

Week 4 Summary: Sheltered and Unsheltered Homelessness in Boise

Summary: This week's focus was to *identify the target number of emergency shelter beds for our community members experiencing homelessness and understand the shifting of resources and services to meet the needs of emergency shelter*. Today, we heard from Lt. Hill (BPD) and Sara Buisick (CATCH) speak about their roles in outreach for those experiencing homelessness and Annie Bacci (Corporation for Supportive Housing) who shared her shelter-needs analysis based off our current shelter data.

Opening Business:

Housekeeping: Task Force members were again asked to sign the Partner Statement of Commitment at the end of the meeting. Those that did not sign are asked to reach out to Casey or Racheal with any concerns that they have with signing the statement. We are no longer accepting recommendations for additional stakeholder interviews. Racheal is conducting interviews and the final packet of one-page conversation summaries will be presented to the task force on August 23rd. Task force members were asked to submit any location recommendations to Casey or Racheal; this will be the last week that location recommendations will be collected from task force members. Lastly, the feasibility criteria questions are continuing to be answered by city staff and experts; we plan on providing those answers next week. All task force meetings will hold a space of 30 additional minutes at the end of every meeting to hear additional concerns or address any questions regarding the task force as we move forward.

Warm-Up: Task force members were asked to write one question that they would like to see answered in today's presentations. Their questions were passed to another task force member who was asked not to answer the question, but to answer HOW an answer to that question would help in their role as a task force member. The questions and responses were collected, transcribed, and attached to this e-mail. Answers to the questions will be provided by city staff.

Presentation

Boise Police Department (BPD) and Our Path Home Outreach (OPH Outreach) presented on their experiences working in outreach efforts with those experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Here are the key points from their presentations:

OPH Outreach:

- The environment of Cooper Court is largely created by the close proximity of varying services and shelters within the area and those that are waiting for access for services. This includes those waiting for breakfast, computer access, or shower/laundry services at Corpus Christie day shelter; those waiting to spend the night or use the cooling shelter at Interfaith Sanctuary; or getting a housing assessment or requesting hygiene items at CATCH.
- Those experiencing unsheltered homelessness also gather around the area because it is safe and has close access to services. CATCH collects data on why people are unsheltered to learn from and create a better shelter environment.
- The OPH Outreach team goes to where unsheltered homeless people are and anticipates that they will stay in the Cooper Court area where they are accessing services and resources.

BPD:

- BPD has a community outreach division that achieves solutions by connecting resources, building relationships, and decreasing unnecessary police contacts.
- BPD has a bike unit who is tasked with implementing more outreach than enforcement by offering resources and access to services.
- BPD officers are trained in an intensive 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training that helps people experiencing crisis and are familiarized with numerous resources in the area.
- Licensed clinical social workers are being paired with officers to help those in crisis and a service coordination team is kicking off in 2022 where a civilian social worker and officer are paired together to focus on helping those experiencing crisis.
- BPD is ready to design strategies and a response plan to shift resources wherever they are needed and are ready to work with the emergency shelter and community surrounding the shelter to provide the most effective level of response.

Annie Bacci, from the Corporation for Supportive Housing also presented a shelter-needs analysis using current shelter data. Their key points are:

- The data collected is minimal and does not represent a comprehensive picture of homelessness as it does not account for unsheltered populations and youth/young adults that are experiencing homelessness as they largely do not use the shelter system.
- Our current shelter capacity stands at 603 total beds, not including the 142 temporary beds at the Red Lion Hotel.
- The shelter demand forecast is sited at meeting today's needs for adult-only populations experiencing homelessness, but illustrates a large gap of serving families with children.
- Annie's recommendations include creating exits to permanent solutions to decrease the length of stay at shelters to 30 days or less, increasing our investment in supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and diversion strategies in order to retain the ability to be flexible with our shelter system capacity.

Closing Activity/Announcement

Task Force members were asked to answer two questions on sticky notes.

1. What did you learn that *shifted* your initial thinking about homelessness, emergency shelter, or anything related to the topics we have covered?
2. What have you learned that you want to *implement*?

These thoughts have been recorded and are attached.

Next week, we are hearing from Interfaith Sanctuary on their current options and plan for the future facility.