



# COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

**TO:** City Council Members

**FROM:** Sean Murphy  
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**DATE:** January 29, 2015 at 5:37 PM

**RE:** **HOMELESS SERVICES**

Item Schedule:  
Briefing: February 3, 2015

## ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

This is a follow-up briefing to the Council's January 20 work session discussion. At that time the Council expressed specific interests related to the two homeless services commissions headed by the Administration and Salt Lake County.

This brief contains four parts:

- 1) A synopsis of how this issue has developed since the Council's last work session
- 2) An introduction to the Collective Impact model, the methodology Salt Lake County will use to evaluate homeless services
- 3) Ideas for how the Council might engage in the current homeless discussion
- 4) Discussion points for developing a resolution on homelessness

**Goal of the briefing:** Follow up on Council Member interests in Homeless issue and determine the degree to which the Council would like to have additional conversations or follow-up staff work in the coming months.

## POLICY QUESTIONS

1. Does the Council want to draft a resolution stating its position on how homeless services in the city should be evaluated?
2. Does the Council want to pursue any of the strategies for investigating homelessness described within the brief?
3. Is there anything in particular the Council would like staff to collaborate with the Administration on, such as homeless or neighborhood outreach?



## ADDITIONAL & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Follow-up from Jan 20 Work Session

Following the Council's last work session, staff have had several conversations with the Administration regarding how both the City and the County are working to shape this project. The Administration stresses that this is a work in progress and that they are open to ideas about how to most effectively engage all parties involved.

In conversation, the Administration has noted its intention to include those community members that the Council felt may have been underrepresented. It has also become clear that while the Administration's commission will focus largely on evaluating the facilities and physical space related to homeless services, the County intends to focus on the service provision itself.

The Administration has also been open about the need to engage the homeless community in a safe and non-threatening manner, and they are working on strategies to do so, such as using existing forums to reach out to both those currently receiving services and those who choose not to receive services. Staff can schedule a follow-up brief with the Administration to discuss these strategies once ideas are firmed up. This may be another suitable area to collaborate, should the Council be interested.

### Salt Lake County Collective Impact on Homelessness Initiative

During the last work session, the Administration referenced Salt Lake County's model for evaluating how its entire system of social services relates to the homelessness discussion we currently having. Staff reached out to the County and conducted some research to learn more about the model.

The Collective Impact method was developed by two principals of the firm FSG, a consulting group that specializes in helping large organizations improve their social impact performance. Their article "Collective Impact" was first published in the 2011 *Stanford Innovation Review*.<sup>1</sup> Very briefly, the method is introduced this way:

Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations. Substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact.

The County plans to use this model to pull together the myriad of different, perhaps disparate, entities that touch the lives of homeless people so in order to ensure that all partners share a common vision. Through a dedicated process, this can lead to a single, structured form of collaboration.

The purpose of the method, and the County's hope, is to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large scale. In order to do so, agencies must share a vision and agree upon a single goal.

The model includes five conditions:

- **Common Agenda:** All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and joint approach for solving it through agreed upon actions
- **Shared measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact/?cpgn=WP%20DL%20-%20Collective%20Impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/?cpgn=WP%20DL%20-%20Collective%20Impact)

- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action
- **Continuous Communication:** consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust assure mutual objectives and appreciate common motivation
- **Backbone Support:** Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies

On the homelessness issue, Salt Lake County has agreed to be the backbone agency. To assist in this effort, the County has formed a collective impact committee on homelessness with the following responsibilities:

- Guide the development of the vision and strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Establish shared measurements practices
- Build public will
- Advance policy
- Mobilize funding

### **Ideas for the Council's Work on Homelessness**

During the January 20 work session, Council Members touched on a variety of areas where they believed the Council may have meaningful input on the current homeless discussion. Staff have attempted to develop these thoughts into actionable items for the Council's consideration.

The follow are 5 ideas for enriching the homeless facilities and services discussion. Each item is intended to be malleable and able to fit in combination with other items.

#### **1) Meeting Attendance and Open City Hall**

This approach represents the smallest time commitment from Council staff. Staff would attend both City and County-led commission meetings and coordinate with the Administration's Open City Hall to push information and gather feedback important to the Council.

- note taking on Commission developments with Council briefings (email or work session)
- disseminate information and collect/tabulate resident responses from Open City Hall
- set up meetings for individual Council Members with community group leaders Palmer DePaulis and Gail Miller
- keep Council informed of key input points

#### **2) Fact Finding Night(s)**

Either a single or multiple Fact Finding Nights could be structured to include a variety of stakeholders. Sessions could be spread out anywhere from 1-3 total meetings – multiple meetings could be structured around a theme, i.e. residents & service clients; smaller service providers; academics.

This option could also be paired with other strategies, such as small group meetings or listening panels.

- possible attendees:
  - o County program representatives
    - briefing on the Collective Impact Process & how the County is evaluating services and planning to use data to help them allocate funding / resources
    - include a discussion of the full suite of services and facilities included – from corrections facilities to mental health services

- representatives from homeless community
  - panel of homeless persons, identified through Council's homeless contact
  - Downtown Clean Team
- service providers
  - first-line service workers
  - drug counselors
  - Crossroads Urban Center
  - The Rescue Mission
  - Volunteers of America
  - Sunrise Metro
- long-term residents from the Pioneer Park neighborhood
- small business owners
  - restaurant owners
  - manager of the SRO at Broadway & Rio Grande
  - Street News representative
  - Businesses along 200 S, 400 S, and affected areas
- Salt Lake City School District
  - school district homeless coordinator
  - teacher with homeless pupils
- U of U professors (Social Work, Sociology, Substance Abuse)
- Representatives from other cities battling homelessness

### **3) Listening Panels**

This approach would include structured conversations with individual groups of homeless service constituents, and/or first-line service providers. Inviting homeless people to sit down and discuss issues of living on our streets could assist in providing a ground-level perspective for better understanding successes and failures of our service provision. Similarly, inviting workers who staff the shelters and facilities may provide a unique additional insight into operations.

Council staff would reach out to academics with backgrounds in both listening panel mythology and issues of homelessness to provide context and structure to the discussions.

The time commitment and complexity of this option is flexible – staff could structure meetings as guided listening opportunities with minimal intervention or coordinate with university professors to develop a rigorous academic approach.

### **4) Combination of Small Group Meetings or Listening Panels and Fact Finding Nights**

It could also be useful to engage constituent groups with different strategies. For instance, two proposed groups – the homeless community and the first-line workers – may feel most comfortable in a small group setting when discussing details of their experience. Other individuals and organizations, such as the County, or business owners, or providers, may be more comfortable and confident speaking in front of the Council in a work session environment.

This is another option that will require considerable staff effort.

### **5) Community Meetings in the Neighborhood**

Council staff could organize community meetings in neighborhoods most affected by homeless issues in and around downtown. This is one of the most flexible and potentially the most time-consuming.

This could be formatted as one or multiple meetings in the community, and could either be an information gathering meeting (where people are encouraged to attend and give input), or an information disseminating meeting (where subject matter experts present key items to the Council) or a combination of both. In either instance, considerable staff time would be consumed.

## Points for Discussion

Also during the January 20 work session, the Council discussed the value of developing a resolution to clearly outline its position and interests in the evaluation of homeless services. Staff have prepared the following list to help facilitate discussion on this.

These points were developed while listening to Council input in and through individual conversations with Council Members.

- We believe warmth, comfort, safety, security, and opportunity is a basic right for all individuals within Salt Lake City
- Our City seeks to be a home for residents who desire and deserve the right to have their voices heard
- The reality of homelessness in Salt Lake presents itself to different people and different neighborhoods in a variety of ways
- All of Salt Lake, and particularly the Downtown and Westside neighborhoods, is burdened by the many community impacts that growing homeless issues have caused in the city
- Our homeless community members live in all areas of the City, not just within the Pioneer Park neighborhood
- Our homeless community members deserve well-designed facilities and service systems that quickly assess their needs, conveniently connects them with the best provider, and generally ensures their quickest possible return to stable, independent living
- The complexities of the homeless issue facing our city are so great that we must strive to gain additional perspective and explore the most innovative and best practices employed today

The Salt Lake City Council:

- Recognizes the uncertainty that neighborhoods experience through the speculation of facility relocation, and we support a comprehensive and transparent public engagement process for both the evaluation and any suggestion of relocation of facilities in order to ensure the smoothest and most orderly public response possible
- Supports a process that considers all parties affected in the Pioneer Park neighborhood, including those homeless citizens, long-term residents, and small business owners who have faced considerable hardship due to increased crime in the Pioneer Park neighborhood
- Believes that any serious suggestions to revising the City's approach to homeless services should include thoughtful outreach to community members who are not commercially invested in property adjacent to Pioneer Park, who do not hold political office, and who may believe the service provider's best location is their current location
- Supports a process that not only considers the physical location of services, but also evaluates the provision of services from a front-line perspective – the perspective of those who visit the organizations funded by our City, County and State taxpayers, and the perspective of the front-line employees who staff those same organizations
- Seeks perspective from valued members of our homeless community and those who choose to live beyond the reach that our services provide due to fear, ostracization, or personal choice

- Believes that along with engaging the Salt Lake City public, other professional voices can add to and deepen our understanding of these issues, and that any proposals should consider the perspective of researchers, academicians and nationally-recognized practitioners
- The Salt Lake City Council seeks to preserve these ideals when considering the administration of and potential changes to the services provided to homeless individuals
- The Salt Lake City Council express support for the efforts of the State, Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, and other local government entities in evaluating and partnering to improve facilities, services and housing opportunities for homeless individuals and families