Homelessness-related Problems in Boulder, Colorado

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Officer R. Maynard,
Boulder Police Chief Maris Herold
• Profound issue in many cities
• Central to public safety topics
• Multi-agency approach
• Successes in spite of challenges
Holistic Response

City of Boulder Police

Foot Forward, Homeless Care, and others
Deacon's Closet
Community Table and Harvest of Hope

HOT
BOTHER
BSH
Municipal Court Navigators
MHP
BHAP
BOCO Public Health
Focus Re-entry
VA
Others
Safe and Managed Public Spaces (SAMPS)

1. Assessment
   - Review, assessments and prioritization

2. Notification
   - 72-hour notices to vacate posted
   - Trash bags and needle containers distributed

3. Clean-Up
   - Engagement
   - First day: supported by BPD
   - Site is monitored and people returning to space required to move

4. Maintenance
   - Park Rangers, Ambassadors and site activation help maintain spaces
Not just processes - People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service: Homeless Outreach Officers</th>
<th>Enforcement: Encampment Clean-Up Officers</th>
<th>Assessment: Research and Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy Transports</td>
<td>Camp Notifications and Clean-Ups</td>
<td>Smart Policing Initiative Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing and Services Connections</td>
<td>Facilitating Outreach Efforts</td>
<td>Data Collection Efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting persons with medical</td>
<td>Community Education and Awareness</td>
<td>Facilitating Citywide Information Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>services</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kyla</th>
<th>Helen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronically Unhoused</td>
<td>Chronically Unhoused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known to HOT, Providers</td>
<td>Known to HOT, Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 years old</td>
<td>40 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 BPD Reports</td>
<td>49 BPD Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Drug Use</td>
<td>History of Drug Use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges and Successes

Kyla
- First Contact
- Re-Unification
- California
- Housed
- Deceased

Helen
- First Contact
- Downtown
- BHAP
- Still Housed
- Housed

Deceased
- Housed
Smart Policing Initiative

• BJA Grant to Boulder PD
• Use POP/SARA to reduce the harms of homeless encampments
• Coordinated effort: multiple city departments and other stakeholder agencies
• Advisory Board
• Research/Advisory Team – not just to evaluate!
Scanning: Defining the Problem

- Disparate data systems
- Same people, contacting different agencies
- Same locations, different agencies handling
- Harms to both persons and places
### Scanning: Defining the Problem

- **What are the harms?**
- **Where are the biggest harms?**
- **Who is being harmed?**
- **What data exist to help us understand the problem?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Public Space Team</th>
<th>Housing &amp; Human Services</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Camping Tickets</td>
<td>• Inspection surveys</td>
<td>• Coordinated Entry screenings</td>
<td>• Inquire Boulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camping notifications</td>
<td>• Notification surveys</td>
<td>• BTHERE outreach contacts</td>
<td>• OSMP &amp; UPR contacts / tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RMS unhoused designation</td>
<td>• Clean-up surveys</td>
<td>• High Utilizers</td>
<td>• Muni Court tickets / surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unattended deaths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• EMS calls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Public Space Team: Housing & Human Services**

- Coordinated Entry screenings
- BTHERE outreach contacts
- High Utilizers

**OTHER**

- Inquire Boulder
- OSMP & UPR contacts / tickets
- Muni Court tickets / surveys
- EMS calls
- Downtown Partnership Ambassador
Analysis: Understanding the Problem

- Individual Harms
- Environmental Harms
- Community Harms
Analysis: Understanding the Problem

**Multiple Data Sources**

**Individual Harms**
- Victimization,
- Drug Use,
- Medical Needs,
- Service Barriers,
- Time on the Streets

**Environmental Harms**
- Encampment Trash,
- Harm Scores,
- Propane Tanks/Fires,
- Human Feces,
- Waterways

**Community Harms**
- Distance to schools,
- Propane Tanks/Fires,
- Victimization,
- Resident Camping Reports
Analysis: Understanding the Problem

- Inquire Boulder Reports
- SAMPS Inspections
- Stakeholder Input
- Top Locations
Analysis: Understanding the Problem

Top Encampment Areas

City of Boulder Police
Analysis: Understanding the Problem

**Encampment Reviews**
- Stakeholders discuss encampment area
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Why
- Additional data & intelligence for a better understanding of each area

**Surveys**
- Unhoused individuals
- Challenges
- Location choices
- Unsheltered history
After the Encampment Reviews

Response
• Custom strategies for each area
• Created by coordinated stakeholder effort
• Implemented with minimizing harms

Assessment
• Track the process
• Evaluate the impact through multiple measures
• Goal is to reduce the harms
Nature and Frequency of Contacts

• Most contacts resident initiated

• Few contacts officer self-initiated

• Trespassing, welfare check, harassment

• Unpredictable situations
Many contacts with few people

Charges for Camping in a 12 Month Period

Top 10% of charged people received 45% of all charges

1 camping charge each

2 camping charges

3

4

Number of Camping Charges

Unique People Charged

City of Boulder Police

17
Safety Concerns at Homeless Encampments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Concerns at Encampments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SURVEYED POLICE EMPLOYEES OFTEN/ALWAYS SEE...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive trash or human caused debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals exhibiting non-normative behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle parts (e.g., tires, spare parts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Carts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypodermic Needle(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knife, box knife, sword, or other cutting weapon/tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hazardous Waste (e.g., paint, oil, batteries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Fecal Waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals actively engaged in drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propane Tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active fires or conditions conducive to fires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm or item that looks like a firearm</td>
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</tbody>
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Boulder County: Annual Drug Related DEATHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count of Decedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
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City of Boulder Police

Devastating Substance Use

A Colorado Library Closed Because of Meth Contamination

January 4, 2023

5 fentanyl overdoses reported in Boulder within 36-hour period: new pill to blame?

Carol McKinley
Problems are Real and Complicated
Conclusions

• The problems with homelessness and encampments are real and complicated

• Problem-solving partnerships possible

• Evidence-based solutions constructive
Questions & Comments

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