

**HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY  
COMMITTEE**  
August 3, 2023

Members Present:     *Council Member, Chair Crystal Murillo*  
                              *Council Member, Juan Marcano*  
                              *Council Member, Alison Coombs*

Others Present:       Mattye Sisk, Tim Joyce, Cristal Dukes, Michael Bryant, Angela Garcia,  
                              Daniel Brotzman, Emma Knight, Jessica Prosser, Roberto Venegas,  
                              Jacquelyn Bayard, Omar Lyle, Melissa Rogers, Bianca Lopez, Alicia  
                              Montoya, Sandra Youngman, Bianey Castro, Scott Campbell, Emily Fuller,  
                              Sunny Banka, Michelle Gardner, Jeff Hancock, Sarah Carroll, Kelsey  
                              DuLaney

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Council Member Murillo welcomes everyone to the meeting.

**MINUTES**

July 6, 2023 minutes are approved

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Alicia Montoya introduced Kelsey DuLaney, the new Housing Compliance Officer at the city, emphasizing that she will represent the city internally and externally, mainly dealing with HUD funding regulations.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Homeless Division Update**

**Summary of Issue and Discussion**

Emma Knight, the Manager of Homelessness provided an update on various initiatives and developments within her division. She discussed an upcoming notice of funding for Homeless Services, which will be released on August 15, with an Info Session and Q&A scheduled for August 21. Applications will be due on August 28, with reviews expected to be finished by September 8, and presentation to the council on September 15. E. Knight also mentioned that funding levels had decreased from previous years, particularly the marijuana fund. She shared outcomes from 2022 to 2023, highlighting that the funds provided services to just under 3,000 people and just over a thousand households. This assistance included employment, education, case management, and behavioral health services.

E. Knight updated the council on the Navigation Campus project, for which they asked for \$22 million from the state and have received matching funds from various sources. She noted that the design of the campus would be finalized once the funding amount was known. She also discussed the recent Point in Time count, a one-night snapshot of homelessness in the area, explaining the HUD definition of "literal homelessness" used in the count. According to the count, the Denver

metro area had just over 9,000 homeless individuals, while Aurora had 572. Emma cautioned against using these numbers to infer a decrease in homelessness, noting that many variables can influence the count. She also mentioned ongoing hiring processes within the Homeless Program, with two outreach workers and a data analyst to be hired soon. The program also sought to replace a position in the abatement liaison staff.

### Questions/Comments

Council Member (CM) Coombs inquired about the Point in Time count data, specifically whether the data indicates if individuals became homeless in Colorado or were homeless upon arriving in the state. E. Knight responded that she was unsure if this information was reflected in the MDHI portal and committed to checking this information and getting back to CM Coombs.

CM Coombs then asked about the capacity and waitlists for mental health services, especially for youth, expressing concern over the reported shortages in this area. E. Knight mentioned that Aurora Mental Health was expanding its Potomac campus to increase capacity and services. Jessica Prosser added more detail, discussing recent efforts to improve services at the walk-in and crisis clinics. She mentioned the expansion of the Mobile Response Team and collaboration with Aurora Fire Rescue to build capacity in their community health program. She also noted that they don't have a specific funding stream for behavioral health services but are trying to address gaps by leveraging resources from agencies they've already funded.

CM Coombs also asked about the potential jeopardy of state funding due to competition with Denver and other programs, particularly regarding the campus they're building. She sought ideas on the process and potential steps to improve their chances of success.

E. Knight acknowledged the competition from other applicants for the Navigation Campus but reassured that, based on their interactions with the state, they were likely to receive some funding. She invited Jessica Prosser and Roberto Venegas to add any further details on state funding streams.

Jessica Prosser discussed some unsuccessful applications from Aurora and its partners, alongside successful ones from Denver and other areas. She stated that they were monitoring what was getting funded in Aurora and other places. She mentioned that while Denver has received considerable attention recently, Aurora's application for the Navigation Campus, which involves a larger, multifaceted project, is unique, increasing hopes for significant funding. R. Venegas commended the efforts of E. Knight, J. Prosser, and their teams in preparing the application and emphasized that Aurora has a strong case for funding due to committed support, regional collaboration, and city-owned site. He, however, expressed concerns about Denver's possible large funding requests and the state's allocation method.

CM Coombs inquired about updates regarding the Request for Proposals (RFP) for nonprofits operations. E. Knight responded that they should have an update at the next HORNS Meeting, mentioning that the original deadline had been extended upon the request of interested applicants. J. Prosser added that they received feedback from four agencies attending a pre-proposal meeting, commenting that they were asking for a lot. She further elaborated on the composition of the robust committee put together to review these applications, which included representation from counties, staff, and people with lived experiences.

CM Marcano inquired about contingency plans in case they did not receive the necessary funding from the state for the campus. E. Knight stated that the intention was to build the campus regardless of state funding, potentially adjusting the scale according to the amount received. They were committed to increasing capacity for the homeless population and would seek other sources of funding if necessary. R. Venegas stated that even without state funding, they had about \$20 million already committed from ARPA and other funds. If they needed more funding, they would explore other sources, possibly private, or potentially dip into their General Fund budget. However, they were ready to pursue a scaled-down version of the campus if necessary and would consult the Council about additional fundraising and scaling options.

CM Marcano asked a question regarding the Point in Time count and whether they knew if any homeless individuals had sought shelter in other jurisdictions during a brutal cold snap earlier in the year. E. Knight didn't have specific data on this but acknowledged that such a movement would make sense, especially considering that people might have sought shelter in hospitals or friends' homes during the cold, which they couldn't track. CM Marcano expressed concern about the lack of tracking for homeless individuals who end up in hospitals and stressed the need for improved data collection. E. Knight mentioned that they had ongoing discussions with hospitals to improve the tracking of homeless individuals. They had attempted to collect data by placing personnel outside hospitals during the Point in Time count. These discussions would continue to ensure that the hospitals are involved as much as possible.

CM Marcano suggested involving hospitals financially in their endeavors, particularly if state funding fell short, given the significant impact homelessness has on hospital resources. He mentioned that investment from hospitals in addressing the root cause of homelessness could be more cost-effective than their current primary care role.

Outcome – Informational only.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

None.

**Next meeting:** September 7, 2023

**Meeting Adjourned:** August 3, 2023 10:45 AM

APPROVED: *Crystal Murillo* 08/23/2023  
Crystal Murillo (Aug 23, 2023 16:08 MDT)

Committee Chair, Crystal Murillo