



**CITY OF BOULDER
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: May 4, 2023

AGENDA TITLE

Consideration of a motion to accept the April 13, 2023 study session summary regarding homelessness strategy - single adult homelessness.

PRESENTER(S)

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager
Kurt Firnhaber, Director of Housing & Human Services
Megan Newton, Homelessness Policy Advisor
Heidi Grove, Boulder County HSBC System Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This agenda item provides a summary of the April 13 study session on single adult homelessness. The purpose of this item was for Council to provide input on collaborative efforts with Boulder County.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Motion Language:

Staff requests council consideration of this matter and action in the form of the following motion:

Motion to accept the study session summary from April 13, 2023 on Single Adult Homelessness.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS

- **Economic** – Homelessness is associated with multiple economic impacts. First, homelessness is at its heart a housing issue, primarily caused by an individual’s inability to access or maintain housing. Individuals experiencing homelessness are often faced with barriers that impact their ability to obtain and maintain gainful employment.

In addition to economic impacts to the individuals experiencing homelessness, unsheltered homelessness can impact the business community. Community responses to homelessness can also be costly, affecting available resources needed for other community initiatives.

- **Environmental** – Homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness in or near waterways or areas that are environmentally vulnerable, disproportionately creates harmful levels of debris, water contamination, or other negative impacts.
- **Social** – While BIPOC people experiencing homelessness are overrepresented in the overall homeless community, they are also over-represented in homelessness exits. The SAMPS program continues to embrace outreach efforts that lead to successful exits from homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are often over-represented in underserved communities including people of color, LGBTQ+, non-binary persons, older adults, and people dealing with disabling conditions.

OTHER IMPACTS

- **Fiscal** – Sustaining some of the programs and initiatives will require sustained and increasing financial commitment.
- **Staff time** – The Housing and Human Services department increased its staffing in the homelessness response system, partly in the creation of the Operations Senior Manager who serves as the logistic manager of camping response and supervises the HHS homelessness team, and with the addition of a Homelessness Program Manager position. The Homelessness Policy Advisor continues to be the lead for adult homelessness responses and supervises the Homelessness Program Manager, who coordinates shelter and outreach work.

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

Study Session questions were:

- Does Council have further input on how HSBC collaborates with its partners?
- Does Council support the direction of HSBC, focusing on housing and supportive services?

BOARD AND COMMISSION FEEDBACK

None

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

This is a complex topic and engenders significant feedback from members of the community.

BACKGROUND

- The annual homelessness update was provided on [Sept. 1, 2022](#).

ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Summary of the April 13, 2023 Study Session on Homelessness Strategy – Single Adult Homelessness.

ATTACHMENT A
April 13, 2023 Study Session Summary
Single Adult Homelessness

PRESENT

City Council: Mayor Aaron Brockett, Study Session Facilitator Matt Benjamin, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Wallach, Lauren Folkerts, Rachel Friend, Junie Joseph, Nicole Speer, Tara Winer, Bob Yates.

Staff: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager; Kurt Firnhaber, Housing and Human Services Director; Megan Newton, Homelessness Policy Advisor; Heidi Grove, Boulder County HSBC System Manager; Susana Lopez-Baker Boulder County Deputy Director of Housing; Vicki Ebner, HHS Operating and Homelessness Strategy Senior Manager

OVERVIEW

The study session provided the opportunity for council members to receive an update and discuss success metrics, collaborative activities and challenges.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

City and County staff provided an overview of:

- Local homelessness strategy
- Homeless Solutions for Boulder County (HSBC) structure
- US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) strategic plan
- Funding Structures

City and County staff provided an update on successes, trends, and challenges, including a discussion of Boulder County's Behavioral Health Roadmap.

City staff provided updates on upcoming initiatives:

- Summer Point in Time Count
- High Utilizer workgroup
- Building Home program

Staff announced the new location for the Day Service Center, at 1844 Folsom and updated council on the timeline for the opening of the center.

Housing and Human Services (HHS) Director Kurt Firnhaber answered questions about the CARE program. While not exclusively for people experiencing homelessness, the CARE program will provide on-street mental health services in lieu of Police interactions. Staff is currently in the hiring process for a potential program launch within three months.

Homelessness Policy Advisor Megan Newton provided additional information about the Building Home program and how the housing retention team.

Kurt Firnhaber discussed changes in the homelessness system and the characteristics of the people experiencing homelessness.

- HHS has added staff capacity which allows for increased coordination with and between the organizations providing services.
- Within the unhoused community, there is a higher vulnerability.
- The work of the city and of the nonprofits has gotten more expensive.

Kurt Firnhaber answered questions about options for people living unsheltered.

Boulder County HSBC System Manager Heidi Grove answered questions about Veteran Homelessness Functional Zero and moving to a focus on single adult homelessness through Built For Zero. Heidi Grove also responded to questions concerning data sharing, how the system defined “inactive” persons on the housing priority list, and the impact of landlord recruitment staff.

Kurt Firnhaber and HHS Operating and Homelessness Strategy Senior Manager Vicki Ebner answered questions about the Point in Time Count and the number of people experiencing homelessness in Boulder. Kurt Firnhaber also answered questions about the role of other Boulder County jurisdictions in the HSBC system.

NEXT STEPS

Council requested further conversation about sanctioned camping and updates on the day service center.