

## **Shelter Better Task Force**

### **Public Input – Stakeholder Surveys**

The Stakeholder Survey process provided an opportunity for the task force members to hear from unrepresented and/or underrepresented constituencies that are stakeholders in the process of shelter siting so they may take into account additional perspectives as they move towards a final proposal.

A questionnaire was developed to understand what shelter better in Boise looks like to constituencies not represented on the task force. Over 30 invitations were sent out to stakeholders and they were given the option to respond to the questionnaire via one-hour interviews with city staff or to submit their answers in writing. Answers were collected and one-page conversation summaries were produced and compiled into this packet.

Of the 30+ invitations sent, we received 22 responses from 20 various stakeholder agencies. The stakeholder is listed below in order of their appearance in this packet:

1. Ada County Paramedics – Dawn Rae, Paramedic
2. Boise Police Department – Chief Ryan Lee
3. Boise Public Library – Heidi Lewis, Division Manager
4. Boise Public Library – Jennifer Villalobos, Branch Supervisor
5. Boise School District – Lisa Roberts and Jennifer Henderson, Deputy Superintendent and Executive Director of Boise Public Schools Foundation
6. Corpus Christi – Marc Schlegel-Preheim, Mission Coordinator
7. DHW Mobile Crisis Unit – Ellie Merrick and Belinda Dalrymple, Clinical Supervisor and Human Services Program Specialist
8. Downtown Boise Neighborhood Association – Jennifer Mauk, President
9. Idaho Homeless Coalition – Denise Caruzzi, President
10. Idaho Homeless Coalition – Executive Committee
11. Idaho Housing and Finance Association – Brady Ellis, Vice President of Housing Support Programs
12. Idaho Legal Aid – Howard Belodoff
13. Idaho Youth Ranch – Scott Curtis, CEO
14. Intermountain Fair Housing Council – Zoe Ann Olson, Director
15. Lived Experience/Expertise – Bonnie Haymaker
16. Lived Experience/Expertise – Marcee Burns
17. Salvation Army – Amber Young, Social Services Director
18. St. Luke's – Theresa McLeod, Director of Community Relations
19. TOK Commercial – Sam McCaskill, Broker
20. West Ada School District – Social Work Team
21. West Downtown Neighborhood Association – Kelley Tagg, President
22. West End Neighborhood Association – Board Response

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Dawn Rae

Organization: Ada County Paramedics

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I had heard a move was in the works before the official announcement, but didn't know of any details or solid plans

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

As a paramedic for Ada County since 2003 I have worked downtown Boise for most of my career. In addition to responding on a 911 ambulance, I was part of group that in 2011 started Ada County Paramedics' Community Paramedic program. We sought to address some of the root causes of individuals' frequent 911 use, roughly 20-25% of whom were homeless. Engagement of community stakeholders led to collaboration with those entities, providing me with a much more nuanced and robust knowledge of the challenges facing persons experiencing homelessness.

I see the negative health outcomes associated with homelessness nearly every work day. The fractured and siloed systems currently in place do not provide for improved health outcomes for vulnerable people.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Funding. Adequate funding is necessary to provide those crucial services that work to prevent homelessness, provide supportive services to those who become or are homeless, and address the concerns raised by community members. The average Ada County citizen has no knowledge of the challenges faced by those who are unhoused, it is up to those of us who do the work to find and face those challenges. There is no one program or place that will "fix" homelessness, the causes are variable and require work by both service providers and the individuals themselves. Work that requires funding, accessible supportive programs, and affordable housing options.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

The area surrounding Interfaith Sanctuary is a "hot-spot" for 911 EMS calls. Since 2017, ACP has responded to 1555 calls to Interfaith Sanctuary and Corpus Christi alone. The #1 dispatch reason is "sick person", which encompasses non-specific medical complaints. What this means to those of us who respond is that there are gaps, expensive gaps, in healthcare for the unhoused population. The solutions are multi-faceted and will require extensive collaboration and innovative thinking to address both current and future needs of a vulnerable and growing population.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

There is an impact to the 911 EMS system where unhoused individuals congregate and are sheltered. Collaborative approaches are necessary to provide staff training, integrated and responsive primary healthcare teams, and emergency response to both medical and behavioral health crises. EMS and hospital EDs are not the most appropriate delivery model for chronic medical and mental health needs. This taskforce and discussion provide an opportunity to create a patient-centered system of care for those individuals in need.

## **City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**

### ***Public Input – Stakeholder Survey***

Name: Police Chief Ryan Lee

Organization: Boise Police Department

#### **1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I have a strong connection to officers who work with constituencies experiencing homelessness and in being relatively new to my role, I've also met with key stakeholders that work within the homelessness response system. The first time I heard of potential change of the shelter site was from our bike unit who work with homeless populations and service providers. I also met with Jodi as a key stakeholder and she mentioned she was looking for a larger property that would better serve this population. But ultimately, I heard about the State St. purchase through public announcement and as we do with all developments, we will look to respond accordingly wherever the final site is selected.

#### **2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

It's a project that deals with unsheltered/sheltered homelessness and they are a vulnerable population. It's our commitment to serve and protect all community members. Those without homes end up living their private lives in public and that's where a lot of calls arise for these people that puts us in contact with them (i.e. welfare check, getting ready in the morning, etc.). They are not criminals. We care about shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing -whatever can help these people live their lives productively and valuably.

#### **3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Looking through a community lens, there are a couple of challenges regarding understanding and awareness. The community has to understand the need for this service; we may not be aware of the magnitude of this need as we go about our daily lives. We need an educational component to raise awareness of this need and of potential bias that we may hold towards this population. When I talk to people about leading drivers of homelessness, it includes domestic violence and that's not what people think. We need to understand the perception of the problem vs. the actual need; not just specifically to IFS, but for the entire homeless population.

#### **4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We need to examine all types of different models and what is going to best serve our community, recognizing that Boise is unique, and understanding that what works in one place may not be successful here. We need to establish clear metrics to deal with this problem and providing emergency shelter, and metrics for the community to see that measures the success of our model. We need to be transparent with the community and show them what success looks like. The more we involve the community, the more that they are aware of the problem and can feel that they are a part of the solution.

#### **5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

The examination of what police and public safety services we may need to provide to an increase in population density or particular area. From a broader lens, I think we need to have conversations about what does success look like and what is the goal/model we are working towards. From my past experience working in another city, one of the challenges was defining what success looks like for some of the shelter settings in a manner that was agreed upon by the community. We need to clearly define what a successful shelter looks like for those that need to access it, the neighbors, and anyone else impacted by the relocation.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Heidi Lewis

Organization: Boise Public Library

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I first heard about it probably on the news, possibly through City channels.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The Main Library has worked with Interfaith a couple of times over the last year and a half to provide additional space in the Hayes Auditorium at the Main Library for vulnerable populations/people experiencing homelessness to get out of the heat or cold during the pandemic. We have also coordinated with Jesse Tree and CATCH before the pandemic to try to provide resources for people in the Boise community. The Main Library is one of the spots selected for the Point-in-Time Count each year. The status and current services of the organizations we can refer people to is important to our work at the Main Library.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

I think the most challenging thing about this project are the misconceptions about who is experiencing homelessness in Boise and why.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

Thank you for your work on this issue so far. Your statements about working with Interfaith to pause the project and establishing the Shelter Better Task Force are appreciated. I'd want to talk about possibilities for community discussions on the variety of challenges and barriers vulnerable populations face, as well as the roles that individuals and various organizations can play to help address the outcomes and underlying causes.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

Possibly more information about where we are now (we can't go back, we can only go forward) and additional clarity about some of the options at this time versus the future.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Jennifer Villalobos

Organization: Boise Public Library

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

The local news.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The proposed shelter is down the street from the Library! at Collister that I supervise. The community that has expressed concerns about the project are library patrons. I want to make sure we are doing everything we can to provide services to people that are experiencing homelessness that are meaningful and beneficial as well as provide information to the community on why this shelter is important.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

I feel that fear of the unknown is what is challenging for the community and the reason why there has been so much pushback. I believe that there are preconceived notions of who the people are that are experiencing homelessness. I think the community is wanting assurances that their neighborhoods will remain safe places for themselves and their children. I also think there are economic concerns regarding property values.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I would want to talk about more social services/social workers for addiction and mental health as well as education for the community at large in order to get buy in. I would talk about how important it is for everyone to have access to services (healthcare, education, transportation, etc.) and if those who experiencing homelessness are sent to an "industrial district" (as has been suggested) that the access could be hindered. I would want to remind the Mayor to remind the rest of the community that there are also children involved and they deserve to live in a neighborhood with other children and schools nearby. Everyone deserves a chance or a second chance to get back on their feet.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

I feel that people want an easy answer to this issue and just because it is not easy doesn't mean that it's not worth the investment. I think there also needs to be political and economic will to fund resources which is why educating the community is so important. From an economic standpoint, we need to talk about the rising rents in Boise. Even with a full-time job, some people cannot afford rent. The same can be said if someone is on a fixed income. We need to find ways to home individuals and families. Provide incentives for landlords to take in lower income brackets and not have insane wait lists like Section 8.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Lisa Roberts and Jennifer Henderson

Organization: Boise School District

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

We heard about it primarily on the news. Where homeless shelters are placed around the city have a huge impact on our schools. We staff the schools that shelters feed into differently, in regards to the number of social services provided. That is why we want to be involved in the conversation. The staffing decision for schools, beginning in January 2022, is impacted by the decision of the shelter location. Its location helps us to focus our priorities and position our resources. One of the pieces that often gets forgotten, is that we serve both students AND parents at our schools. Families experiencing homelessness have a big impact within our school community. The sooner we know about them, the faster we can act.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

Training for our staff. Schools that serve more Title I students have more training for these services and support that our families will need. If the shelter pops up in an area that doesn't have Title I services, it would require intensive training and support for those schools. When you look at where shelter is placed, it would be logical to look at what's going on in our community schools. Community schools are a system where a lot of wrap-around services are provided to not only students, but their families, and community members as a whole. We are the biggest social provider in the state and we want to ensure that proper services are in place to take care of them.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Trying to be transparent and educate the community to welcome those at the shelter. From a district perspective, we don't want to concentrate all homeless kids in one school. We want all the kids to be exposed to diversity in our schools. In siting a shelter, we need to balance the population to ensure that all kids have the best education and experience by exposure to different populations. We also hope to have the shelter in a spot that has good transit routes and access to services. Our refugee families experiencing homelessness is an additional complicated layer and we would like to ensure that there are language services available to them.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We would ask the Mayor to have us at the table, hearing the conversation, and providing input about the services we know are in the area. Our school district's social workers that work with a wide variety of agencies are often forgotten. We need to take a deeper look at that the system and how we are all communicating with each other.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

What we haven't heard discussed is the idea of the "mega-shelter." Is that the right thing for Boise? Does it make sense, with no limitations to access to services, to have one shelter? It makes sense to have shelters be provided in areas where people experiencing homelessness are.

Who can we partner with to make improvements in the community and assist those in need? We want to be at the table to help. We want to do what is best for the children in our community.

## **City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**

### **Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Marc Schlegel-Preheim

Organization: Corpus Christi

#### **1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I first heard about the shelter siting during winter meetings with IFS and city representatives when we were running warming shelter with them. We use these meetings to check-in on our projects and Jodi mentioned that this was something they were working towards. At Corpus Christi, we serve primarily unsheltered people, but we provide daytime services to a lot of people from IFS.

#### **2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

I care about this project not only from my role at Corpus Christi, but also as a member of the Sunset neighborhood. At Corpus, the relocation certainly impacts our guests in a major way - specifically how many emergency shelter beds will be made available at the new location that are not dependent upon the guest being in a program (as not all our homeless citizens can make it in a program). We hope for the best situation for our homeless citizens, and for one that is as least restrictive and most accessible as possible. For those who can't access a shelter bed at night, they carry the cost, and so does the rest of the community. Also for those in recovery, being away from this downtown corridor is important - as IFS continues to help guests with recovery programs, it is important for them to be able to be in a new location.

#### **3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Accessibility. Will the chosen site be accessible by bus route and after the buses stop running for those that work outside of public transit hours? Will it be placed too far out where people can't seek work while staying there, or can't access the services and programs that they need? If we're considering multiple sites, the challenge will be funding and staffing for them. One of our biggest concerns (as an organization) is trying to figure out what gaps will be created when IFS moves from the downtown corridor and how will we continue to work together -working to refer people back and forth will be more difficult.

#### **4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

An important reality is that Corpus is staying put - one community worry is about homeless citizens hanging out around the new shelter location all day. Likely our unsheltered population will stay downtown where they know the area and are close to services like ours (not by the new shelter location). Also, we have to center the conversation around the homeless population, not just the new neighbors. I'm worried that we will have too few emergency beds just to appease the neighbors and that will ultimately, increase the unsheltered population. I want to reiterate my respect and admiration for IFS and the work they're doing. When a shelter enters anywhere, there is always adaption. I've heard the concentration of poverty argument with our warming shelters and it will always be the same input from every neighborhood.

#### **5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

To reiterate that with Corpus and CATCH staying put in the same corridor, it would make sense that the vast majority of our unsheltered folks to be somewhere accessible to services. For every emergency bed that doesn't exist, where do those people go? We don't want more people sleeping outside - that is harder on the people and harder on the community. And everyone who is in a shelter is one step closer to housing and services. We also have to consider those with high health care needs that are sleeping outside and ensuring that there is care for them. I can certainly think of a handful of people that fall into that category - those people that we help get off the ground in the morning, help shower, and help get into clean clothes -there needs to be place for them too.

## City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force

### Public Input – Stakeholder Survey

Name: Ellie Merrick and Belinda Dalrymple

Organization: DHW Mobile Crisis Unit

#### 1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?

We first heard about it on Facebook and the news. We've heard discussions about the move from our behavioral mental health team leadership and what the move means for our service providers and folks needing our services at the shelter. We know that IFS is full on a regular basis and would love to see the shelter system grow and include crisis services to better support those at the shelter. We are concerned about the shelter being moved away from services available in the corridor. If we're expanding the current shelter and have different access points, it takes a whole population away from the services that they need access to now. We do acknowledge the need for a bigger shelter and IFS is the one to do it as they always take our folks that need quick access to mental health services.

#### 2. What motivates you to care about this project?

Housing in general is very important to mental health and overall health. In our work, we see the positive/negative impacts of housing stability. The housing system now is strained and expansion is needed. When we look at other cities with high homeless populations, we see that once their needs aren't being met, things get out of control and it's hard to keep up. I hope Boise keeps up and helps the homeless population and community at large. Our folks that we serve are at risk of homelessness or are homeless. We are looking at an increase of this risk with the market now and if folks can't afford their rent or housing for any reason, they will be in crisis. We will see an increase of mental health crises with the decrease of stable housing.

#### 3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?

We were initially surprised at the news of the shelter relocation. As a service provider finding out the news from social media and the news, we do wish we would've been more in the loop. Although, we know it wasn't IFS's intent to fly under the radar, we think that our surprise was also felt by the community. If we are going to expand the shelter system, we have to engage the community upfront. If we put a vulnerable population where they are not wanted, they will feel unwelcome and not reach out to build relationships and connections to improve their mental health. When it comes to homeless and mental health programs, people can be afraid of what they don't understand. We have to educate the community on the ground level and increase community engagement to increase their support.

#### 4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?

It is essential to understand that the mental health crisis system and the homelessness system walk hand in hand. The more resources we put into housing first development, the better. Stable housing and supportive services have to be built in pace with population growth. The further you remove the shelter from the corridor, you have to make up for the distance by moving services into the shelter. The shelter needs to be central to and within easy, walkable access to services; somewhere the residents are seen, heard, and exist equally to others in the community. If there is a reason for moving IFS out of corridor, every neighborhood will not want them. There needs to be an understanding of expectations across the community so that the shelter guests feel welcome.

#### 5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?

We're incredibly supportive of IFS and they have been a lifesaver for 10-15 years. IFS is not a health care provider, but have been filling those shoes. We could definitely use a medical recovery center and as an example, Nampa converted an old assisted living center into a medical recovery shelter and I believe Boise would benefit from a service like that. I want to thank the City and IFS for opening rooms at the Red Lion; it's nice to know that crisis can help us be creative and convert an hotel for extra rooms for our homeless populations. IFS has been inclusive and before them, we didn't have anywhere to send all of our folks because they weren't eligible for other shelters. They have really filled the gap - we are supportive of them and want to see them be successful.



**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Jennifer Mauk, President

Organization: Downtown Boise Neighborhood Association

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

The downtown neighborhood is and has been over the years a home for much of the services provided to Boise City's homeless population and frankly, the issues that sometime arise. We believe that services for homeless are an important part of being a humane community and will continue to support our homeless in a manner that provides needed services but also minimizes the impact on livability of our residents and business owners. We are also of the opinion that the downtown should not shoulder this burden alone and would like to see other neighborhoods engage in problem solving and possible solutions. What we are hearing is that no one opposes services for the homeless, just not in their backyard.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The DBNA members vote each year on a platform of issues by which we offer support. There are three planks that are relevant to this discussion. Homelessness: Partner with the city and non-profit associations to help manage the effects of the city's homeless population. Crime/Safety: Partner with Boise City police, and other first responders to promote safety downtown Boise. City Beautification and Cleanliness: Partner with the city to create and maintain parks, green spaces, greenbelt, and public areas that are desirable and increase downtown livability.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Concerns collected via social media survey: Support for services for homeless, but not as proposed by IFS for the State St. facility, and preferably not in their neighborhoods; concern that with such a large facility there would be inadequate infrastructure to support the community (i.e. police, traffic, ems); concern about concentrating services for low-income individuals and families in one area of the city; impact on property values; safety, environmental impact and lack of control of the homeless population; and livability, Boise making the same mistakes as other cities such as Portland or Seattle.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

It is important to note that this is not just a downtown problem, it is citywide and requires a citywide solution. We concur with many of the survey respondents that concentrating services in one part of the city would create adverse impact on that community. Therefore, we will continue to support those working with the homeless, Interfaith Sanctuary and a host of others in their efforts to bring services to the neighborhoods in which they are needed.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

As for the type of facility on the State Street property, we respectfully await the findings of the task force around best practices and lessons learned from other cities and will provide input when asked and as appropriate. We applaud the City and Interfaith Sanctuary for taking the time to take input, value diversity of thought around this issue, research, discuss and formulate a path where the city continues to provide needed supports for our homeless population while valuing the interests and needs of Boise's neighborhoods.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Denise Caruzzi, President

Organization: Idaho Homeless Coalition

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

The urgent need for housing at all stages of the continuum of unhoused members of our community. Although we need a lot more permanent housing, we also need emergency housing for those awaiting suitable long-term housing. Unfortunately this may always be true; but the dearth of housing at present, and for the indefinite future, make shelter/interim housing critical in order to keep people off the streets and with a level of safety, dignity, and care.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The fear of the unknown (lack of knowledge about the truths of who and how people become unhoused); the lack of understanding about the costs, resources, methodology, reality and objectives of providing services; the individualistic character that keeps some people focused on what is best for themselves, rather than on what best serves the community (and therefore the many individuals).

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The fear of the unknown (lack of knowledge about the truths of who and how people become unhoused); the lack of understanding about the costs, resources, methodology, reality and objectives of providing services; the individualistic character that keeps some people focused on what is best for themselves, rather than on what best serves the community (and therefore the many individuals).

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

Let's work on a multi-layered, multi-option, continuous timeline for how to ensure our community's healthy, housed future. Look to needs (the successful future), then to the opportunities, and the obstacles that inhibit success. Then change the root causes, systematically. Let's use this period of visibility to educate and create better ongoing communication. Although this particular shelter conversation is highly controversial, the growing housing burdens will impact most families (i.e. they will know someone who is struggling for housing--new grads, elderly, those under-employed or unable to work). As the problem is now bigger than it has been in our lifetimes, let's use it as an opportunity.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

The framework (defined steps and phases) of the Task Force seems just right, and the City gets accolades for bringing this process forward.

Although it must be on the table, what concerns me most at the moment is the political context in which many decisions are made. Do the noisiest people in the room get to outvote the needs of the community at large? How do we protect data-driven decisions and move into action, based on them?

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Executive Committee

Organization: Idaho Homeless Coalition

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

N/A

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The increasing need for adequate, safe, supportive shelter—emergency and otherwise— as we address our historic, current, and increasingly severe, lack of affordable equitable housing. (Although not a new problem, the housing crisis is escalating exponentially.)

Hotel spaces, though currently a boon as emergency support, are not a long-term solution.

We cannot leave our friends, neighbors, fellow citizens on the street. The moral, financial, and psychological health of our community rests on the safety, security, education, and health of ALL of today's children, families, individuals.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Neighborhood acceptance of a population with whom they are not comfortable; resistance from a noisy minority.

The perceived (or factual?) concentration of poverty and low-income and permanent supportive housing in the area of consideration.

The lack of understanding/education about causes of homelessness, needs of people experiencing homelessness, and benefits to community of robust support.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We now need, and will continue to need, more—not less—emergency shelter and supportive services until we can adequately address our severe shortage of and access to affordable housing. We must not overcomplicate today's issue to the point where we don't address our immediate need for expansion of our current shelter operations. All Boise neighborhoods need to accept shelter and/or low-income housing so that vulnerable people are integrated into areas of opportunity. We need to acknowledge the complexity of the problem and the multi-faceted solutions it requires—along a time frame from immediate to long-term and in all categories, including emergency shelter, affordable housing, and PSH.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

Critical services that have been cut from the original Interfaith program must be provided in some other way. Services must go beyond emergency shelter to transition (including preparation for transition) into jobs, schools, sustainable lifestyles, and long-term housing.

We need more conversation/education/outreach (from sources beyond service providers) about the benefits of affordable housing in any and every neighborhood.

There must be a shift in attitude toward creating a positive healthy community (versus spending our time arguing about how to overcome the perceived negatives).

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Brady Ellis

Organization: Idaho Housing and Finance Association

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I first heard about this when Interfaith came to us and indicated that they needed a bigger space last year. With IHFA having been a financier of the current shelter (via a loan), Jodi came to us and asked if we had the ability to reinvest this and additional money into a new shelter. I knew that the plans were not only to expand the building and number of beds, but to expand the services provided. Being here locally in Boise, we've certainly seen the challenges of homelessness and support Interfaith Sanctuary (IFS). As a possible continued financier and partner, IHFA was invited to walk through the proposed site on State St.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

Our mission at Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) is to expand housing opportunity and build self-sufficiency across Idaho communities. To a large degree, this is accomplished through programs that support unstably housed persons with their housing needs. We believe our mission and goals align with those of this shelter. We also want to reinvest back into our community. For these reasons, that's why we have invested in this project and partnered with IFS and why we infuse resources into homelessness response. We feel that IFS is a good response to those on the street who need a place to stay. Shelter is not a main component, but is an integral component of our homelessness system response.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The biggest thing I've heard is a concern about the safety and security of the surrounding area and its neighbors. This conversation should not come from a perspective that shelter increases safety concerns or if it does, that there is no way of preventing or reacting to those concerns. The conversation needs to include what the solution might be for what IFS, neighborhoods, and emergency services do to help catch safety concerns at the front end. A lot of the service calls at IFS are preventative measures taken to try and help a person before things escalate. To me that demonstrates that IFS has a great relationship with emergency services and they know how to call and involve them in a way that works for everyone.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We need to think about long term housing and homelessness issues. We have to recognize that Boise is growing and not only are we challenged with the lack of housing, but the prospect of more people becoming homeless. IFS cannot afford prime downtown real estate. So, where is the opportunity to find a location that meets a balance between costs, needs, and a suitable facility? I think IFS found a good balance on State St. and that is why we supported it. It's close to downtown and services. If placed too far out, clients will not be connected to services that they need. The longer we delay, the worse our situation becomes -we have to act now.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

We need to consider what's occurred in other communities where the issue wasn't addressed soon enough. SLC had a large shelter that was met with community push back which resulted in the shelter being closed and coming up with a plan for scattered shelters and access to services being spread out. The issue of homelessness was not resolved as the focus became placating neighborhoods. Also, IHFA has an investment in the State St. property and an outstanding loan with IFS that allowed them to purchase the property. If another site needs to be purchased, the current site has to be sold, thereby tying up funds and limiting financing opportunities at a different site.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Howard Belodoff

Organization: Idaho Legal Aid

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I heard about it from Jodi when we were negotiating the Martin settlement for funding that we agreed to set up to improve shelter. I've been involved with the homeless population before we had shelter in Boise and was one of the founders of IFS and have been involved with them since they opened. I was working in homelessness since Mayor Cole's administration and helped create Community House, which is now the Boise Rescue Mission. Boise is lucky to have a manageable problem right now, but we find ourselves in a situation from a housing market that isn't affordable and we need Jodi and the work she's doing.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

IFS is performing a service for the community. With New Path, we know the city provides services for its residents and we've seen the benefits from that. BSU's study on New Path showed a cost savings of over \$2m for 40 people, imagine what Jodi is doing for 200 people. Jodi's payback to this city includes daycare, preschool, medical services, a culinary arts program, and caring for those that are medically fragile. They perform a service to Boise, what they're planning is such an improvement, and we need to have a low-barrier shelter. You can't provide services with scattered sites and have them connected to the resources that they need.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

I don't think the loud voices count for the whole community. Those coming forward to complain have preconceived notions about who the homeless are, which tend to be negative, and no confidence in the providers who can address the issue. I've sat in on Homeless Coalition meetings where they show up, don't listen, and they cannot be convinced that they're going to be okay and the crazy things they're afraid of will not happen. Homeless people used to have to leave the shelter in the morning, now the plan is to get them to stay, get them employed, and get them into programs. I don't think those loud voices speak for the community -the challenge is that you can't convince them even when we're doing things right.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I had your sign, I gave you a contribution, I always liked you on Council. I did not grow up rich and had to work for everything to get where I am and those experiencing homelessness had much less than me. We need more affordable housing. Maureen Brewer is great; there was no housing in HCD before. The Mayor has done a great job putting Racheal and Casey on the job. Keep putting people in the right direction and don't be afraid. I always believed in the right thing and helping others do the right thing.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

If you can get it done quicker, that's better. The delay can't be forever, a decision has to be made that's not going to please everyone. It's not set up to please everyone, this is set up to give everyone their two cents. I've been involved in this longer than anyone else in City Hall that I know of. It's not a law enforcement issue, it's a social issue that has to be addressed. So many reasons why people are homeless, when you talk to them, you find that out.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
***Public Input – Stakeholder Survey***

Name: Scott Curtis

Organization: Idaho Youth Ranch

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

The shelter siting was brought to my attention by our executive leadership team. They shared some information regarding the project and provided resources for us to read more about it.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

As a shelter program for youth in Idaho, we provide emergency shelter to the community every day of the year. However, we realize that we don't have the ability to assist all youth. There are youth that we are unable to serve due to age restrictions in our license, sexual offender history, or capacity issues within the shelter itself. Having more resources for the youth would be amazing for multiple stakeholders, families, the department of health a welfare, law enforcement, and so many other partners that are investing in supporting the youth in the community.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The most challenging thing for the community may be understanding the need for additional emergency shelters, the challenges with housing in Idaho, and the dangers for youth, and other under served populations such as undocumented workers, who reside in the area, with no resources to find a safe place to stay.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

It would be important to highlight the need for emergency housing for single parents, youth that age out of foster care but have no place to go from ages 18-22, and youth that are being sexually exploited.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

The importance of creating more affordable employment and employment housing opportunities in Boise.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Zoe Ann Olson, Director

Organization: Intermountain Fair Housing Council

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

Everyone, including Interfaith (IFS) and Neighborhood Associations (NAs), have reached out to me regarding the shelter siting because of my work history with Intermountain and Legal Aid. Everyone has the responsibility of addressing this as a neighbor issue because people need a place to live; we need to confirm what our vision is and how, as good neighbors, can we help? We have to be good neighbors and our mission is to affirm fair housing and part of that is making sure community members experiencing housing or cost burdens have access to community and housing in every neighborhood. While the cost of housing goes up, our wages and local commitment to housing has gone down.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

Housing Justice. If we consider housing a human right; healthcare; racial, gender, and human justice; then, we have to work with partners and neighbors to make better housing where providers and jobs are. We have enough resources to help families living unhoused and we should help IFS create housing, connect people to services, jobs, transportation, and lending institutions. NAs are concerned about the concentration of poverty. You're making poor communities bear the cost of the lack of resources to help them thrive. We need to ensure that opportunities exist in every neighborhood. Neighborhoods also need to be educated on their perceptions of the people they should be welcoming in every community.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

We have to create a political and social will. It's fiscally responsible to care about this issue. It's more expensive to help unhoused people. Studies show that what New Path is doing works and needs to be funded. We need to work at local levels, regionally, across county and state lines to be a good neighbor by sharing resources to address the issue. We need to move beyond the idea of sheltering people and work towards solutions of housing people. Affordable housing right now is being pushed further out, how can we work together to address this as good neighbors?

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

The most important thing is to re-frame "Shelter Better" as "Housing Better." We need to make sure everyone has housing and abundant resources. Again, this is fiscally responsible and responsible from a human rights perspective to make sure everyone has secure and stable housing. We need to educate neighborhoods as to why this helps with property values and being good neighbors reduces constructs that harm our community. Appealing to people with varying political persuasions and economic levels, how do we work together to make sure needs are being met?

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

We need housing-first housing in every neighborhood. What are the resources that we have in every neighborhood and instead of filing expensive lawsuits over these issues, how do we use the money to purchase other buildings and help IFS and other community groups to make sure people aren't displaced? We need to work together to use resources from everyone: hospitals, banks, providers, volunteers, etc... to help this problem. Examples of this include having community members help with emergency rental applications or the construction of buildings, going from neighborhood to neighborhood, and putting a coalition together to have those conversations to dispel myths and move past prejudice.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Bonnie Haymaker

Organization: Lived Experience/Expertise

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I recently heard on the local news of a need for the shelter to move. Also a no warehouse shelters campaign is in my neighborhood.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

My experience with homelessness and unsuccessful work in finding affordable housing in Boise.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

- a) Costs to adequately help homeless
- b) Lack of mental illness treatment
- c) Stigma with mental health and homelessness
- d) Safety for both homeless and neighbors

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I would discuss ideas for alternatives to large communities of homeless living in one facility. Within Boise neighborhoods half way houses would be a good model of transitional housing. Also investment of time to access, rehabilitate, train and obtain stable housing for the homeless.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

Caps on rent would help and application fees are very expensive for low income people. A lack affordable housing and rent raised to absorbent amounts in Boise over short period of time. My section 8 search was cut off after 4 months by the program rules with housing waiting list full sometimes for years according a few managers in Boise. Assistance for disabled to navigate searching for affordable housing. Perhaps a group training on the best way to find low income housing in Boise.



**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Marcee Burns

Organization: Lived Experience/Expertise

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I first heard about the siting through being reached to from Racheal for this interview. I've been in contact with the City in trying to find a place to live for myself and four kids, ages 8-18, with a Section 8 voucher. I've been struggling to find a property owner or landlord to accept my voucher since March and need to find a place to accept my voucher before it expires as I've run out of times that I can apply for it. Currently, I'm living out of my car and my kids are separated and living with various family members throughout Idaho. I'm in a rush to secure housing because the living arrangements for my children are not ideal and they are all coming to live with me in Boise before the school year starts.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

I care about the families that are in a similar situation as I am. I've never stayed at a shelter and I've always found a way to avoid them because I've been fortunate enough to have family members that can take in my kids and I can stay in my car. Every night, I think about those experiencing homelessness that don't have family to help them out and much harder this situation is for them.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The most challenging thing for the community is understanding the homelessness system. People need to be educated on the system so that they can make informed decisions. They need to understand that the entire system needs to expand so that we can help everyone find secure and stable housing.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We need to expand Section 8 housing. I have a full-time job as a postal worker and I cannot afford housing in this market. We need to expand the shelter system for those that are in a similar situation as me to provide them with a temporary living arrangement while they wait for a place to stay. It's unfortunate that it's taken so long for me to get the help that I need.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Amber Young

Organization: The Salvation Army

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

On the news

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

I have worked 20+ supporting housing and homelessness through program operations, direct care, and now fund raising for shelters in the Treasure Valley. I have lived through opening and maintaining a shelter with neighbor resistance in both Nampa and Boise. I also personally live near the new shelter site.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Fear of the population. Specifically fear of the sheer numbers of homeless individuals and families in one facility and how this impacts the area, library, crime rates, safety (both of those living in the proposed shelter and those around the shelter).

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I would tell the Mayor that when a shelter is having space issues, addressing capacity issues through larger shelter facilities is never best practice or the safest answer, but as a professional who started a shelter in Nampa (with huge neighbor opposition) and was involved with the legal battle with the neighborhood association over opposition of the shelter in the North End, the community's fear of gives homeless providers very little options to open new shelters. Yet, there absolutely must be emergency shelter in a community. It is safer for the community if shelter is available.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

There is a lot of research around emergency shelter and it's impacts on families with kids. I think this type of information should be a guide.

## **City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**

### ***Public Input – Stakeholder Survey***

Name: Theresa McLeod

Organization: St. Luke's

#### **1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

Along with Saint Al's, I've had regular communication with Jodi regarding our shared COVID-19 homeless response plan. In addition to supporting Interfaith financially and in-kind, St. Luke's is committed to improving the transitions, made more noticeable by COVID, of medically fragile, unhoused community members into shelters, recognizing a gap in what is called respite care. Jodi explained that she was looking for a new facility and shared that the new facility would include respite care. Jodi invited Saint Al's and St. Luke's to learn about the facility and provide guidance on needs for respite care space. We met with architects of the new facility to discuss what considerations should be made for respite care and recovery.

#### **2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The community need and my experience with Community House and its collapse (2004). The proposed shelter operates on a similar Community House model of co-locating individuals experiencing a variety of housing and mental/behavioral health needs. Solving for these challenges takes passion AND it is essential to learn from past experiences. How can we take the lessons learned from Community House and evolve it into a successful model that can also earn the hearts of the neighbors?

#### **3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Given the proposed number of residents (similar to Community House) in emergency, transitional and supportive housing in one facility, Boise's experience suggests this may not be successful. A smaller single site model may be more successful (e.g. New Path). New Path was located beautifully and there are services near. To place the accountability and responsibility for 250 of our most vulnerable community members under one roof is concerning to me. Having such a concentration of a single site is not what we experienced as successful with Community House and not necessarily a best practice for Boise.

#### **4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I'd share with her the enthusiasm that I had for establishing Community House: a single site with a combination of individuals and families needing emergency, transitional or supportive housing, and the services of job training, recovery, childcare, food service, etc. At the time it was established, it was thought to be a best practice. Unfortunately, with changes in operators, board members, and fundraising, Community House could not be sustained. How might we connect the goals of Our Path Home and its strategy for solutions with Jodi's passion and commitment to serve? As a funder it is important to see how each of these built solutions are connected (e.g. New Path, Allumbaugh House, Valor Pointe, CATCH, Jesse Tree and Interfaith).

#### **5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

I have been impressed with the collaboration of Our Path Home. As a funding partner, we've committed funds to the Campaign to End Family Homelessness, New Path, and the Allumbaugh House. That being said, what Jodi is doing can feel like a one off that corners the market and passion around emergency homelessness. How does what she's doing connect to Valor Pointe, New Path, and the Allumbaugh House? From a funding perspective, how does Interfaith's large proposed facility fit within the current projects? We have an existing ecosystem of homelessness response, but concentrating everyone into a single site feels like an independent project that does not mesh seamlessly with the rest of CoC.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Sam McCaskill

Organization: TOK Commercial

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

I have worked with the City of Boise for acquiring land for mixed income residential development. Through those efforts i came in contact with Interfaith and have been assisting them in locating potential opportunities they could move the shelter to.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

I see the growing need for these services and how impactful Interfaith is in this community. I recognize that Interfaith is not exempt from the current real estate market that is in high demand. Finding a location

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The most challenging thing not just in our community, but anywhere around the world with an organization like this. Wherever they move to, I expect opposition from the neighborhood they are entering. I have followed this closely, and I know Interfaith understands this. They are willing to do whatever it takes in reason to ensure all voices are heard and addressed.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I would likely ask in her opinion, where in town makes the most sense for them to be. THE criteria is a great guide, but I'd love to hear where she sees it fitting best. Unfortunately, Interfaith is limited to properties on and off the market with sellers who are willing to sell. Right now, those prices are quickly becoming untouchable.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

I would say the lack of real estate opportunities on and off the market in Boise.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: West Ada Social Work Team

Organization: West Ada School District

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

News coverage about Interfaith moving and the concerns of community members in the area.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The West Ada social work team works primarily with families experiencing homelessness. We work with families to connect them with school and community-based resources. Ensuring our families who are sheltered have access to safe housing as well as community resources is essential to their personal and academic success. Having a housing first mentality helps our group realize that all families are housing ready. We are acutely aware that access to safe (and ultimately permanent) housing is essential for our students to feel safe, secure, and thrive both while in school and to achieve higher levels of success post-graduation.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

For West Ada, our families do not have a shelter option within our geographical boundaries. We provide transportation to these families from shelters in Boise and Canyon County to school, but often transportation for parents and students to access other services can be challenging. There is minimal access to bus lines in our area. A shelter that is centrally located so families and individuals that need to walk, bike, or bus to access services should be a priority when considering location. It would also be nice if a shelter location was located near a place like the YMCA or another program that offers before/after school care as this is often a challenge for parents and can become a barrier to finding employment.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

We would want the Mayor to understand the impact that homelessness has not only on the individual/family but on the community at large. We have personally seen the success of the local housing first initiative and are privileged to witness the success stories firsthand. Having comprehensive shelter services with heavy case-management can help individuals and families meet their goals, remove barriers to homelessness, and get in a position to successfully gain and maintain permanent housing. Homelessness is a complex issue that requires our community to come along side these individuals and provide wrap around services in order to help them achieve long term housing success.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

Students experiencing homelessness are incredibly resilient, but we know that homelessness can negatively impact their education. We know that youth with less than a high school diploma or GED are at a 346% greater risk of experiencing homelessness and households reporting an annual income of less than \$24,000 are at a 162% higher risk of experiencing homelessness. Focusing on education and job readiness for students and families can prevent homelessness. Focusing on homeless and housing services is essential, but homeless prevention needs to be a bigger part of the conversation. It is much easier to keep a family housed, than to find new housing for a family after a homeless episode occurs.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
**Public Input – Stakeholder Survey**

Name: Kelley Tagg

Organization: West Downtown NA

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

From the news and reading the paper. As a Neighborhood Association (NA) president, there is a monthly informal call within the neighborhood on how to manage things and it was discussed there. Honestly, homelessness is an issue that I care deeply about and something that I follow closely.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

I care about IFS and think what Jodi is doing for the community is great. Our neighborhood held a temporary shelter location here 18 years ago, we continue to prepare meals for the community, and New Path exists here. We have homelessness because we allow it. I want everyone to have shelter and their needs met. I think the City has made good strides in dealing with the issue, but IFS needs something more permanent and accessible. It's not at a place now that is conducive for people to heal and get support. I'm on the fence for the State St. location, but it sounds like there will be wrap around services available there. I like the idea of having services condensed and available from that location.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

The concerns of the neighborhood surrounding the State St. location is of those experiencing homelessness hanging out in their neighborhood. It is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city and what I hear from them is that their lives are hard enough without adding another layer of the shelter to it. From our neighborhood perspective, I can say that most neighbors are sympathetic and I've never felt that they were dangerous, but they can be a nuisance. If the shelter is there, we need more investment in the neighborhood (i.e. park, sidewalks) to add a benefit to the community. We have a police substation in front of New Path that helps address security concerns; more connection with law enforcement helps.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

I love IFS and what they're providing for the community. I would like IFS to be bigger. In addressing homelessness, we really don't see those experiencing homelessness in other parts of town as they are concentrated in one area so I don't know if shelters are needed in other parts of town. I want to see IFS in a bigger building that has a day care facility, a bus stop for school, and even a preschool. Most of the people in our neighborhood are very tolerant, accepting, and just want to provide help to those in need.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

I understand why we took a break from the shelter move because the conversation was not productive. If there's an investment in the community where the shelter will be placed, or a partnership with them to have place for them to participate in the process, it could become more accepted. We also have to consider how people will get from the shelter to the services they need access to.

**City of Boise Shelter Better Task Force**  
***Public Input – Stakeholder Survey***

Name: West End NA Board

Organization: West End Neighborhood Association

**1. How did you first hear about the shelter siting?**

We received communication from Racheal Hall, the Our Path Home Program Coordinator at the City via Email in late July.

**2. What motivates you to care about this project?**

The West End Neighborhood is in close proximity to current shelters and supportive services. Recipients of shelter services or people needing shelter services often rest in, recreate in, or transport themselves through our neighborhood.

**3. What do you feel is the most challenging thing about this project for the community?**

Managing contrasting opinions of residents. Some are concerned that the health and safety for residents will be negatively impacted by providing shelter services in the neighborhood. Others believe we must address the challenges around mental health, substance use, criminal behaviors, and littering by providing services that improve the health of the population needing shelter services.

**4. If you had an hour to talk to the Mayor about this, what you would say?**

In general, the only neighborhood that won't support a shelter project is the proposed neighborhood that will host it. A shelter site needs access to public transportation, bike lanes, safe pedestrian routes, support services, and places where service recipients can meet with treatment providers.

**5. What isn't being highlighted in this conversation that you want to say more about?**

n/a