working to meet the diverse needs of our homeless population
- This will serve as a filter for our homeless response advocacy in the areas of *support services, shelter options, public space management and enforcement response*
- We acknowledge the competence and thoughtfulness of our local service providers and law enforcement officials and offer our perspective as support for their efforts and additional resources in meeting this community challenge

Our Process

POLICY ROUNDTABLES

Finding Solutions to the Homelessness Crisis



Brought to you by Boulder Chamber with support from Visit Boulder, and the Downtown Boulder Partnership

POLICY OVERVIEW

NOVEMBER 17 | 12-1:30P.M.
BOULDER CHAMBER

This will commence a collaborative business community effort to identify thoughtful strategies and develop actionable steps to respond to our homelessness crisis with key policy experts in Law Enforcement, Mental Health, Addiction, and Housing.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

JANUARY 27 | 4-5:30P.M.
BOULDER CHAMBER

Those in attendance will speak with law enforcement experts and receive in-depth information on strategies in place to prevent and respond to criminal behavior and safety concerns.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

FEBRUARY 6 | 4-5:30P.M.
BOULDER CHAMBER

Membership is invited to hear from civil justice advocates and legal professionals on the rights of our unhoused population, limits of law enforcement approaches, and proposed solutions to addressing the concerns addressing homelessness in our community.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

FEBRUARY 24 | 2-5:30P.M.
OFF-SITE IN DENVER

Attendees will tour Denver shelters, navigation centers, and sanctioned campsites to observe regional approaches to the unhoused crisis and engage in discussions on state-wide solutions.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

APRIL 10 | 4-5:45P.M.
BOULDER CHAMBER

We listened to your ideas. We met with numerous experts. Now, join us as we share our preliminary findings from our first four policy roundtables on Finding Solutions to the Homelessness Crisis and receive feedback from specialists in the field.



Our Goals

- **Save Lives!**
- **Eliminate Criminal Activity Associated with the Unhoused**
- **Protect our Public Spaces and Lands from Intrusion Associated with Homeless Encampments**
- **Provide Clear Pathways for our Unhoused to Receive Shelter and Support Services (so that incidence of people living without shelter in Boulder is rare, brief and non-recurring)**
- **Secure a Safe and Clean Environment that Supports a Vibrant Economy**

Our Principles

Bottom Line: In order to address public safety, concerns we need to provide homeless services

- **Save Lives!**
- **Intolerant of Homeless Encampments in Public Spaces**
- **Provide Multiple Shelter Options and Consistent Availability of Daily Necessities**
- **Provide Robust Access to Mental Health, Drug Treatment/Recovery and Employment Services**
- **Boulder Cannot Become a Homeless Magnet**
- **Support Criminal Justice System Response to Recalcitrant Individuals**
- **County, Regional and State Engagement with Programming and Financial Investment is Critical**
- **Incorporate Lived Experience Perspectives in Solutions Development**

Summary: Business Community Input Framework



Preventing Homelessness

- Be aggressive in support of initiatives that generate housing of all types across Colorado (Examples: Proposition 123 and Senate Bill 213)
- Support programs that keep residents from slipping through the cracks and losing otherwise stable housing – noting the particular need to focus on families with children
- Seek to capture at-risk individual before they become unhoused – i.e. the re-entry population
- The ultimate goal for all work with the unhoused population should be to return them to a stable housing opportunity

Activation of Spaces

- Expand events and placemaking in public space
- Encourage/incentivize for temporary uses of underutilized commercial
- Provide increase security lighting, environmental design and patrols of bike paths (including volunteers – e.g. Shared Paths)

Homeless Outreach

- Support and build-on the current continuum of homeless engagement outreach mechanisms and funding to meet identified needs
- Expand dispatchable outreach beyond that which is connected to enforcement or encampment management that is available on call to respond to needs in all of our public spaces and commercial districts
- Improve coordination between providers and impacted businesses (Example: Business response hotline and trainings)
- Track individual engagement and outcomes through an accessible *by-name list* as a condition of service offerings

Sheltering Options

- Provide 24/7 shelter options
- Analyze other pilot sheltering options: car camping / safe outdoor spaces / homeless shelter pods / tiny homes
- Follow best practices in implementation of pilot initiatives – learn from the experience of others
- Support expanded development of transitional housing that prepares unhoused individuals for a permanent housing opportunity
- Accompany all sheltering options with wrap-around supportive services - need to support the success of unhoused individuals in their housing experience while avoiding disruption to other residents

Continuum of Supportive Services

- Support community services center for the homeless
- Focus on individualized trauma-informed case management
- Support statewide and regional mental health treatment facilities – e.g. Larimer behavioral health campus
- Support the full spectrum of drug recovery services: harm reduction / drug rehabilitation / recovery
- Reduce barriers to accessing service, where appropriate – funding, behavioral challenges and criminal background

Incremental Enforcement

- Increase Safe and Managed Public Spaces Program investment and shorten encampment removal notice periods (within the limits of legal authority)
- Consider laws that elevate illegal camping to an offense worthy of immediate removal
- Address criminal record expungement through demonstrated positive steps toward personal self-sufficiency and housing security
- Evaluate other successful encampment options that allow for immediate removal to alternative supervised location (example: Chico, California)
- Ensure that law enforcement officers are treated as fully respected partners in homelessness strategy
- Support enforced consequences for business, personal property, victim crimes and repeat municipal law offenders

Avoiding the Magnet Effect

- **Compel registration for all individuals accessing services in Boulder County through the by-name list or some other widely accessible mechanism**
- **Monitor population trends through accessible tracking instrument of trends that indicate metro-regional magnet impact of service programs**
- **Adjust program admissions when a metro-regional magnet effect is identified**
- **Enforce the camping ban!**

Next Steps

As this is a policy framework document, our key next step is developing a work plan with priorities, funding resources and a timeline.

- Consider early wins - i.e. clear action steps with identified funding - a priority for demonstrating clear progress toward our goals v. needing to outline the entire plan before proceeding forward
- Advocate for the business community principles
- Participate in community review of dedicated funding to meet the comprehensive nature of our homelessness challenge
- Engage in effort to transition to a 24/7 shelter for the homeless
- Participate in the siting and development of a community services center
- Engage in developing and supporting regional mental health and behavioral health services
- Identify funding support for additional coordinated outreach responders and workforce development programs
- Engage in exploration of pilot sheltering options and advocacy for housing solutions
- Support full evaluation of criminal legal system to address any identified deficits
- Engage in update to the City of Boulder and Boulder County Homelessness Strategy

Thank You!

