



**CITY OF BOULDER  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**MEETING DATE: October 19, 2023**

**AGENDA TITLE**

Consideration of a motion to accept the September 28 Study Session Summary regarding the Annual Homelessness and programs Update..

**PRESENTER(S)**

Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager  
Kurt Firnhaber, Director of Housing & Human Services  
Vicki Ebner, HHS Operating and Homelessness Strategy Sr Manager  
Megan Newton, Homelessness Policy Advisor  
Lynette Badasarian, Homelessness Program Manager

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This agenda item provides a summary of the September 28 study session regarding the annual homelessness and programs update. The purpose of this item was for Council to provide input into the six new programs: Building Home (including Peer Navigation and the Housing Retention Team), Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH) pilot with Boulder Community Health (BCH), Tribe Recovery, Respite services, and the unit acquisition program as well as provide direction regarding implementation or continued exploration of sanctioned camping.

## **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 September 28 Study Session regarding the Annual Homelessness and programs Update.

## **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 people who are Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC) are overrepresented in the overall community of people experiencing homelessness, they are also over-represented in homelessness exits. The city's homelessness programs continue to embrace outreach efforts that lead to successful exits from homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are often over-represented in other underserved communities including 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. The Homelessness team is implementing several new initiatives during the next 18 months, including collaboratively working on the placement of over 100 people in new housing programs.

### **QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL**

Study Session questions were:

1. Does Council have input into the six new programs: Building Home (including Peer Navigation and the Housing Retention Team), Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH) pilot with Boulder Community Health (BCH), Tribe Recovery, Respite services, and the unit acquisition program?
2. Does Council wish to direct staff to implement or further explore alternate sheltering services?

### **BOARD AND COMMISSION FEEDBACK**

None

### **PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

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

### **BACKGROUND**

- The last annual homelessness update was provided on [Sept. 1, 2022](#). An additional study session on Homelessness Strategy-Single Adult Homelessness was provided April 13, 2023.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

- A. Summary of the September 28, 2023 Annual Homelessness and Programs update.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**September 28, 2023 Study Session Summary**  
**Annual Homelessness and Programs Update**

**PRESENT**

**City Council:** Mayor Aaron Brockett, Study Session Facilitator Rachel Friend, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Wallach, 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; Vicki Ebner, HHS Operating and Homelessness Strategy Senior Manager

**OVERVIEW**

The study session provided the opportunity for council members to receive an update on the homelessness system and programs.

**SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**

HHS staff provided an overview of:

- National/State/Local homelessness trends
- New and expanding programs.
  - Local Voucher Program
  - Shelter Unit Acquisition
  - Building Home
  - Respite Services
  - Project Recovery
  - BSH and BCH Partnership
  - High Utilizer Program
  - Day Services Center

Staff provided updates on the Homeless Solutions for Boulder County system collaboration and City of Boulder investments in programs and services.

Staff provided updates on existing programs.

- BTHRE
- Expanding sheltering programs, including Haven Ridge and TGTHR.
- Mental Health Partners Acute Care Campus
- Winter weather sheltering plan
- Housing efforts
- Homelessness prevention efforts

Staff provided information on both programming and estimated costs of alternative sheltering programs.

Housing and Human Services (HHS) Director Kurt Firnhaber, Policy Advisor Megan Newton, and HHS Operating and Homelessness Strategy Sr Manager Vicki Ebner answered questions about the programs presented.

Kurt Firnhaber answered questions about Mental Health Partner's Acute Care Facility.

Megan Newton and Vicki Ebner answered questions about needs and programming for individuals who have been recently housed in the community. Additional information on the types and frequency of services was provided.

Kurt Firnhaber and Vicki Ebner answered questions about shelter programming. They answered questions about the winter weather plan, shelter use, and the number of beds in the system compared to previous years.

Kurt Firnhaber answered questions about Homeless Solutions for Boulder County (HSBC), system collaboration, and what would be required for additional representation on the HSBC Executive Board.

Kurt Firnhaber and Megan Newton answered questions and provided additional information on alternative sheltering programs and costs.

Council members provided feedback to two posed questions.

- Council expressed overall support for the current programming and services being provided and added to the system.
- Council requested an agenda item be added to the October 5, 2023 council meeting agenda regarding voting on next steps for implementing or further exploring alternative sheltering services.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Council requested an agenda item added to the October 5, 2023 council meeting agenda regarding voting on next steps for implementing or further exploring alternative sheltering services.