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Commerce City Homelessness Prevention/Diversion, Support Service, Built Environment Initiative Proposal

Summary and Background Information:

This presentation is in response to the most recent study session presentation with Council regarding the approximately \$10.5 million in federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that Council has previously directed to be used towards addressing homelessness in Commerce City.

This presentation will include an update on homelessness climate, provide a better understanding of homelessness in our community, and a staff proposal to begin addressing these barriers.

Adams County is Experiencing a Poverty and Homelessness Crisis.

According to the Homelessness Measurement Information System (HMIS), data from March 2023 shows that Adams County has approximately 4,561 people experiencing homelessness. Based on 2022 HMIS intake data of 1,115 people experiencing homelessness showed the number one reason to why people are experiencing homelessness in Adams County is relationship problems or family breakup. The other top five reasons contributed to homelessness were domestic violence, lost their job, asked to leave/evicted, and unable to pay rent or the mortgage.

Homelessness in Commerce City

Currently in Community Well-Being's homelessness program, 74 households are actively enrolled. These individuals and families enrolled are consistently receiving services and contact with the team to be active in the system. Households may also consist of multiple family members.

According to the graph provided from Severe Weather Activation Plan (SWAP) data, clients that listed Commerce City on their initial SWAP intake, 79.66% still listed Commerce City as the city they slept in prior to activation. This data shows people experiencing homelessness in Commerce City are "less mobile" than other homeless communities compared to the other municipalities. This data is from Nov 2022-YTD. Updated program numbers for Community Well-Being's homelessness and outreach program:

- 2022 (Jan-Dec) vs. **2023** (Jan-April)
 - o Outreach contacts: 1,211 - **665**
 - o Identification assistance (IDs, Birth Certificates, Social Security Cards): 26

- 16

- o Public Benefit Assistance (SNAP, OAP, Medicaid, TANF): 52 - 23
- o SWAP vouchers administered: 82 - 76
- o Housing Assessments/ Applications completed: 56 - 75
- o Individuals placed into shelter or housing: 10 Shelter / 5 housed - 22
Shelter / 7 housed

Case Study Examples of Real Clients of Community Well-Being

Attached in this document are examples of real clients Community Well-Being and the homelessness navigator have and are working with. These examples highlight a range of individuals and different barriers to overcome in order to achieve housing for each.

Three Levels of Services to Begin Addressing Barriers:

1st-Emergency shelter during severe

weather

2nd- Bridge housing with wrap around

services

3rd-Resource Center with permanent supportive housing with wrap around services

Currently in Adams County there are no emergency shelters available. During December's 2022 Artic Blast, Denver shelters were over capacity and clients were moved to standing room only. Community Well-Being have seen 4 amputee clients due to frost bite and 7 frost bitten clients within the most recent winter season.

Bridge Housing with Wrap Around Services

Bridge Housing is a short-term, continuous stay accommodation that helps people 'bridge' the gap from homelessness to permanent housing. On-site and in-reach supports are offered to assist individuals with meeting basic needs, while individuals work with community supports to secure permanent housing as quickly as possible. From the few case study examples presented, many of the barriers Community Well-Being comes up against can be resolved with the access of bridge housing. Our clients are constantly moving around and being asked to leave; they are in constant survival mode. They can easily fall through the cracks, lose momentum on obtaining housing, and even lose hope. Our clients' priority is safety. If there was a place that clients could safely stay with their belongings, it allows the capacity to focus on obtaining permanent housing.

Wrap Around Supportive Services

The City has identified a list of potential partners to assist with providing supportive services, which includes but is not limited to:

- ACCESS Housing - Family Services, Rental/Utility Assistance
- Adams County Human Services - Public Benefit Application Assistance,

Benefit Interviews On-Site

- Almost Home - Family Services, Family Shelter, Housing Navigation, Case Management for Safe Parking Lots
- Colorado Legal Services - Pro Bono Legal Aide, ID Retrieval Services
- Colorado Poverty Law Project- Eviction Services, Legal Workshops
- Servicios De La Raza- Re-entry, Behavioral Health, Employment, Victim Services
- Veteran's Community Village- Housing, Rental/Utility Assistance, Case Management
- Volunteers of America - Meal services
- Yahweh Health Clinic - Medical Clinic and Volunteer Health

Services

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Regional Alignment (Attached is the original MOU and the First Amendment to review)

As part of these on-going partnerships, staff is looking for Council's approval on a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Adams County and surrounding municipalities. Since early 2021, the City of Commerce City has been an active participant in the Adams County Regional Working Group on Homelessness. The purpose of this working group is to coordinate each municipality's homelessness policies and projects to create a network of resources for unhoused individuals across the region, prevent the unnecessary duplication of resources in Adams County, and to support each other's efforts in order to improve the effectiveness of these resources. To affirm each community's commitment to collaboration, an MOU has been prepared and approved by Adams County and the Cities of Northglenn, Arvada, Aurora, Federal Heights, Westminster, Thornton, and Brighton. This MOU does not commit any Commerce City funds or resources.

Proposal for ARPA Funds

1. Stand up an emergency shelter capability in both recreation centers and civic center. The timeline suggested is listed below.

- Spec generators May '23
- Order generators July '23
- Install generators Oct '23
- Order cots/blankets etc. June '23

2. Provide Bridge Housing with wrap around services. The timeline suggested is listed below.

- Identify property June '23
- Land use entitlement Dec '23
- Identify partner Jan-June '24
- Design/construct June- Dec '24
- Occupy Spring '25

3. Provide a resource center with permanent supportive housing and wrap around services. The timeline is suggested below.

Preliminary Allocation of Funds

- Identify property Dec- Oct '23
- Engage partner June- Dec '23
- Design Jan '24
- Construct Oct '24
- Occupy Dec '25
- Emergency shelter stand-up \$1.5 mill
- Bridge housing \$2.0 mill
- Resource center w/PSH \$5.0 mill
- Contingency \$2.0 mill

Timeline for the Use of ARPA Funds

The allocation of the funds must occur by December 31 ,2024. This can be though official Council Action to adopt this plan of use. The expenditure of funds needs to occur by Dec 31, 2026. If council chooses to move forward with this proposed plan, we can meet this timeline.

Staff Responsible (Department Head): Jim Tolbert, Assistant City Manger

Staff Member Presenting: Sarah Nachtman, Community Well-Being Manager

Financial Impact:

Funding Source:

Staff Recommendation:

Suggested Motion: