

Homelessness Advisory Committee 2.0 Recommendations and Considerations Report

December 2020 - May 2021

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Charter

In November 2019, the Fort Collins City Manager convened a temporary Homelessness Advisory Committee (HAC) of diverse members representing business owners, service providers, members of the faith community, healthcare professionals, and community members (with and without lived experience of homelessness) to develop recommendations and considerations for expanding emergency shelter capacity within Fort Collins. The committee began this work in support of our community's goal to make homelessness rare, short-lived, and non-recurring. Meetings were open to the public to observe and were often well attended.

The HAC was formed in response to systemic pressures in the community and specifically after a site search for potential new shelter space and co-located services in 2019. Concerns were raised by some community members after a site in north Fort Collins was secured as an option. City Manager Atteberry then decided to pause the exploration process and zoom out for additional dialogue.

In continuation of the effort begun in November 2019, this second Advisory Committee to the City Manager was formed a year later to consider key questions and offer recommendations regarding the potential development of permanent homeless shelter in Fort Collins, including lessons learned from running a 24/7 COVID-19 shelter at the Northside Aztlan Community Center with greater distancing requirements. The role of committee members was to advise the City Manager on key considerations from varying perspectives, and to represent community interests to identify opportunities and concerns related to the following key questions:

1. What amenities and services should be co-located with a 24/7 shelter?
2. Where can a new 24/7 homeless shelter be located? What trade-offs will exist?
3. How can impacts be addressed and mitigated? What type of engagement is needed?
4. What funding considerations are recommended?

The recommendations and considerations from this committee, while commissioned by the City Manager, are intended to provide guidance to community leaders and providers as they make decisions on how best to support our community and all its residents.

Committee Members

Brian Ferrans - Health District of Northern Larimer County

Cheryl Zimlich - Bohemian Foundation

David Rout - Homeward Alliance

Dean Hoag - North Fort Collins Business Association

Desiree Anthony - Fort Collins Rescue Mission

Gloria Kat - The Family Center

Joe Domko - Catholic Charities

Julie Brewen - Housing Catalyst

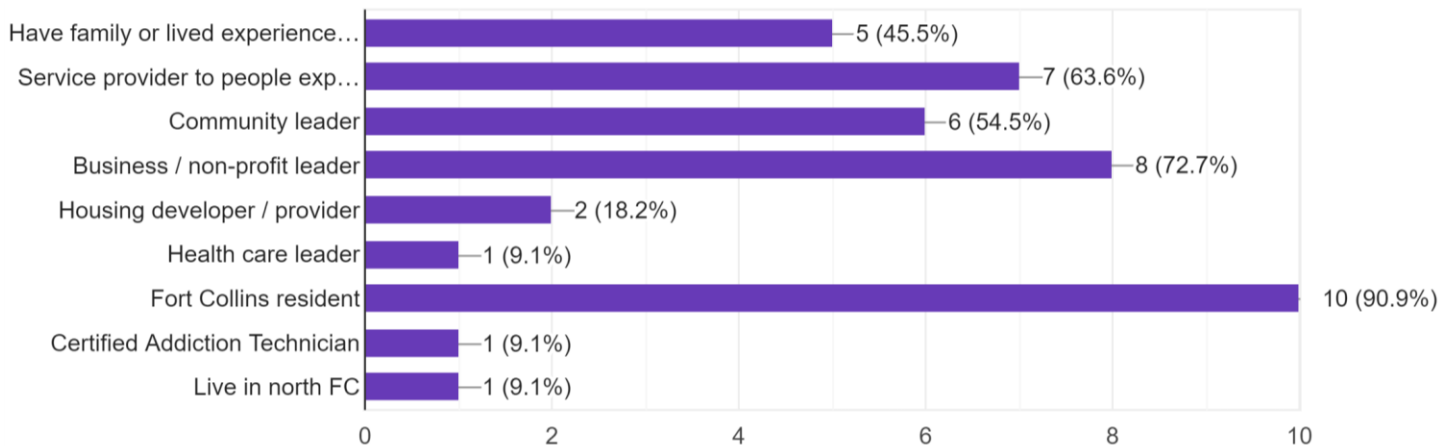
Laura Walker - Larimer County

Matt Robenalt - Downtown Development Authority

Seth Forwood - Fort Collins Rescue Mission

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These 11 members collectively bring the following perspectives to this committee:



The first two options are “Have family or lived experience with homelessness, mental illness, and/or addiction” and “Service provider to people experiencing homelessness”, and the last two options were self-identified by individuals, using Other.

Process and Meetings

The committee first met remotely in December 2020, establishing ground rules and drafted the overall flow of addressing the questions in the charter. Each meeting was 90 minutes, with people honestly sharing perspectives and asking questions of each other and supporting City staff members.

To accommodate all the work needed, the committee added an additional meeting to the original six, and requested and received Spanish translation support for observers for the last few meetings.

The committee addressed each question in turn - following are summaries of the process and responses:

1. What amenities and services should be co-located with a 24/7 shelter?

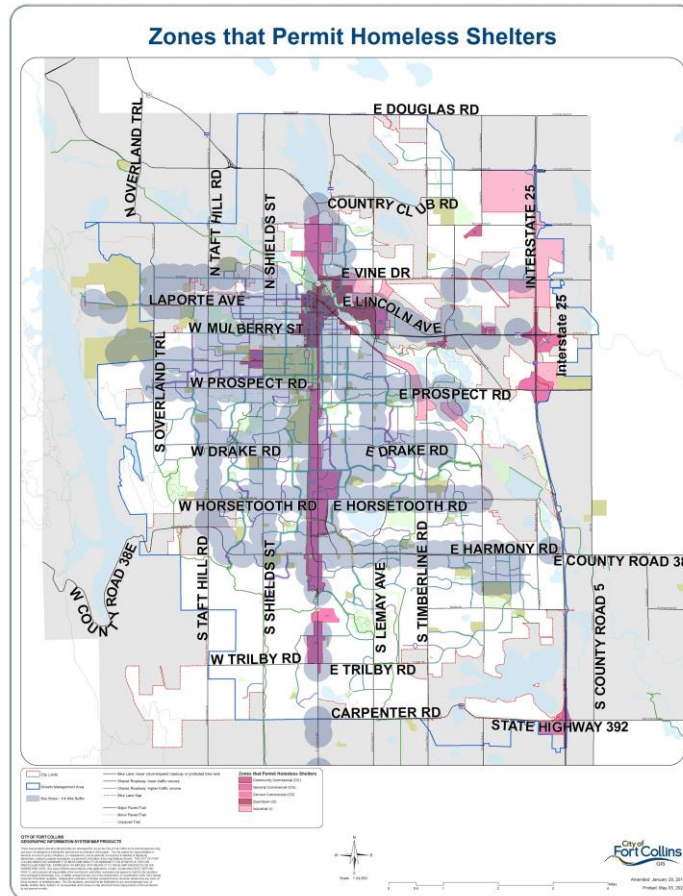
Much of the committee’s time invested here was understanding what amenities and services should be co-located with a 24/7 shelter. The service and shelter providers met and assembled a draft of needed amenities within a range of solutions from what would meet immediate needs, to the next tier of service, to what would be most ideal. Providers used current experience and brought in information from other service providers in Denver to ensure they had the best information possible. They also identified what would not be acceptable in a shelter to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness within our community.

The committee debated, challenged, and added to the provider information to create [a detailed spreadsheet](#).

In support of the committee, City staff worked with Vaught Frye Larson Aronson Architects to create a “Building Program” - or rough outline of space requirements for each function - at different levels of designed occupancy. [This spreadsheet](#) helped the committee consider the building and site needs that could impact where a shelter could be located. Note: the committee requested larger numbers of occupancy be explored to understand future potential impact and in an effort to provide decision-makers with information to ensure a site could function effectively into the future.

2. Where can a new 24/7 homeless shelter be located? What trade-offs will exist?

The committee requested a map of where shelters could be located. The following shows all zones which permit homeless shelters (in pink), walkable ¼ mile radius circles around bus stops (in darker gray), and biking lanes and trails (in blue, purple, and green):



Using the map and focusing on the overlapping requirements listed above, four locations were initially chosen - North Fort Collins (1311 North College), Mulberry Corridor, Midtown, and South Fort Collins adjacent to the future Behavioral Health Center. Another option considered was Renovate Existing Shelters. As the committee’s work progressed, they added a potential location of the North Fort Collins site at Vine and Redwood, restricted Mulberry Corridor to the area between Lemay and Timberline to keep closer to services and reduce transient problems, and removed the South Fort Collins location adjacent to upcoming Behavioral Health Center due to nonavailability of services and amenities.

3. How can impacts be addressed and mitigated? What type of engagement is needed?

The committee discussed these for each location, and in general, sharing and debating best practices and successful strategies from other communities. These potential impacts and opportunities to both the surrounding community and people experiencing homelessness - along with mitigation and engagement strategies, financial/resource considerations, and timeline considerations - are [detailed in this spreadsheet](#). Additionally, the spreadsheet also includes some information from Staff to augment what the committee put together.

4. What funding considerations are recommended?

While the committee had questions around funding - for example, who would fund what for how long - the lack of specifics around exact shelter location, building design, and resulting operations prevented detailed results. Cost of acquisition, development, and operations will vary depending on the exact location, and the committee could not effectively develop estimates for the costs involved. Instead, the committee chose to flag the types of costs that might be higher or lower depending on the final site chosen. Further exploration of how the shelter would be funded through acquisition, development, and operation, as well as what organization(s) will be responsible for that funding, will be vital to make the best decisions for our community.

Limitations of this Committee

Locations considered for a permanent shelter varied from a specific plot of land to currently occupied sites to general areas in Fort Collins where zoning allows construction and operation of a shelter and where transportation and other services are available. This affected the ability of this committee to be able to fully compare options. Specific site selection - unless already acquired - will be difficult because of the unique nature of a shelter, and that speculation around a project like this can itself impact pricing and availability of sites before they are acquired.

Another limitation that followed the issue above is that the committee did not have specific neighborhood and business representation on the Mulberry Corridor, North Fort Collins Redwood & Vine, or Midtown locations. If either area is chosen, a successful process will require bringing those perspectives into the process as soon as practical.

Available time and the need for remote work during the pandemic limited the depth of some conversations and exploration of all the issues involved. Despite best efforts, we did not explore every concern and consideration or how to mitigate potential impacts as fully as will be needed in the next phases of outreach and engagement.

Results

Shelter Needs

The committee identified the needs of our population of people experiencing homelessness, and the amenities and services in a range from minimal requirements to ideal. These include:

- A 24/7 shelter is needed primarily for men
 - To fill current and near future population, 200 beds and flexible space for 50 - 100 additional beds is needed (bunks are acceptable)
 - Assuming women and families with children would continue to be served by Catholic Charities
- Key amenities
 - Services must be delivered with a trauma-informed care lens rooted in dignity
 - Able to accommodate inclement weather days without people being dispersed through the community
 - Located on transportation routes - must be bikeable and walkable, with access for those differently abled
 - Medical / Behavioral Health Support on-site
 - Commercial kitchen and dedicated eating area
 - Showers and laundry
 - Multi-use space with a greater or equal footprint to the overnight sleeping area
 - Adequate parking for staff, guests, and fleet vehicles - including space for bike racks / storage

For comparison, the current shelter system - under COVID-19 spacing - provides emergency overnight mats and beds to men, women, and families. The Fort Collins Rescue Mission shelters men and has capacity for 80 overnight and 60 during the day. Catholic Charities shelters up to 54 women per night and two families. The Murphy Center provides daytime services including appointments with resource and housing navigators, laundry, mail, employment services, and other critical support services. Currently, meals are provided at the Rescue Mission and Catholic Charities to those staying with them overnight.

In 2019 - under pre-COVID-19 spacing - an average of 129 men (142 November - April and 116 May - October) and 50 women were sheltered overnight.

The best representation of current emergency needs in our community comes from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Northside Aztlan Community Center (NACC) was repurposed into a 24/7 emergency shelter from March - June 2020 and the Food Bank warehouse on Blue Spruce was utilized from November 2020 - April 2021 as an emergency overnight shelter for men.

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- The NACC served a total of 272 unduplicated men and 268 unduplicated women, and the maximum sheltered overnight at one time was 114. Blue Spruce served a total of 511 unduplicated men, with an average of 118 served each night, and the maximum sheltered at one time was 151.
- From November 2020 - April 2021, women and families were sheltered at Catholic Charities, where 54 overflow mats were available and an average of 26 served each night.
- Emergency shelter capacity outside COVID-19 response efforts typically require people to be turned away due to space limitations, which was not necessary when these larger shelters were open.

Alongside these emergency shelter services, there are longer-term shelter options for women fleeing domestic violence at Crossroads Safehouse, and for four (soon to be 11) families experiencing homelessness through the Family Housing Network. Catholic Charities offers program beds for nine men, six women, eight veterans and four families, and Harvest Farm (operated by the Rescue Mission) offers a long-term program for men seeking to exit substance abuse and homelessness.

More detail on amenities and services surfaced by the committee is available in [this spreadsheet](#).

Overall Hopes for a New 24/7 Shelter

Following are edited excerpts from the survey results that reflect individual and shared perspectives discussed during the committee's time together (full results are in the Appendix below):

A 24/7 model can truly engage more people, establish a true community of sojourning, build resiliency, and connect folks with more resources, ultimately resulting in more people working their way out of homelessness.

A 24/7 shelter would significantly improve our opportunity to achieve our community goal of making homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring. If operated correctly, the shelter would be a centerpiece of our efforts to help people escape homelessness.

Giving people experiencing homelessness a place to go and resources will positively impact our community. Expanding and deepening shelters' role in the continuum of care for unhoused individuals leads to housing individuals and getting them the mental, physical, and behavioral health they need to be whole. When people exit shelter into housing they also can become productive members of our community and give back.

I hope to have the ability to outreach, resource, counsel, and empower those experiencing homelessness, hopelessness, marginalization and oppression. With a safe place for people to be (found) during the day, I'll be able to facilitate MORE successful transitions into housing, at a quicker rate. I hope that our community can see human spirits instead of dirty faces, unique stories instead of preconceptions, warriors instead of junkies, compassion instead of condemnation, and love instead of disgust.

My hope is that the 24/7 shelter will serve as a vital, life-saving first stop in an integrated system, connecting participants with a full spectrum of services, resources, and housing opportunities. The shelter should have a focus on community and relationship building, with messaging that participants are full-fledged citizens, endowed with the same rights, opportunities, privileges, and responsibilities as any Fort Collins resident.

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Related to our community and current impacts, I see a 24/7 shelter/day center providing a welcoming place for those experiencing homelessness to have their needs met, eliminating the need to find public restrooms, alternative welcoming places to gather etc.

Lessen the shuffle of persons experiencing homelessness between daytime and overnight service facilities, and minimize the number of persons dwelling on the streets when hours of service are NOT available in either daytime or overnight facilities. Leveraging the 24/7 opportunity to connect people with the specific services they require to begin the journey out of homelessness. A 24/7 model creates an opportunity to provide transitional housing options that are severely limited in Fort Collins.

A 24/7 shelter/day center eliminates the large check in and leaving process that now occurs with the shelters due to their hours and other operational needs. Currently everyone essentially arrives and leaves at one time - a 24/7 model could be more of a continuous in and out process, especially as jobs are accessed during the day etc. There would be a place to store some belongings as well while they were working or getting services etc.

Because service providers and relationships would be in more continuous and in closer contact with those experiencing homelessness it increases the likelihood of problem solving quicker to find housing and stabilize. Shelter is not a substitute for housing.

Creating a shelter resource that helps connect the homelessness community rather than keeps it fragmented by offering a space with enough beds to shelter the majority of folks that also houses staffing from multiple service agencies so that individuals can access resources quickly and often. The easier it is for people to stay connected to community resources and humane shelter, the faster people will be able to get on the path to exiting homelessness.

General Impacts and Recommended Mitigations

These issues are likely to affect any site chosen, and are listed here with recommendations from the committee on potential mitigations:

Nearby neighborhoods and businesses feel burdened by the presence of a shelter

Success will require building strong relationships through early, open, and continued engagement with neighbors and business owners with deep listening and as much transparency as possible. Recent communications from concerned community members reinforce this recommendation of data-informed conversations with as many community members connected to the potential site of a shelter before, during, and long after the shelter is open and operating.

The committee recommended a “Yes, and...” approach to honestly validate the needs of the neighbors and business owners, then bring in the needs of the greater community and of people experiencing homelessness. Also bringing and qualifying data will be important for effective communication and increased understanding.

To support surrounding community members, it’s important to meet people where they are. For example, having Spanish translation available when needed can ensure effective communication and understanding around emotionally-charged conversations.

Some people experiencing homelessness affect nearby neighborhoods and businesses with disruptive behavior

The committee discussed the need to raise behavioral challenges to the shelter providers to have disruptive behaviors addressed - without having to trigger police intervention. A Good Neighbor policy that brings service providers and residents together has been successful in Boulder in addressing disruptive behavior, and could be adapted here in Fort Collins.

Additionally, having adequate day shelter space with nearby services could significantly reduce people “hanging around” businesses and neighborhoods. The Fort Collins Rescue Mission’s recent shift to a 24/7 shelter model has gotten positive feedback from surrounding businesses, although the shift did reduce the number of people able to be served.

Attracting more people experiencing homelessness to our community - “If you build it, they will come”

The committee discussed the possibility of a residence requirement that could help ensure serving residents first and discourage people from outside Northern Colorado coming to get support. Also, the Mulberry Corridor option was focused away from I-25 to reduce the attractiveness of a shelter to transient populations.

During on-site visits to shelters in other areas, some committee members were told by those providers that this was an effective practice. Our local providers shared that, while a residency requirement is a good idea in concept, it is very difficult to do in practice. Most clients currently being served are from Northern Colorado, and data show travelers are not currently coming to access services, as evidenced by recent data from the Murphy Center:

- 72% from Fort Collins (66%) or Loveland (6%)
- 7% from Weld County
- 6% from Denver
- 2% from Boulder
- 7% other City in Colorado
- 6% Out of State

While stories were shared of other cities’ challenges, more concrete data - along with effective strategies from other municipalities that have been employed successfully - will be helpful to minimize this potential problem.

A shelter will not move people out of homelessness and could become more de facto housing

The committee wrestled with the fact that emergency shelter is only one portion of the continuum of care supporting people moving out of homelessness. Having it in place will not reduce the need for government and service providers to accelerate the expansion of other services to make affordable and supportive, transitional housing available.

[Prioritizing shelter needs in gaps and times to meet current demand.]

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More options and support to help people become homed are vital to ensure the intention of a temporary shelter does not turn into more de facto housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Funding for acquisition, construction, and operation of a shelter will be significant

Funding will need to come from a partnership of many sources - public and private. The approaches to secure capital funding versus ongoing operations and maintenance funding will likely require different approaches.

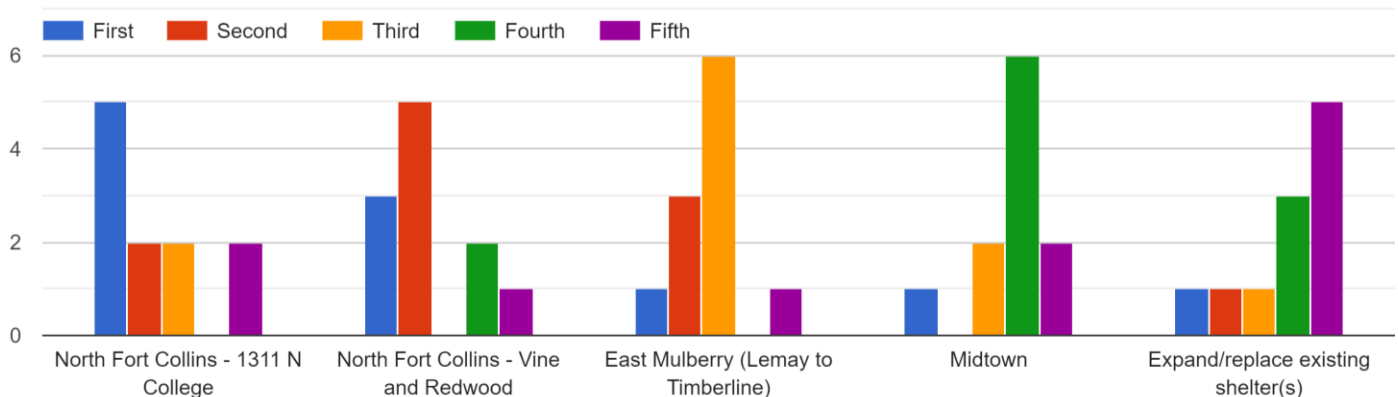
Location Consideration Priority

Following are results of the locations under consideration, overall by total numbers of committee members, using a ranked choice voting method, and by percentage of represented groups.

Order of Consideration Overall

These collective results reflect survey results where each member put the location options in priority order:

Given the needs of our entire community, in what order would you recommend the locations be considered for placement of a permanent 24/7 shelter?



Order of Consideration using Ranked Choice Voting

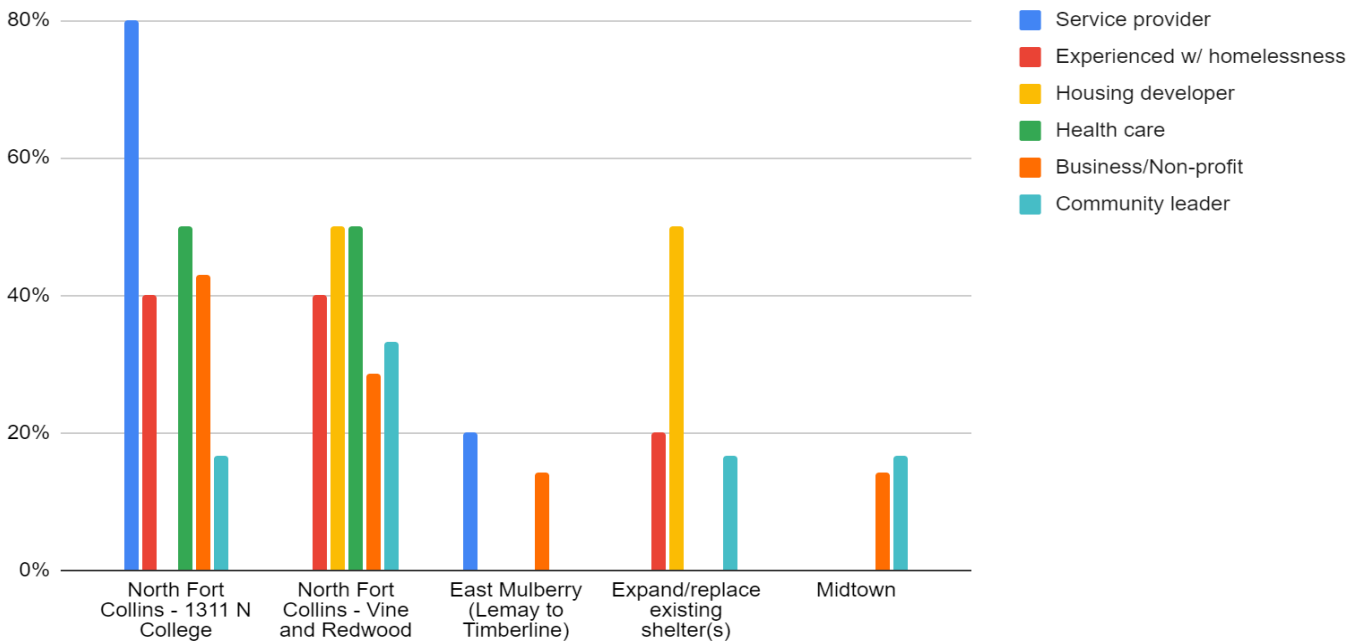
Alternatively, the results below reflect the same data using a ranked choice voting method. In the first round, no location got over 50% of the vote, so the sites with only 1 vote each were eliminated and those members who had voted for those locations had their next highest (non-eliminated) vote counted:

	North Fort Collins - 1311 N College	North Fort Collins - Vine and Redwood	East Mulberry (Lemay to Timberline)	Midtown	Expand/replace existing shelter(s)
Round 1 "vote"	5	3	1	1	1
Round 2 "vote"	7	4			

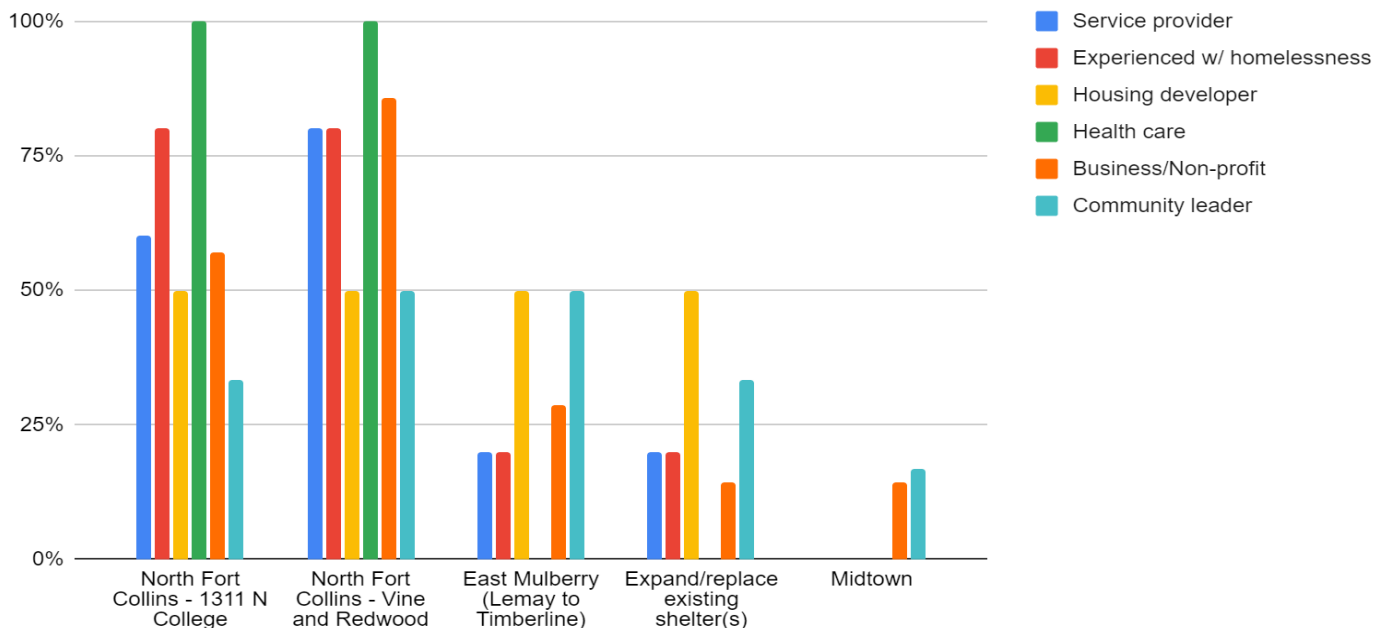
Order of Consideration using Percentage of Represented Groups

These results again reflect the same data, yet show the percentage of each group which voted for each location. Since the committee had both significant numbers of service providers, business/non-profit leaders, and community leaders, these results attempt to create more parity between the different groups represented. The first graph shows first choices, and the second graph shows first + second choices.

First Choice by % Category Responders



First or Second Choice by % of Category Responders



Location Details in Descending Priority Consideration Order

The following information is generated from worksessions and the survey, and is listed below with site specific Opportunities/Hopes, Impacts/Fears, Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline, and Potential Mitigations as surfaced by Committee Members. In some cases, individual perspectives conflict with each other and will need further exploration and clarification when a site is selected moving forward. Many of these items can also be seen on [this spreadsheet on Impacts & Opportunities by Location](#).

North Fort Collins - 1311 North College Avenue

Opportunities / Hopes

- Land already purchased and available; adequate size for shelter needs
- Transportation is accessible, near bike paths, on bus route - time required for transportation between facilities/services is a major drain on people experiencing homelessness
- Population is more likely to access robust, established services in the area familiar with; good coordination with existing/complementary services
- Adequate space to provide for needed operations, added community amenities and to create buffers between activities. Adequate space makes phasing easier.
- Collaboration between services streamlined and issues mitigated to result in improved health and movement into stable housing
- Ability to add other community amenities to the build out
- North Fort Collins is most demographically diverse and more likely to reach populations currently underserved
- A shelter could be a cultural and economic driver; opportunity for growth in commerce and perspective

Impacts / Fears

- Detrimental to the safety of surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, and school
- Behaviors or cultural perceptions will not change with the presence of shelter in north part of town
- Different underserved groups may not be able to co-exist, evidenced by experience of study group at the Murphy Center with positive narratives and good intentions yet families - especially Spanish-speaking) feel unsafe there
- Does not align with the North College Community Investment Plan adopted by the City; the north part of our city has been left out of development plans
- To honor our homeless population they should be placed next to a supported community instead of a community that has been segregated and excluded from government benefits and live in poverty
- Our homeless mainly formed with veterans, that come with PTSD, substance use, mental health and stress would be placed next to a community that has struggled accessing services too and also come with trauma
- Homeless shelter will be a new addition - we should respect who got there first
- The North College community is already overwhelmed by different social issues: 1.- Hickory MHP is for sale and residents are trying to become owners through a Resident Owned Community program. If this is not achieved there is a high risk for many of the residents to lose their homes if the buyer decides to increase the rent. The buyer is known for increasing rents and violating residents' rights.

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2.- Poudre Valley Mobile Home park just sent a letter of intent to sell the park. We are talking about 500 homes that could potentially face the same issues. 3.- Businesses and residents continue to see the effects of homelessness in this part of town, with many issues that have not been collectively solved. Guests trespassing into mobile home communities, guests roaming around inside mobile home parks where children are present, etc. 4.- Poor planning around the development of this part of town (Marijuana dispensaries next to an ice cream place, next to a bar, next to a bowling alley). 5.- North College residents have expressed their desire to have a cultural center representative of their cultural heritage. This needs to be acknowledged

- It places too many services in one area of the community, Devalue surrounding properties. Very costly to do all of the improvements, No infrastructure and no stormwater system in place currently, Not large enough to accommodate all of the improvements and the shelter, Also major opposition in the area.
- That the backlash from residents might further stigmatize those experiencing homelessness and any issues which may already occur without the facility would accumulate to reflect the unhoused community as a whole.
- I acknowledge their fears, and I am not in their shoes.
- I don't think you could overcome all of the concerns.

Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline

- Need infrastructure for buildings
- Development process estimated to take 12 months

Potential Mitigations

- Effective day shelter will reduce “hanging around” community with place to go; allows providers and people experiencing homelessness to be connected
- Advocacy and working with adjacent communities and dealing with their own challenges/issues
- Need a representative sample of the population/residents of the North corridor to provide input; I hope this location is not chosen without the input and appropriate engagement of the North College residents
- Relationship building, open mindedness, education.
- Be able to reflect the healing and health that is invested into the community through statistics and stories of lives restored.
- Create a strategic and thorough campaign to engage the neighborhood, address stigma, and broaden the perspectives on those experiencing homelessness; Engage the community in a vision of what community amenities could be included that are desired.
- Great operators of the shelter/day services and a welcoming space for people experiencing homelessness so they feel a sense of belonging.

North Fort Collins - Vine and Redwood - Larimer County site

Option added by Committee at 9 April meeting. Overall many similar opportunities and concerns as the North College site in the North Fort Collins area

Opportunities / Hopes

- Good location to the services in the area (close to resources between Catholic Charities and Murphy Center), less impact to the surrounding neighborhoods
- On a bus route, simplifies transportation
- A chance for the City and County to partner / work together on this site.
- Adequate space for operations and amenities
- Potentially Less impact if shelter is here vs North College - less community mitigation and messaging needed*
- Not adjacent to residential neighborhoods*
- Ability to add other community amenities to the build out

**Following a Coloradoan article, Old Town North HOA members communicated to the committee through an email-writing campaign that they have significant fears and concerns if this site were used*

Impacts / Fears

- Increased number of homeless guests
- A few years out having access to the property. Need to mitigate flood plain issues.
- May be less of an issue to 1311 North College - not sure how the community will react differently

Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline

- Will be at least 30 months for County Fleet to fully exit the site via staged moving to their new site become available, and future use of the site will remain undetermined most of that timeframe
- Not designated or donated like 1311 North College property
- Depending on Utilities Director review for compliance with floodplain regulations, could involve very expensive stormwater remediation or may not be a significant challenge

Potential Mitigations

- Location closer to existing services [than 1311 North College]
- Any site will take several years to get through the process anyway
- Engage the community in visioning what desired community amenities could be included
- Great operators and a welcoming space for people experiencing homelessness so they feel a sense of belonging in our community

Mulberry Corridor - from Lemay to Timberline

Opportunities / Hopes

- A project in this area could be an income and development generator / driver for the entire corridor
- Area does not have as much effect on the surroundings
- Opportunity to define a culture and environment for service delivery, opening up potential for a campus design
- Transportation services may be free flowing; on a bus route
- Close to motels folks experiencing homelessness frequent; and there is already significant police presence
- Any expansion of shelter that keeps people safe and alive is a value to our community
- Could offer the opportunity for more services to expand as complementary offerings with more available real estate on that corridor

Impacts / Fears

- Could become seen as a shelter-off-the-highway
- Seems like an industrial area
- It will become a ghetto
- There are two mobile home communities (Air Park and Parklane). I hope it is not too close to these locations
- Pushes people experiencing homelessness further out of the city and away from resources; not close to most utilized resources for this population
- This is not a realistic option for homeless services. It is disconnected from the (entire) community and most existing resources. Particularly in a 24/7 model, people would be isolated and in a vacuum. They would access other services less frequently (because of time/distance), and therefore escape homelessness less quickly and less often. Perhaps hyperbolic, but it would almost certainly cause providers, people experiencing homelessness and advocates to question the overall purpose of the project: is it to relocate people experiencing homelessness or to empower people to escape homelessness?
- The difficulties of coordinating services and the logistics for guests to access services may mean that we have people in our community who do not get the physical, mental, and behavioral resources they need which translates to a less safe community on the whole and a growing rather than a shrinking unhoused community in our city

Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline

- Might be a while before site is within city limits / developing property adjacent to City would trigger annexation
- May be less expensive to develop prior to municipal annexation
- Need to acquire
- Not currently in City Limits, may not be for several years. Would this create a delay in the project?
- Would develop per County regulations if property is in the County

Potential Mitigations

- Look at a location that will cause less impact.
- Could be an area that could accommodate a shelter with little impact to its surroundings.
- I am concerned that this is under consideration.
- I believe significantly more money and a significantly larger facility will be needed to bring agencies into shelters rather than located nearby.
- Great operators and a welcoming space for people experiencing homelessness so they feel a sense of belonging in our community.

Renovate existing shelter(s)

Could include Murphy Center, Catholic Charities, and Fort Collins Rescue Mission

Opportunities / Hopes

- Moderate expansion could bring a positive change to service providers.
- Less impact on the surroundings. Less need to address neighbor concerns than a brand new location.
- Close to services, Smooth transition.
- Any increase in shelter and resources is a benefit to our community.
- Better coordination, resourcing, staffing. More sophisticated tracking/analyzing needs and numbers.
- They are known locations which is a comfort to users and with existing public and private “neighbors” already
- Transportation issues are solved
- Issue of land procurement and zoning already solved
- Established identities and association with services

Impacts / Fears

- Short-term and long-term impact assessment. Is it really going to mitigate many of the current struggles for guests and service providers? To what percentage will their capacity be increased?
- If expand in Old Town, impact to businesses there could be similar or greater to current North Fort Collins
- Having enough land and space for a larger facility; Limited space for expansion based on the numbers we have been talking about; The current footprints at these locations are limiting, thus making it hard to expand and costly to bring things up to code.
- Fort Collins Rescue Mission looking to expand to get more beds, getting info on building and fire codes - looking very difficult
- Similar to Midtown.
- May not have enough good infrastructure in existing locations to build what’s really needed.
- Doesn't solve the issue as not enough room to gain the required capacity and accommodate other operational spaces desired

Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline

- Primarily lack of available space and higher cost of remodeling / renovation
- Could reduce availability of shelter while renovating shelters

Potential Mitigations

- Maybe a small change could have a better outcome. Ongoing issues could be kept under control while collectively thinking of better and more effective interventions.
- Designing a shelter that would work in the space available.
- Similar to Midtown.
- Not a mutually exclusive option; one shelter could be refurbished while another is relocated

Midtown

Opportunities / Hopes

- This location could balance the weight of the many services already located on the North. Our homeless guests deserve a top notch location so they can be safe and thriving and have that sense of belonging and not feeling displaced.
- Less impact to neighborhoods, On a bus route, could revitalize existing area.
- Similar to East Mulberry

Impacts / Fears

- Not close to services, Impact on surrounding businesses.
- Midtown is far-removed from other services/resources - there are almost no other services. It would create efficiency gaps in our homelessness response system and the overall effort to quickly move people out of homelessness. Inconvenient and inaccessible in context of day-to-day activities among people experiencing homelessness
- Similar to East Mulberry with the additional FEAR similar to North College of increased stigmatization combining with the more difficult access to services.
- Complicated politics would delay/obstruct progress of this initiative

Financial and Resource Needs / Timeline

- Similar to East Mulberry, more money and space to bring resources and services into shelter.

Potential Mitigations

- Collocated services and amenities need to be well designed for a centralized location.
- Could improve an existing property.
- I believe Midtown is only a feasible option if at least some other services relocate to Midtown (such as the Murphy Center) and/or with a fixed, seven days per week bus from the shelter to other parts of the community. This does not seem like the most efficient option.
- Great operators and a welcoming space for people experiencing homelessness so they feel a sense of belonging in our community.

~~South Fort Collins - near Larimer County Behavioral Health Center site~~

Option eliminated by the Committee as nonviable during 9 April meeting

Next Steps

The committee provided ideas for continued effort, supporting final siting of a 24/7 shelter and beyond:

- **Clarify the City's role and who will make the "final decision" / how it will be made / what it will be.** This could be part of the Communications and Outreach plan listed below. Communicating the City's role as convener and supporter of this potential community resource, along with information about how a decision to build a shelter would be made by service providers and property owners, could help improve understanding and summon support. These roles include: 1) obligatory required role relative to quasi-judicial oversight of application for a shelter from owner/applicants 2) regulatory enforcement role - police, violation of laws, activities that may take place 3) Enhancement role - not required, but beneficial - City's ongoing funding of Outreach Fort Collins is an example and 4) bonus - areas that have not yet been identified in ways that fit a broader community need.
- **Convene businesses, faith communities, neighborhoods, service providers, and county and city stakeholders interested in driving toward solutions.** Building a team of willing partners can surface possibilities for resources and provide support for overcoming obstacles and challenges.
- **Create and implement communications and outreach plan/strategy moving forward.** Community efforts succeed when there is a direct and personal connection with everyone affected by the project: homed residents, residents experiencing homelessness, businesses, and organizations. A coordinated communications and outreach plan can ensure two-way communication so the community needs for a shelter can be clearly articulated and concerns and potential problems can be addressed.
- **Conduct a visioning process or master site planning to achieve the outcomes desired and identify mitigating solutions where possible.** Getting people affected by the project involved in the visioning and site planning process can help create better solutions and shared ownership of the results. Could start with Building Program document and consider further analysis to understand the appropriate size and ability to flex to meet changing needs.
- **Continue to work on the other pieces in the system that support people to be housed.** Emergency shelter is only one portion of the Continuum of Care. For example, ensuring services are available in or near the shelter to support people moving out of homelessness, and having sufficient affordable housing for people to move into, will be needed to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Much like how the HAC completed a matrix of services that would be necessary in a 24/7 shelter, we could complete a matrix of existing and needed services for people experiencing homelessness across the community

Appendix

Group Norms

- Speak from personal experience
- Lead with inquiry and curiosity
- Value diverse perspectives
- Get comfortable with discomfort
- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact
- Use the buffet rule (firsts before seconds)
- Speak directly and honestly

Results from the Committee Survey

Overall hopes for what a new 24/7 shelter could do

My hope is that the 24/7 shelter will serve as a vital, life-saving first stop in an integrated system, connecting participants with a full spectrum of services, resources, and housing opportunities. The shelter should have a focus on community and relationship building, with messaging that participants are full-fledged citizens, endowed with the same rights, opportunities, privileges, and responsibilities as any Fort Collins resident.

Lessen the shuffle of persons experiencing homelessness between daytime and overnight service facilities, and minimize the number of persons dwelling on the streets when hours of service are NOT available in either daytime or overnight facilities. Leveraging the 24/7 opportunity to connect people with the specific services they require to begin the journey out of homelessness. 24/7 model creates opportunity to provide transitional housing options that are severely limited in Fort Collins.

A homeless shelter should offer protection and safety to homeless individuals. It should be a place that offers comprehensive support for those with the desire to move out of homelessness.

Provide assistance to the homeless population to help them to get back into society and be a positive part of the community.

I believe that a 24/7 shelter would significantly improve our opportunity to achieve this community goal (making homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring). A 24/7 shelter would provide stability/reliability to people experiencing homelessness and regular access to services--both at the shelter and at connected community resources, such as the Murphy Center. If operated correctly, the shelter would be a centerpiece of our efforts to help people escape homelessness.

Giving people experiencing homelessness a place to go and resources will positively impact our community. Expanding and deepening shelters' role in the continuum of care for unhoused individuals leads to housing individuals and getting them the mental, physical, and behavioral health they need to be whole. When people exit shelter into housing they also can become productive members of our community and give back.

I hope to have the ability to Outreach, Resource, Counsel, and Empower those experiencing homelessness, hopelessness, marginalization and oppression. With a safe place for people to be (found) during the day, I'll be able to facilitate MORE successful transitions into housing, at a quicker rate.

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I hope that our community can see human spirits instead of dirty faces, unique stories instead of preconceptions, warriors instead of junkies, compassion instead of condemnation, and love instead of disgust.

Eliminate people sleeping/living in unsafe conditions, although I am still not clear on the numbers/volume of the need for the physical building shelter.

Increase capacity for overnight shelter as well as offer or comprehensive daytime and prevention services.

Because service providers and relationships would be in more continuous and in closer contact with those experiencing homelessness it increases the likelihood of problem solving quicker to find housing and stabilize. Shelter is not a substitute for housing.

Related to our community and current impacts, I see a 24/7 shelter/day center providing a welcoming place for those experiencing homelessness to have their needs met, eliminating the need to find public restrooms, alternative welcoming places to gather etc.

A 24/7 shelter/day center eliminates the large check in and leaving process that now occurs with the shelters due to their hours and other operational needs. Currently everyone essentially arrives and leaves at one time, with a 24/7 model, I envision this being more of a continuous in and out process, especially as jobs are accessed during the day etc. There would be a place to store some belongings as well while they were working or getting services etc.

Creating a shelter resource that helps connect the homelessness community rather than keeps it fragmented by offering a space with enough beds to shelter the majority of folks that also houses staffing from multiple service agencies so that individuals can access resources quickly and often. The easier it is for people to stay connected to community resources and humane shelter, the faster people will be able to get on the path to exiting homelessness.

Overall fears for what a new 24/7 shelter could do

My fears for a 24/7 model is that it would be the one and only major investment by the larger community and, once established, people experiencing homelessness would be "out of sight, out of mind" and thus any robust investment in a spectrum of rapid/transitional/affordable/permanent supportive housing opportunities would be ignored or forgotten. 24/7 facilities without an exit strategy are a disaster. I also fear that if we make homeless too "easy", we will simply attract more people experiencing homelessness. I cannot ignore the realities of progressive municipalities currently being overwhelmed by the growing need and numbers of people experiencing homelessness. The irony is that the communities which try to do the most about the need, typically end up with the greatest increase in the need. How will that be addressed? I have yet to hear any meaningful dialog around this issue.

The enigma of shelters as a "build-it-they-will-come" situation will further manifest in additional substantive examples of other communities taking advantage of Fort Collins' generosity, and if NOT mitigated by intentional and pragmatic shelter policies and local regulatory oversight the neighborhood where the new 24/7 shelter is located will become overwhelmed with unmanaged and negative impacts.

Our community is already impacted by homelessness (on top of other ongoing social and economic crises). City and County governments really need to make affordable and transitional housing a priority and guarantee that sheltered individuals can really obtain barrier-free assistance to move out of homelessness. My fear with a new homeless shelter of that capacity (500 right?) is that it could potentially increase the number of homeless on the streets and it will not solve already existing issues. Government and service providers need to ask ourselves if we already have the infrastructure and built capacity to support the social, economic and health related needs that this project will generate.

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I can't see it completely helping the transient population out of homelessness.

Shelters are a crucial part of a housing-first system, but must be operated according to a housing-first philosophy. It is important that a 24/7 shelter is equipped to provide shelter and basic-needs assistance, but also that the shelter/surrounding community resources are equipped to effectively utilize that resource and move people out of homelessness. A new 24/7 shelter will not solve homelessness on its own, so the accompanying services/expansions to other services must be a part of the conversation.

A 24/7 shelter must also be inclusive. What steps will be taken to ensure that everyone can access overnight shelter, including further-marginalized subpopulations, such as the LGBTQ+ community, people of color, youth, etc.?

I believe a strategic and intentional policy for prioritizing those experiencing homelessness in our community is imperative.

I don't fear; because the resources, services and, frankly, the acknowledgement and validation that these struggling souls will experience.... will manifest positive impacts on the whole community and inspire compassion, understanding, and perspective.

Under-resourced services/staffing

More infrastructure in Fort Collins may increase PEH traffic to the city.

I don't have any fears of developing a newer and more humane space for the existing community members experiencing homelessness. Regardless of how well we do at making homelessness rare, short-lived, and non-recurring we will always have individuals needing emergency shelter and as a community we should want to provide that in a space that is clean, accessible, adequately sized, and designed for the population utilizing the space. We shouldn't not improve our community's resources knowing it will benefit individuals simply because we are afraid that others from outside our community might come and use those services.

Other comments about the process, your involvement, and results

Very interesting reflections and great facilitation process.

I feel we have come up with what is needed for a shelter. The hard part is where to place it. I would like to see on our recommendation, stating the pro's and con's of each location and letting the City Manager and Council decide where to put it. We have two locations that are known and two more locations that don't have a specific property. It is hard to give a complete objective opinion unless you have all of the properties selected. We have areas in general for the locations.

Thank you to everyone for your work on this project, and to the City for bringing this diverse group of voices to the table.

I was hoping to have firmer recommendations that would rally local stakeholders and lead our community toward action as a result of this committee. Perhaps we may still accomplish this. No matter the decision or results, I am committed to being engaged with my community until a concrete recommendation with next steps and tangible results is developed. I am especially interested in bridging business, faith communities, governments, and service providers to develop that plan, fund it and implement it once developed.

Additional information referenced earlier in the report

[Amenities and Services Needed in an Effective Shelter](#)

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[Exploratory Building Program information](#)

[Impacts and Opportunities by Location](#)