IN THIS PRESENTATION

This presentation contains a summary of what happened at the Community Strategy Workshop, organized by each segment of the workshop agenda:

5:30 Welcome and Get Settled
5:45 Project and Event Orientation
6:30 Explore Proposed Strategies
  • Organized by strategic theme
8:30 Close

Thank you for visiting!
WE STARTED THE EVENING BY CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER...

AND HEARING FROM TWO OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS:

DURANGO MAYOR MELISSA YOUSEFF
& LA PLATA COUNTY COMMISSIONER JULIE WESTENDORFF
Jenn Lopez shared the following slides on what the PATH has been doing and learning...
PLANNING ACTIVITIES

To get started, the consultant team:

- Reviewed news reports and other background materials
- Identified who’s in community and how connected
- Conducted interviews
- Formed PATH, then followed the process shown on right
As of 2017, eight of the ten states with the highest rate of homelessness are also among the ten most expensive states by median price of housing. **Utah** and **Connecticut** are the only states that fall within the top 10 that have a below average homelessness rate.
COST OF LIVING CONTINUES TO RISE FASTER THAN EARNINGS

% Increase, 1970-Most Recent Available (2011-18)

- HEALTH EXPENDITURES: 3400%
- COLLEGE TUITION: 1515%
- AVERAGE HOUSING PRICE: 917%
- CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: 547%
- MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: 511%
- AVERAGE WAGE: 400%
- MINIMUM WAGE: 353%

Sources:
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- National Center for Education Statistics
- US Census Bureau
- The Simple Dollar
FEDERAL POLICY CHALLENGES

• **1960-1980**: Deinstitutionalization reduces # of patients living in state hospitals from 535,000 to 137,000.

• **1970-1980**: “Devolution of authority” - Focus on block grants and increase in authority granted to local jurisdictions

• **Social Security Act of 1980**: Tightening of disability eligibility process adversely affects mentally ill persons living in rooming houses.

• **1982-1985**: $57 billion cut from welfare programs; over half of working families removed from the Federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

• **1983**: Reagan administration pushes to issue 80,000 Section 8 vouchers; opposition from the house whittles down administration’s request to 15,000 vouchers.

• **1985**: Estimated deficit of 3.7 million low income housing units.

• **1991**: Welfare reform establishes workfare programs; many recipients ended up at low paying jobs and still living below the poverty line. AFDC Homeless Assistance Program is cut by 38%.
INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE/ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

• **1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act**- The first federal legislation enacted to explicitly address homelessness. Defines homelessness in order to allocate federal resources, makes provisions for using federal money to support shelters for persons experiencing homelessness. Creates targeted Health Care for the homeless.

• **2002 10-year plans**- US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) asks states and local jurisdictions to create 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness.

• **2009 HEARTH Act**- Creates a federal goal that individuals and families experiencing homelessness be permanently housed within 30 days through a planning process used by communities to organize into Continuums of Care in order to apply for homeless assistance funding through HUD.

• **2010 Federal strategic plan**- The Obama Administration creates a federal strategic plan to end all types of homelessness within 10 years or less. Four key goals are established: (1) Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 5 years; (2) Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 7 years; (3) Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 10 years; (4) Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

• **2005 Utah plan**- Utah/Salt Lake City built hundreds of apartment units, hired dozens of social workers and provided no-strings-attached housing to people who were chronically homeless. Reduced chronic homelessness by 91% in 2015.
Housing & Homelessness

Local and State Context

**People**

5.6 million people live in Colorado

11,000 people experience homelessness on any given day

60% 58% male
60% 42% female

192 people were found to be unhoused in January 2019

7% 13% veterans
3,658 25 people

Chronically homeless: 39%

Also experiencing...

20% serious mental illness
14% substance abuse disorder
26% fleeing domestic violence
29% chronic illness
23% PTSD
10% brain injury

**Housing**

5-year avg 2013-2017 in La Plata County (US Census):

68% of pop. owns their homes

Median home value: $356,700

Median gross rent: $1,090

Durango Housing Plan, 2017

435 units of subsidized affordable housing across 10 developments

Area median income (AMI): $62,533

Largest industry: retail trade

AMI Levels of Common Occupations in La Plata County for a Four Person Household

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

--Durango Housing Plan, 2017
WHAT DO PEOPLE CARE ABOUT HERE?

We heard many different things through interviews and surveys...

Quality of Life  Housing affordability and cost  Housing/public policy
Funding  Wages & cost of living  Mental/physical health
Shelter  Laws/panhandling Intolerant/Exclusionary
NIMBY  enforcement  Barriers experienced by unhoused
Government  Existing organizations and resources Substance abuse and marijuana
Services  Programmatic solutions  Negative (and not) toward organization and government
Nonprofit champion  Public health, safety & environmental concerns Positive (and not) on people who are homeless
Collaboration  Accountability of those unhoused
Death
Trash/vandalism
Community equity

Here were some key reflections on the input by PATH members:
During August listening sessions, we heard strengths, opportunities & common ground on which to build the strategic plan...

• Housing and shelter: Support for shelter at/near Manna, new designated camping area, potential for car/RV camping site, rapid rehousing, supportive housing, etc.

• Health & other support: Some co-location of services at Manna, peer recovery support, formal and informal mental health services, etc.

• Inclusive, connected community: Positive provider relations, NINA, PATH, CCO, etc.

• Safe, clean community: Success with camp host model, new designated camping site, DBID coordinator, etc.

• Access to work that works: Ella Vita landscaping, knowledge of talents and strengths, potential role for NINA, etc.
PROPOSED APPROACH TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN & AROUND DURANGO

Balanced and coordinated approach that builds on existing strengths, addresses critical needs of unhoused and neighbors, and aims to end homelessness in the greater Durango area, focusing resources on the needs of local* community members first.

*Local = in community for 1-6+ months

Community Leadership: Tier 1 Strategies

- City and/or County
- Manna Soup Kitchen & New HS Manager
- Neighbors in Need Alliance (NINA)
- Housing Solutions of the Southwest (HSSW)
- San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBP)
- Axis Health Care
- Community Compassion Outreach
- Collaborative Management
- Mercy Hospital

Safe Community
- Designated camping area
- Weatherization Kits
- Organized camp
- Law enforcement - community relations
- Enforce camping laws

Clean Community
- Restrooms & trash bins at camp & other key sites
- Solidarity Lockers
- Quarterly clean-up events

Coordinated entry
- Housing
- Supportive housing
- Increased voucher value
- More rapid rehousing

Shelter
- Continue shelter planning

Navagation Center
- Service access & tracking through Manna
- System coordination, evaluation, advocacy with oversight body
- Youth Registry Week

Health & Support Services
- Sched'd services & resources
- Volunteer mentors, companions, MHPs
- Hygiene kits

Work that Works
- Share opportunities, online work space
- Expand supported work programs

Annual conference
- Increase coffee & conversations events

PROPOSED APPROACH TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN & AROUND DURANGO
STATIONS WERE SET UP AROUND THE ROOM FOR PEOPLE TO EXPLORE PROPOSED STRATEGIES AND GIVE FEEDBACK

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The remaining slides show the specific questions asked at each station and the comments people made. (Approx. 200 unique comments recorded.)
Participants had limited comments but seemed to be in support of the plan principles.

“I love the city/county collaboration on this important & complex issue”

“Differentiate silos to coordinate not duplicate.”

“Durango is amazingly compassionate...spread awareness that bad times [happen] to good people.”

“...look for pathways that people can find long-term change if they desire.”
Participants seemed to support some way to address locals in plan when it comes to priority access to services + efforts to help feel belonging and valued.

― Vital documents can be hard to obtain.‖

― Limiting when you can't provide local I.D.‖

― When people in need are in [constant] flux, how do you establish local‖

You are local when this is where you choose to live…”

― Local if…here in Winter, not just summer travelers.‖

― What about…homeowners who spend one weekend a year in Durango?‖
Participants seemed to like all of these strategies and particularly interested in the Homeless Strategies Manager.

“need one organization in charge to facilitate communications & actions."

“Yes, for coordinator at Manna 😊”

“Professional grant writer & fund raiser (P.R., [messaging])”

“I agree with this-likely paid”
HOW COULD WE BEST COORDINATE SERVICE ACCESS?

There was support for all versions of the navigation center, though 1 comment suggested that Manna should focus on food and 1 worried about attracting more people who are unhoused.

“Raise builders fees to contribute $ for housing

“...get matching funds from gov't & funders, plus solicit [in-kind donations]”

“Provide cell phone charging in new areas. Place resource phone #'s at that spot.”

Multiple transportation suggestions, including: “Provide transportation to Manna etc. from Purple Cliffs, or it's not sustainable” & “free bus fare”
STATION 2: SHELTER

Participants said a range of accessible options are needed for different circumstances.

“Yes to ALL of the above. We need options for different needs.”

“Not having a form of identification, should not be a barrier to stay at shelter.”

“Put up a fence…”

“Various parking lots for car/RV’s”

Shelter often “red dots” people for life. frustrating.”

“Must SURVIVE, follow others examples.”

“Yes, a low barrier shelter would help reduce ER & jail costs...Very supportive.”
WHERE SHOULD DESIGNATED CAMPING AND SHELTER BE LOCATED?

This is the tricky part!

Camping sites?
Purple Cliffs: “Disaster waiting to happen... be close to services- Not have to walk long distances.” “No sun. Snow will make this already dangerous terrain deadly. No access to town.”

“Field(s) by Iron Horse”

Shelter sites?
“Location is critical.....Keep location away from neighborhoods & downtown.”

“Acres for sale near Mercy- Development possibilities.”

“Location is everything- Must be near services/job opportunities.”

“...near services is foundation to success.”

Camping & Shelter?
“2 acre flat property owned by the city close to Manna & other services.”

“...at city property by hilltop-room for camp and near transitional facility”

How about building another soup kitchen in the north or near Home Depot?
STATION 3: HOUSING

Participants support increasing housing options for people with lower incomes and helping people to stay in housing.

“Finding affordable rentals that meet housing voucher objectives/requirements”

“utilize vouchers other then fed. gov’t. asst.”

“Housing with opportunities to contribute skills...garden, cooking repairs.”

“Creation of tiny home village within cycle distance of town.”

“Check out Conestoga Huts.”

“Promote Habitat for Humanity volunteerism”

“Higher fees for builders to be used to purchase existing housing/apts. for low income.”
HOST HOME MODEL FOR YOUTH?

There is some interest, but more exploration is needed.

“Community members housing the homeless or housing insecure…Have communities successfully implemented?”

“A lot of second homes and open rooms.”

“Empty FLC dorm rooms”

“NINA needs help from gov’t & others - They are volunteer & are burning out. Many are overwhelm.”

“The Respite Room with Axis Health can provide temporary assistance for youth (12 hours).”
STATION 4: CLEAN COMMUNITY

Participants support shared clean-up efforts – with reward system – and more city resources for trash, restrooms.

“Clean team - visible like on art - can impact public perception”

“Need-based friendly volunteer clean up assistance.” “Partner w/ homeless”

“Reward system for cleaning up” “Partner with the center for a free shower…” “…Trolley token”

“More public restrooms in downtown”

“Showers in the public restrooms provided by the city.”

“Saul’s Creek near Bayfield also hosts the unhoused-It’s a mess.”

“More trash bins on ART...especially south end.” “recycling too avoid all the plastic bottles”
STATION 5: SAFE COMMUNITY

Relationship-building, trust, organized camp, respect... all considered important for improving sense of safety.

“Housed feel unsafe w/unhoused... Unhoused feels unsafe w/housed”

“Trust between ‘manager’ and tenants won’t be established/maintained.”

“[organized camp] is paramount to begin other programs.”

“When homeless community feels respected, they will show initiative in keeping designated areas”

“Stress respect between ALL community members”

“Support safety team... meth impact... homeless know best what needs to be addressed...”
STATION 6: CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Most supported efforts to share stories and to connect, and more effort to advertise is needed.

“To what end? ...‘Storytelling’ is being presented as something other than quaint”

“There is no us and them”

“Please help just talking...& possible help w/food and/ or $”

“What about creating some platform where lonely elderly people have a chance.”

“Storytelling makes people human!”
STATION 7: HEALTH & OTHER SUPPORT

Limited comments made here – one comment seemed to sum up thinking: "Covers a lot of topics...Keep up the good work."

"Solar panel at homeless camp to charge cell phones...So can get calls from potential employers, also call 911 if need help."
"Donated out of service...phones...dial 911."

Need: "Medical & addiction recovery services"
Include peer recovery coach on "Axis Crisis Team (mobile crisis team)"

Need: "Cultural healing for Native Americans [experiencing] homelessness...[female] hygiene & reproductive health"
STATION 8: WORK THAT WORKS

There is support for identifying non-traditional work opportunities. Barriers - like time, timeliness, mobility, storage for belongings - must be addressed.

“Incentives for employers to hire [people with mental health challenges].”

“Let's look what meaningful employment means.”

“Day labor”

“Maker Lab”

“Locker for workers.”

“Job training program would be good”

Provide “access to transportation.”

“Advocating for supporting people receiving SSDI or SSI”

“Less wait time for Axis program” Leniency for “being late to and missed appts”
Rather than signing up to get involved in some way, people shared additional suggestions for the plan:

- Expanded options for behavioral health
- Focus on people with disabilities, older adults, families, people with mental health challenges
- Fort Lewis collaboration
- Emergency survival course
- Mobile outreach with supplies, clothing
- Mobile health services
- Foam for tent insulation
- Increase panel of medical providers with RAE
WHAT’S NEXT

• City-County Study Session, November 18, 2:30-4:00 p.m.
• Meeting with Ella Vita neighbors, November 19, 5:30 p.m. (tentative)
• Meeting with Purple Cliffs campers, November 19, 2:00 p.m. (tentative)
• PATH meeting to review community input and refine strategies for plan
• Strategic plan draft by end of December 2019
• Strategic plan considered for adoption in January 2020

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROCESS!