

**HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE**

August 5, 2021

Members Present: *Council Member, Vice-Chair Alison Coombs*  
*Council Member, Marsha Berzins*

Others Present: Allison Hiltz, Lana Dalton, Jessica Prosser, Rodney Milton, Tim Joyce, Juan Marcano, Mike Franks, Sharon Duwaik, Andrea Amonick, Christina Amparan, Jeffrey Hancock, Sandra Youngman, Daniel Brotzman, Daniel Krzyanowski, Roberto Venegas, Karen Hancock, Kiwa Anisman, Sarah Martin, Alex James, Brittany Mcgaughy, Tandis Hashemi, Tom Henley, Courtney Tassin, EJ Becker, Nikki Caicedo, Bianca Lopez, Luke Palmisano, Omar Lyle, Daniel Money, Emma King, Chance Horiuchi, Melinda Townsend, Mindy Parnes, Charise Canales, Julie Patterson

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Council Member Coombs welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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**MINUTES**

CM Coombs asked CM Berzins if there were any changes to the May minutes. CM Berzins noted a misspelling of CM Marcano's name. She also requested that the "mixed income" piece from CM Marcano's statement about social housing be removed from the minutes. CM Coombs disagreed because he was specifically talking about that aspect and asked that only the name be corrected. There were no changes to the June minutes. Both minutes were approved.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

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**NEW ITEMS****XCEL ENERGY ADVANCED GRID INITIATIVE****Summary of Issue and Discussion**

Karen Hancock (Planning) introduced Sarah Martin with Xcel Energy ("Xcel"), Aurora's community facilitator for the Partners in Energy program, to discuss the Advanced Grid Initiative. Partners in Energy is a two-year collaboration with Xcel to develop and implement an energy action plan, and is an opportunity to engage stakeholders, create goals and strategies, and develop a work plan to be successful. The Advanced Grid Initiative is Xcel Energy-wide, while Partners in Energy is more of a sub program that works directly with communities.

Kiwa Anisman and Nikki Caicedo gave an overview of the Advanced Grid Initiative. The idea revolves around adding additional technology to electric service to provide customers clean and reliable energy,

new ways to save money, and a better experience for the City as a community. There are four main aspects of the Advanced Grid:

1. Smart meters which enable two-way communication to wirelessly transmit data that is safe, secure, fully licensed, and has multi-layered encryption to improve transmission security
2. Advanced Distribution Management System which acts as the operating system for Xcel and provides better control of electric distribution. It also provides timely, more accurate outage detection and restoration for improved service reliability
3. Field Area Network (FAN) which is the linkage point between smart meters at homes and the Advanced Distribution Management System, and provides data communication back to Xcel
4. Integrated Volt-VAR Optimization which ensures more even voltage distribution across the entire system and allows for higher usage of renewable energy sources by using sensors and voltage devices

Sarah tied the behind-the-scenes elements into the community goals and listed the potential benefits including resiliency (fewer and shorter outages), climate mitigation (ability to deliver more renewable supplies onto the grid and integrate electric vehicles), economic development (business attraction and retention), cost savings (more control for residents, businesses, and local governments to reduce energy costs), and equity (ensuring all community members enjoy reliable, affordable access).

Installation of smart meters in Aurora will likely occur in Q4 and will be preceded by a communications campaign. Customers will receive a postcard 60 days before installation, a letter or email with more detailed information 30 days before, and a door hanger once the meter has been installed. Installations will occur Monday through Friday between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Customers do not need to be home unless the meter is inaccessible. Once the meters are installed, customers will receive their first bill that is reflective of the installation. The meters will allow for personalized account information with real-time, detailed energy use and cost information. Customers can expect to receive projected cost impacts on bills, personalized tips to save on energy costs, and access to new products and services. Time of use rates (paying a different rate for energy based on when energy is used) will also be new. These offer more control over energy bills as well as opportunities to reduce energy costs while helping the environment.

#### Questions/Comments

CM Coombs asked what role Council should play in engaging the community and giving feedback. Kiwa said she's working on community engagement efforts and has developed templates for newsletters, email, social media posts, and flyers for local governments to distribute to communities. She offered to create some for Aurora as well as add more community events. Sarah added that hopefully this presentation and the playbook help as the roll out begins and the community has questions. CM Coombs agreed that more digital information for distribution closer to Q4 would be helpful.

CM Berzins said she has already received a door hanger about it and was glad to hear there is no cost to the customer. She asked if someone would need to let the installer in if the meter is in the backyard, to which the answer is yes. CM Berzins thanked Xcel for their partnership and innovation.

CM Berzins expressed uncertainty about the time of use rates. Staff explained that the rate is based on pilot studies conducted throughout Colorado from 2017-2019, which found that on average, most customers do not see much of a bill change. If they are incurring bill changes, there is an option to opt out and go to an alternative flat rate instead. It was suggested that Xcel come back and report once they have

more data about the time of use rates. Customers will be rolled on biannually in April and October so the first group enrolled in rates will be in April 2022. Nikki said they could plan to report next summer.

CM Berzins asked how time of use rates will impact businesses that use a lot of electricity, specifically the marijuana industry. Currently, the time of use default rate is meant for residential-only customers. An alternative rate structure for commercial customers is being investigated, but Nikki will find out if anything has officially been approved. Tom Henley added that the goal of this change is to shift the curve since it costs Xcel the most to produce energy in the summer between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. The result should be a benefit to both the consumer and Xcel.

#### Outcome

This item was informational only and no action was taken.

### **AURORA MOBILE RESPONSE TEAM UPDATE**

#### Summary of Issue and Discussion

Jessica opened by saying that the Aurora Mobile Response Team is nearing the start line and hopes to launch in early September. She highlighted that the name was chosen to differentiate from the co-responder program with the police department as well as the Colorado Crisis Line. The established geographic area for the program is mostly in northwest Aurora with the ability to expand. This area was chosen because of the call volume and because the requests for service parallel STAR's. The team will operate Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. as these are the peak volume of calls. Currently, there is only one team, but data will be collected to evaluate effectiveness and any issues that need to be resolved. The team is currently doing engagement in the community.

Tandis Hashemi is the team's clinician and has worked in the mental health field since 2013. Her experience is primarily in crisis, but she has worked with all levels of care including residential, in-patient hospitals, crisis services, stabilization units, and the crisis line.

Alex James is the team's paramedic and has worked in the mental health field since 2013. He has been an EMT since 2014, a paramedic since 2017, and he received his associate degree in Emergency Medical Services in 2019. His experience is split between 911 and inter facility transfers (IFT). To prepare for this program, he received his adolescent and adult Mental Health First Aider. He has been doing a lot of shadowing, including with the crisis response team, and has connected with the STAR program.

Courtney Tassin is the team's program manager. She has a master's degree in forensic psychology from the University of Denver. She has worked with Aurora Mental Health Center and the Aurora police department co-responder team. She has experience with case management and acting as a co-responding clinician. She also has experience with the federal prison system, court systems, community mental health centers, and competence restoration.

#### Questions/Comments

CM Coombs said this program will improve outcomes in the community and will be a great support for public safety services. She thanked the team for their work.

CM Berzins asked how the work of this team will differ from other teams that respond to these calls. Lana explained this is a paramedic mental health clinician co-response team so there is no police involvement, but there will be response to police calls for service. The program will handle incidents like trespassing,

individuals experiencing homelessness, and behavioral health emergencies by providing a qualified clinician and paramedic to help solve the social service issue rather than it being a police issue. CM Berzins asked if the 911 dispatch person is the one who decides whether to send police or the response team. Lana said there are specific call flows and decision trees to make sure everyone stays safe based on the situation. CM Berzins asked if they will go in teams and if Alex is the only EMT. The paramedic and clinician will respond in one van to these calls, and while Alex is the only EMT at this time, he hopes the program expands to provide 24/7 coverage after the initial rollout.

CM Hiltz clarified that Council voted on this program in October. She expressed excitement for the program given her previous involvement. She highlighted that 911 dispatch must be properly trained to ensure they don't send the co-responder team rather than this pilot program. She also noted that since Aurora Mental Health Center is involved in both programs, there is a financial incentive for them if both programs continue operating. The intent of this program is to phase out the co-responder model and move to a non-police model. She noted that the data collected does influence outcomes and urged everyone to be mindful of the inherent biases in the program. Lana mentioned the data collection spreadsheet and offered to share it with CM Hiltz to ensure it meets her vision. CM Hiltz said that would be great.

CM Berzins asked if the team will receive safety training in case they are unable to handle a situation or dispatch sends them instead of the police. The team will receive specific trainings through Falck and will wear police vests. Lana said the call flows have been built to have a very low need for police response. She highlighted that STAR has never had to call police since the program started and they hope the same will be true for this program. Alex added that a large part of EMS training revolves around situational awareness and avoiding unsafe situations. He prides himself on this ability and will ensure both he and Tandis are safe. Courtney added they will also have police radios connected to Police District 1 dispatch so if a police response is necessary, all surrounding patrol officers can respond if necessary. She is also looking into private companies to do regular safety training refreshers.

CM Hiltz asked how the team resolved the issue of an unlicensed clinician not being able to do an M1 hold in the field. Lana said Tandis is fully licensed.

### Outcome

This item was informational only and no action was taken.

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## **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Housing Strategy Update**

Rodney discussed the three working groups that are working on implementation of the Housing Strategy: People, Production and Preservation, and Places and Process.

The People Working Group is focused on:

- Displaying, tracking, and monitoring current outputs and outcomes
- Creating narrative and storytelling of outputs and outcomes
- Improving outreach and awareness of programs and services and improve overall community engagement

The Production and Preservation Working Group is focused on:

- Implementing and improving transparent community investment funding process

- Improving outreach and relationships with development community
- Facilitating pipeline for housing development
- Increasing resources for housing production and preservation

The Places and Process Work Plan is focused on:

- Creating and improving community investment process
- Improving housing development process (streamline affordable housing delivery system)
- Creating and implementing city-owned land redevelopment processes
- Establishing placemaking and place keeping processes

Rodney also discussed the city-owned land redevelopment process:

- Step 1: inventory (inventory of city and partner/non-profit/faith-based land)
- Step 2: site analysis (site feasibility assessment to determine suitability for redevelopment)
- Step 3: site selection (site criteria/neighborhood readiness/incentive assessment)
- Step 4: engagement (select engagement option/conduct engagement)
- Step 5: RFP (bid and selection process/continued engagement)

Rodney also mentioned HB21-1271 DOLA Innovative Affordable Housing Strategies which provides state assistance to local governments to promote the development of innovative affordable housing strategies in a manner that is compatible with best local land use practices.

CM Coombs said she has received questions about what is being done to quickly find short-term solutions for people experiencing homelessness. She asked how the team is finding locations for options including safe camping, pallet homes, etc. and whether they are looking at places that have a future redevelopment use as a possible site for a short-term solution. Rodney said one or two sites have been identified as feasible. Lana added that they're engaging faith-based communities, like Restoration Christian Ministries.

CM Berzins asked where the safe parking is located at the Restoration site. Lana said it is fenced off with barrier fencing so it isn't noticeable. CM Berzins said she only saw two vehicles parked and asked if it fills up more in the evening. Lana said it is a 24/7 facility, but many people leave during the day. CM Berzins asked if registration is required to know who is staying there. Lana said they have to go through an intake process and be registered with the organization. They also work with a case manager to help resolve the situations they're currently in. CM Berzins noted that she thought the parking spaces would be more spread out than they are.

CM Coombs asked if greenhouse gas impacts are being considered in relation to housing land use. Jessica said the community investment process and gap financing for affordable housing projects look to co-locate resources, including transportation, to ensure access to services. The Planning department also seeks to address the issue of greenhouse gases and transportation impacts related to access to transit, walkability, and mixed-use districts that offer jobs and opportunities for services.

### **Youth Violence Prevention Program Update**

The Youth Violence Prevention Program coordinator, Kayla Salmon, starts Monday, August 9. She has experience with at-risk youth, law enforcement, investigations, and initial case management. She also has an MSW and has worked on mentoring initiatives. She will engage the Youth Advisory Council and provide support to the Outreach Specialist.

The Youth Advisory Council has 13 members between the ages of 14 and 24 that live in Aurora. The group is very engaged and has been meeting once a month. Some of the members are going with the Outreach Specialist to pop-up events to engage the community. Ten focus groups are scheduled with over 80 individuals including parents, youth, faith-based leaders, and service providers, to provide perspective on how the community is impacted by youth violence. Additionally, a survey is in the community and over 160 responses have already been received related to community perspectives. This information will be included in an executive report with recommendations on how the program should move forward.

CM Coombs asked what is being done to ensure these efforts are actually reaching at-risk young people and not youth already engaged in some type of programming. Christina said the current Youth Advisory Council is very diverse and only two of the members are actively involved in other efforts. The goal is to target youth that have not been engaged in the past. For the most part, these youth have had some level of impact from one or more risk factors in their upbringing so they bring real-life experience. She is also working closely with Aurora and Cherry Creek schools, Adams County and Arapahoe County Human Services departments, and criminal justice agencies to ensure they're looking at prevention and intervention level efforts to target high-risk youth.

#### **Updates from Community Members**

There were no updates from community members.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:58 a.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_



Committee Vice Chair, Alison Coombs