

## Meeting Summary:

### Overnight Shelters Text Amendment Community Meeting – South

Minneapolis American Indian Center

July 22, 2015

Attendees included council members Cam Gordon, Lisa Bender, Abdi Warsame, and Alondra Cano, staff from Minneapolis CPED and the Minneapolis/Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness, and approximately 35 community members and shelter operators.

The meeting began with a presentation by Shanna Sether, a planner with CPED, detailing the historic and current zoning code regulations for overnight shelters as well as an overview of how peer cities regulate overnight shelters. Next, Mark Legler from the Office to End Homelessness gave a presentation on homelessness in Hennepin County, including statistics on various homeless populations and an overview of existing Minneapolis overnight shelters. The meeting broke off into four small groups to discuss three questions, and then report back to the larger group:

1. How do you envision the ideal shelter environment to better serve those in need?
2. What types of locations do you see as appropriate for overnight shelters, both to best serve those in need and to ensure compatibility of uses?
3. If an overnight shelter were to locate near your home or business, what would be your primary concerns, and what suggestions would you have to mitigate those concerns?

For the first question, many of the responses focused around creating a dignified, safe place. Some ideas included offering storage space, privacy, and beds (not floor mats). Others included creating smaller, specialized shelters for more vulnerable populations that might not feel safe in and around the larger shelters, and keeping shelters open later in the morning, particularly in the winter. Many other responses focused around offering support services on-site at shelters, including substance abuse programs, job training and search help, and permanent housing assistance.

For the second question, discussion was focused around two primary areas: avoiding concentration and providing access to services. Many of the attendees stated that certain neighborhoods, particularly Phillips, Whittier, Near North, and Jordan, were already experiencing an overconcentration of overnight shelters, community residential facilities (CRFs), and supportive housing establishments. The participants expressed concern that a future text amendment would increase more of these congregate living uses in the neighborhoods that are over saturated. Many responses suggested that shelters should be located near transit and support services. Downtown was thought to be a good central location, but many of the neighborhoods near downtown already have a large number of supportive housing, shelters, and CRFs. A common suggestion was to create more medium-sized shelters that could be dispersed into more neighborhoods, if located near reliable transit. Some suggested co-locating shelters with more long-term supportive housing to provide a better path to housing stability.

For the third question, responses tended to focus around operator accountability and preventing quality of life crime. A common concern was those who were turned away from shelters that are at capacity and often spend the night in the neighborhood, sleeping on porches, stoops, park benches, and in bus shelters. Some suggested that many of the Minneapolis homeless are vulnerable youth and adults that may be influenced into prostitution or drug use. Some suggestions for mitigation included holding operators accountable for litter, vagrancy, and other minor crime in the area around their shelters. Others suggested mandatory participation in substance abuse and job placement programs, and a greater police presence near shelters. Some suggested that jails and hospitals should provide housing placement services, in lieu of discharging people without permanent or temporary housing options. Many requested that shelter operators be more proactive with neighborhood organizations, participate in education and outreach with the community, and make themselves more accessible to neighbors with issues. Some suggested that a triage center be the first point of contact for those experiencing homeless and that placement and transportation is provided to shelters that meet the needs of the individuals or families experiencing homelessness.