

# CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



**MEETING DATE:** October 10, 2017      **ITEM NUMBER:** <ITEM\_OUTLINE>

**SECOND READING:** N/A

**TYPE OF ITEM:** General Business

**PRESENTED BY:** Shawn Lewis, Assistant City Manager, 303.651.8760 or  
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**SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:** Presentation and discussion of Longmont community response to adults experiencing homelessness

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The City of Longmont, in collaboration with other public and private sector partners and community members, is launching a new regional approach for working with adults experiencing homelessness that focuses efforts and resources on a path out of homelessness and into stable housing. This approach improves coordination and engagement across the community and region, aligns resources and measures success based on homeless adults achieving stable, sustainable housing. Specific to the Longmont community, this new approach features a realignment of resources and/or service approaches within Community Services, Public Safety, and Public Works/Natural Resources (PW/NR); increased resources for affordable housing options; and enhanced engagement with community members, neighborhoods and businesses aimed at improving the quality of life for Longmont residents, neighborhoods and businesses.

The presentation on October 10 will feature more details about these efforts and how they all connect to optimally address this complex and challenging issue of homelessness that affects all of us in Longmont. City staff members representing Community Services, Public Safety, and PW/NR will join in making this presentation, as well as representatives from two of our homeless service providers.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:** Provide input or direction to staff.

**RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:** Provide input or direction to staff.

**FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:** To be determined. Currently, these recommendations are being supported with existing resources, as well as additional funding provided by some of our regional partners.

## BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:

Broadly, there are six areas of influence featured in this proposed community response that staff believes has the strongest potential to effectively address adult homelessness:

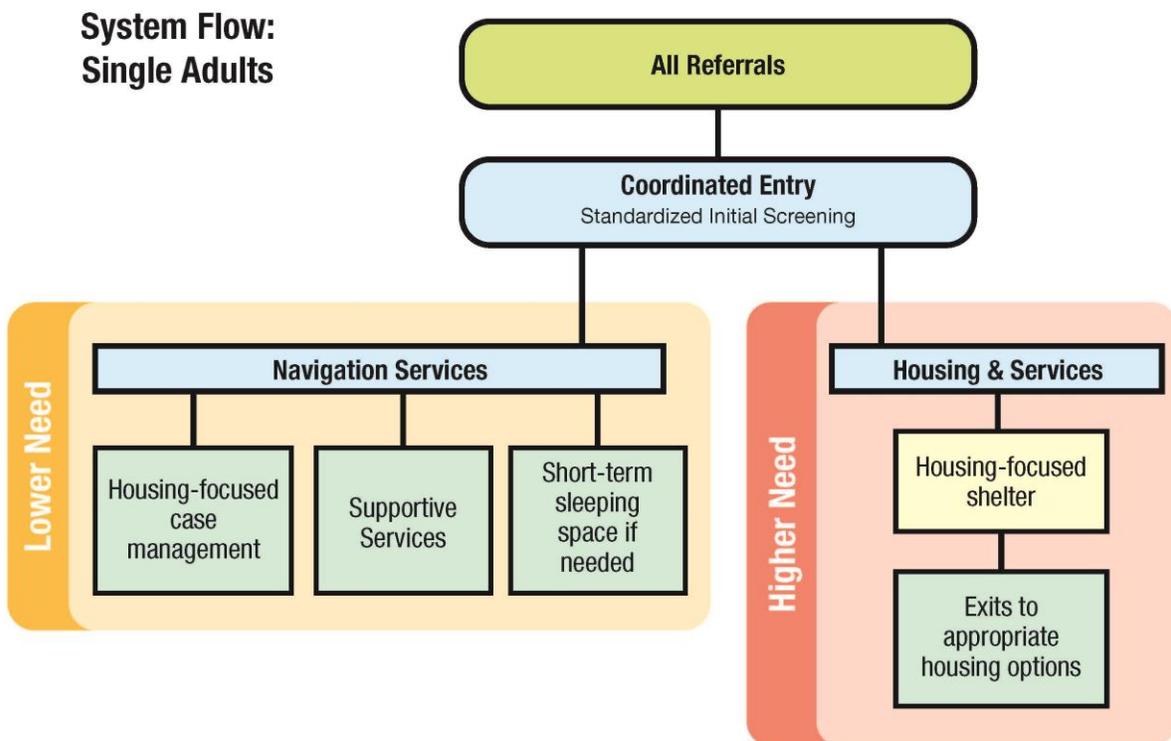
1. New Regional Approach to Service Delivery
2. Increased Affordable Housing Options



3. Realigning Human Service Funding to Support Homeless Prevention and Intervention
4. Increased Compliance and Accountability
5. Enhanced Public Space Maintenance
6. Robust Community Engagement

## Regional Approach to Services

Earlier in 2017, the City of Longmont joined efforts with the City of Boulder and Boulder County, as well as other public and private entities, to form the Boulder County Regional Homeless Collaborative. This Collaborative has been developing a new countywide system for working with adults experiencing homelessness that focuses efforts and resources on a path out of homeless into stable housing. This system features a countywide coordinated screening process to assess the needs of people experiencing homelessness and to match them with appropriate services and housing; program-based shelter that provides year-round shelter and resources for individuals who need the most support to stabilize and get into housing; short term resources and navigation services that divert adults from longer-term shelter services and a more immediate return to stable housing; and a common database that tracks resources provided and client progress.



The OUR Center and Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (HOPE) will collaboratively provide Navigation Services (immediate resolution and short-term assistance) to adults experiencing homelessness in the City of Longmont (Bridge House will provide Navigation Services in the City of Boulder). Program-based Shelter for the entire county will be provided by Boulder Shelter for the Homeless.

## **Housing**

As part of the new regional approach, the City of Longmont will continue to focus on six areas related to housing:

1. Transitional Housing such as the units owned and operated by the Inn Between.
2. Permanent Supportive Housing such as The Suites and Briarwood
3. Affordable/Workforce Rental Housing provided by public, non-profit and private housing partners throughout the community
4. Housing Retention in the form of mediation, landlord/tenant workshops and training and case management
5. Affordable Housing Fund to encourage rental and homeownership; in 2018 and beyond, the City hopes to invest \$1 million annually with the goal of \$10 million revolving loan fund
6. Affordable Housing Incentives such as expedited plan review, height/density bonuses and fee waivers as well as direct financial support via loans and grants

Funding for a regional approach to housing was discussed extensively at the recent Boulder County Housing Summit. Communities will continue to work together to consider a regional approach to housing challenges.

## **Human Service Funding**

In 2016, the City of Longmont conducted a Human Services Needs Assessment that provided a number of recommendations now being implemented. As approved by City Council this summer, the Community Services Department in conjunction with the Housing & Human Service Advisory Board has revamped the way in which Human Service Agency funding is allocated. The City continues to allocate 2.05% of General Fund revenues for Human Service Agencies. This equates to 1.26 million per year for Human Service Agencies in 2018. In alignment with the County-wide homeless services approach (discussed above), staff has allocated 50% of these funds for homeless prevention/intervention services and 50% for addressing the following social determinants of health:

- Housing stability
- Self-sufficiency and resilience
- Food and nutrition
- Health and well-being
- Education and skill building
- Safety and justice

## **Compliance and Accountability**

### Past & Present Compliance and Accountability Efforts

#### *Safe and Welcoming Public Spaces Committee*

In 2016 and throughout 2017, City staff with approval from City Council adopted a number of new policies that have helped address and reduce behavioral issues in and around City facilities. These include new Standards of Behavior, smoke free areas, and changes to the RV parking policy. In addition, over 200 staff members were trained in the

new Standards of Behavior and how to most effectively gain compliance and/or hold people accountable to these standards. As part of the 2017 budget, two campus supervisors were hired to monitor behavioral concerns at the Library/Civic Center and the Roosevelt Park complex including the Memorial Building and Senior Center.

### *Public Safety*

Public Safety was active in addressing compliance and accountability issues, particularly through the work of the Street Outreach Team. Many officers, including this team, dedicate significant resources to provide resources and enforcement services for people who are chronically homeless. In 2016, Police engaged Mental Health Partners to provide crisis intervention in situations where police were encountering individuals suffering from mental health issues. The Angel Initiative was launched in 2017 to help those with substance abuse and has led to a decrease in the number of high-frequency users of public safety resources.

### Future Compliance and Accountability Efforts

Public Safety and Longmont Municipal Court are preparing to make a number of changes that are aimed at improving resources and accountability for homeless individuals. These include shifting staff resources to the Street Outreach Team so that the officers currently involved with that team can spend more time on the activities and services related to homeless persons. Police is also considering how to re-prioritize service calls related to homeless individuals engaged in illegal activity.

Municipal Court, in conjunction with Public Safety, is investigating implementation of a new treatment model court in which eligible substance-addicted persons could simultaneously receive treatment to become sober, including random testing, while being held accountable to alternate sentencing where applicable. In addition, the court is considering an emergency action process to resolve and/or adjudicate cases. This could involve video sentencing in which cases are heard as they occur instead of issuing a summons to appear. Staff believes this could greatly improve the efficiency of the police/court process for those who routinely fail to appear at designated court dates.

## **Public Space Maintenance**

### *Funding for Illegal Campsite Cleaning*

In 2018, Public Works and Natural Resources has requested \$15,000 from the General Fund and \$5,000 from the Sanitation Fund to remove illegal campsites throughout the City. This work is performed by private contractors who specialized in this type of clean-up. Based on clean-up costs incurred through October of this year, Public Works will likely spend close to \$30,000 by the end of the year. These funds were not allocated in the 2017 Sanitation Fund budget, and are therefore being paid for through Sanitation Fund reserves.

### *Response Times for Illegal Campsite Cleaning*

When an illegal campsite is identified by citizens or City employees, Police and Public Works staff coordinate efforts to clean up the illegal campsite. Police officers will “tag” the site to provide notice to people living there that they 48 hours to move their camp and clean up any trash. Each officer has the discretion to extend this period, if it makes sense to allow an individual the time to move their belongings. This tag lists the HOPE

organization and the OUR Center as contacts if the folks need services or help in moving their belongings. After the notice period has expired, Public Works Operations will schedule the trash removal with their contractor and coordinate any additional City resources that are needed to environmentally restore the site. If the camp is found to be occupied at the date/time scheduled for clean up the contractor will notify Public Works Operations who will refer it back to Police Street Outreach Team.

The City plans to modify its notice period for clean up from 48 hours to 24 hours, and Public Works will clean up these illegal camps soon after the 24-hour notice expires. City staff anticipates that the enhanced maintenance services for downtown and the Main Street corridor in 2018 will help reduce the formation of illegal campsites in popular areas along St. Vrain and Lefthand creeks.

### *The Role of Neighborhoods in Cleanup*

Finally, as part of community engagement efforts, the City intends to empower neighborhood-led cleanup efforts in addition to the City-funded cleanups noted above. In September, the City was contacted by representatives of the Historic Eastside Neighborhood regarding their desire to form a neighborhood cleanup team that would be made up of resident aimed and keeping Collyer Park clean and safe. The City hopes to assist other neighborhoods in organizing similar efforts.

## **Enhanced Community Engagement**

The City of Longmont recognizes that the issue of homelessness cannot be addressed by the City of Longmont. Efforts to reduce homelessness are only successful when private, public, civic and non-profit sectors coordinate and work hand in hand with local residents.

### Sampling of local partners identified to date in addressing homelessness

- Individual citizens
- Neighborhoods and homeowner associations
- Individual businesses
- Business & trade associations
  - Longmont Chamber of Commerce
  - Longmont Downtown Development Authority
  - Longmont Economic Development Partnership
  - Longmont Association of Realtors
  - Startup Longmont
  - TinkerMill
- Civic groups
- Non-profit organizations
  - Addiction Recovery Center
  - Agape Family Services
  - Center for People with Disabilities
  - Community Food Share
  - El Comite
  - Foothills United Way
  - Habitat for Humanity
  - HOPE
  - LEVI
  - Longmont Community Foundation
  - Longmont Community Justice Partnership
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Mental Health Partners
  - OUR Center
  - Safe Shelter of St Vrain Valley

- Thistle Community Housing
  - Inn Between
  - All members of Longmont Housing Opportunities Team not listed above
- Local government/quasi-governmental
- Boulder County
  - Boulder County Housing Authority
  - City of Longmont
  - Longmont Housing Authority
  - St Vrain Valley School District
  - Workforce Boulder County

#### Outreach efforts to date

City staff has begun outreach efforts to several of these organizations to convene discussions about ways Longmont as a community can address homelessness. Presentations completed or scheduled to date include Local Business Advisory Council (a committee of Longmont EDP), Longmont Downtown Development Authority Board, Longmont Economic Development Partnership Board, Longmont Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Group Leaders Association and the Longmont Housing Opportunities Team.

#### Planned initiatives to engage the private sector and public

- Implement Public Awareness Campaign—ways to help address homelessness that promote housing stabilization, rather than reinforce negative behaviors
- Provide Information Resources—provide citizens and organizations with information about resources and services available to assist individuals experiencing homelessness
- Identify volunteer opportunities—neighborhood watches and cleanups, volunteering with local agencies serving homeless individuals
- Educate on CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)—provide information and resources to businesses and homeowners about how to reduce the likelihood of illegal activities through improvements in lighting, landscaping and other exterior design
- Convene partner organizations and citizen groups noted above to brainstorm how citizens, associations, organizations and businesses can take action to address homelessness