

**Transforming Safety North Aurora Local Planning Team
First Meeting – December 9, 2017**

The first meeting of the Transforming Safety North Aurora Local Planning Team (LPT) was held on Saturday, December 9, 2017, from 9:30 am – 1:30 pm at the Aurora Strong Resilience Center, 1298 Potomac St., in North Aurora.

The following LPT members were present:

LaKeshia Hodges, Tonya Rozencwajg, Ken Crawford, Harry Glidden, Reid Hettich, Dana Jenkins, Hanni Raley, Robert Andrews, Yemane Habtezgi, Farduus Ahmed, Molli Barker, Nancy Jackson, Hassan Latif, Debi Hunter-Holen, Brian Arnold, Dara Goldsby, and Omar Montgomery (Mr. Montgomery arrived late due to a previous engagement)

Members absent: Ronald Blan, Crystal Murillo (Mr. Blan and Ms. Murillo received separate orientations after the meeting.)

Attending as Guests/Helpers were Richard Morales and Shannon Ross from the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership, the evaluation and capacity building team for Transforming Safety; Alison Williams-Helm, the Transforming Safety project manager from the State Department of Local Affairs; Patrick Horvath and Becky Alberti-Powell from The Denver Foundation, which is administering the LPT and grant-related aspects of the Transforming Safety project; Christie Donner from the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition; and Yael Berhane, a resident of North Aurora.

The meeting was facilitated by Wendy Talley and LaDawn Sullivan.

Wendy and LaDawn introduced themselves, as did the guests/helpers. The LPT members and guests then got acquainted through a small group exercise.

Wendy provided background on the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition and the Transforming Safety legislative initiative. She noted that the source of the state funds that will be used for small business lending and the grant program come from savings within the Colorado State Department of Corrections parole division, and emphasized the importance of this experiment in community reinvestment as an alternative to prison and parole. She walked the LPT members through the legislative parameters that provide the basis for the grant program for which the LPT will be setting priorities.

In the course of discussing the legislative parameters, Yemane offered a quote from his country that he felt described the goal of engaging the community broadly: “If you hide your own illnesses, you hide your own medicine.” The group appreciated this quote and asked that it be included in the notes for the meeting.

Patrick provided an overview of The Denver Foundation’s role in administering the LPT and the grantmaking process.

Christie gave further information on the intention behind the Transforming Safety legislation, stressing that it is specifically a place-based program. She noted that the project is not designed to chase a problem, but to try to help the community devise its own solutions to public safety. She noted that the areas of focus in the legislation – academic achievement, community services, neighborhood connections and leadership, and public spaces – are based on research that has shown successful outcomes from community justice reinvestment in these areas. She also informed the LPT that there is an additional \$1.7 million in a parking lot fund that will be available if the Department of Corrections realizes savings beyond those anticipated in the legislation. She reported that year two funding for this bill, which would take effect on July 1, 2018 and that includes the additional \$1.7 million, is already in the State budget for 2018-2019. There are many steps yet to be taken, but if the budget process plays out as hoped, there will be a larger amount of funding available in year two of the project.

Wendy then led the group through an exercise in active listening. Her tips for listening and dialogue, especially in situations of division or conflict:

- Listen like your life depended on it
- Ask for permission before sharing your point of view
- Listen to how you are listening
- Listen for the commitment behind the complaint

The group then broke for lunch.

When the meeting resumed, Wendy led the group through a discussion of the key agreements that LPT members acknowledge they will observe to ensure that they are fully present at LPT meetings and contributing effectively to the group's outcomes. The group agreed on the following:

- This is a brave space
- It is a confidential space
- Be yourself in this space
- Model the behavior you'd like to see from others
- Be an ambassador for your community and to your community
- Use "I" statements
- Operate from a foundation of respect and appreciation
- Put your phone on silent or vibrate
- Get permission
- Listen like your life depends on it
- Listen to yourself listening
- Listen for the commitment behind the complaint
- Take risks
- Before speaking, ask yourself, "Is my comment necessary to move the conversation forward?"

The members of the LPT then participated in an exercise called The SOUP - What I Bring. Participants were asked to think about the gifts they have that they would like to bring to the LPT, considering what would be most helpful to the group as it moves through the priority setting process. Folks wrote their gifts on sticky notes and put them on the whiteboard. When everyone was done, the LPT members took some time to read all the sticky notes to see the gifts that members will bring to the collective work of the LPT. The exercise concluded by each member sharing their name and one gift they put on the board. Gifts included the following:

- Leadership
- Peaceful and calm energy
- Kindness
- Learner
- Empathy
- Vision
- Creativity
- Thinking out of the box
- Mentorship

The members of the LPT were asked to read an article from the NY Times before the first session, entitled *The Unsung Role That Ordinary Citizens Played in the Great Crime Decline*. The LPT split into small groups to discuss the article, and then shared back key points from their conversation. These included:

- Not surprised that community organizations can help solve issues in their own community
- The environment of ownership is where change happens
- Quality of life plays a huge role in crime prevention and improving community, especially people's ability to meet their basic needs
- Groups described in the article were not focused on reducing crime, but on neighborhood improvement. Improving the neighborhood had the effect of driving crime down
- People do crime because they are not fine (jay z)
- Need to involve youth in this conversation and bring people who have been in prison back into community and create a sense of belonging
- Equity and fairness are not the same thing

Next the LPT participated in an exercise to identify and lift up what's working, not working, and needed in North Aurora. Participants completed a worksheet with the following questions, divided into new small groups, and looked for themes in each of the areas below. Then groups shared out the themes in each area, which are summarized below.

Given the situation we are trying to address, what is working well in North Aurora that we are already doing?

- Nonprofits are recognized as a part of the solution to community issues

- Continue building partnerships and having real honest conversations
- Continue trying to impact the causes of crime

What do we need to stop doing? What is no longer serving our community?

- Isolating and discriminating against community members
- Assuming negative community issues will always remain
- Fueling and funding the school to prison pipeline

What do we need to start doing?

- Increasing mental health access and looking at it as a priority without the stigma
- Making sure there is more community involvement, and move past the idea that government will solve all our problems

LPT members were then given the following homework assignment:

Walk around your community.

What assets do you notice?

Notice with a mindset of appreciative inquiry. Appreciate everything around you that is happening in your community.

Take extra moments during your day to pause and observe your community.

Bring to our next meeting a full vibrant collective vision of North Aurora.

At the next meeting we will be discussing and identifying the geographic boundaries of North Aurora that will be used for the grant program. The Transforming Safety legislation requires the LPT to set these, and it will be a critical first step in the group's work.

Materials to prepare for the next meeting will be sent out on Tuesday, January 2, 2018. There may be a video to view before the next meeting, and time will be tight because of the holidays.

If you have valuable data that you think will be important to advance the LPT's work, please contact Wendy so it can be brought into the LPT process.

CCJRC is seeking to document the Transforming Safety process, since groups from around the country are eagerly anticipating the outcomes. In order to help with this, there may be a need to photograph and shoot video of some of the LPT meetings. The LPT members were asked if they gave their consent to the sharing of images from the meetings.

Next steps:

The facilitators asked LPT members to share one thing they are taking away from today's session. Responses:

- Lots of opportunity, wishing for this opportunity
- Being a part of such a powerful group
- Pride in dedicated group present today
- Community building widely starts with understanding and relationships

- Budding relationships and mind shift
- Excitement to impact lives we may never meet or see
- Opportunity to really do something, and more empowerment
- Humbled and appreciating collaboration
- Cooperation and togetherness
- Finding people like me ready to make a difference
- Focus
- Inclusivity
- We all have ambitions for our community
- Optimistic
- Hopeful about creating change
- Family and love
- Like-minded people coming together have endless possibilities
- New friends and family

The next meeting of the North Aurora Local Planning Team is Thursday, January 4th, from 5:30 – 8:30 pm at the Village Exchange Center, 1609 Havana St., which is just north of Colfax on Havana. The parking lot across from the building on 16th is available for use by LPT members.