

Transforming Safety North Aurora Local Planning Team – January 4, 2018

LPT Members Attending: LaKeshia Hodge, Tonya Rozencwajg, Ken Crawford, Harry Glidden, Reid Hettich, Hanni Raley, Robert Andrews, Yemane Habtezgi, Farduus Ahmed, Nancy Jackson, Hassan Latif, Debi Hunter-Holen, Brian Arnold, Dara Goldsby, Omar Montgomery, Crystal Murillo, Ronald Blan

LPT Members Not Attending: Molli Barker, Dana Jenkins

Guests Attending: Ernie Duff, Heather Shockley, James Wallace, and Yael Berhane

Helpers: Richard Morales – Latino Coalition for Community Leadership, evaluation and capacity building team; Patrick Horvath – The Denver Foundation; Christie Donner – Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Facilitators: Wendy Talley and LaDawn Sullivan.

Everyone present introduced themselves and briefly described what they are going to be up to in 2018.

After a brief break for dinner, the group reconvened and shared reflections on the TED Talk video that was part of the homework assignment, *The Danger of a Single Story*. Wendy asked the group to consider what the single story of North Aurora might be. What do some people see as the single story when they consider North Aurora? Responses:

- Unsafe
- Ghetto
- Poor
- Drug-infested
- Violence infected
- Illiterate
- Prostitution
- Refugees and Immigrants
- Resiliency
- Opportunity

Wendy then turned the discussion to data that the LPT should use to make decisions. She emphasized that the people who live in a community live the data that is often produced to describe and define the community. She understands the need for and importance of data, but wants the group to think about using data to answer the question “What’s so?” about the community, i.e., to use data to understand the community and the facts on the ground in the community, but not to define the community.

Next the group divided into smaller groups, which chose team names and prepared individual and group asset maps, based on the walking exercise that was part of the homework. Each group then shared out the group version of their lists.

NA Town

Spaces: The Art District, gaming spaces, library, multi-cultural, shelter for all ages, theater, dance, writing, ACAD, broadcasting

Places: Low-income resources, veterans assistance, TREA, North Middle School, Opportunity Center, APD

People: Rhonda Fields, Maisha Fields, families, senator, generational

Activities: MLK Parade, Aurora City Park, Green Bike Program, immigration festival

Other: Village center, Stanley Aviation - meetings, community, religion, night life, networking

2G2B

Spaces: Lots of open spaces and different types of parks and recreation areas, Bluff Lake, bike path, Del Mar water park, soccer and ball fields, Jewell Park

Places: Schools, nonprofits (2nd Chance, It Takes a Village, Opportunity Center, MCPN, Rise Colorado, Street Fraternity, Library, HOPE Center, Dawn Clinic, Comitis Center, CO African Organization, 1 supermarket, Stanley Marketplace

People: Families – multi-generational, refugees and immigrants, police officers, entrepreneurs and small businesses, local businesses, the Aurora Cultural Arts District

Activities: Kids sports leagues, thrift store

Other: Community Gardens (to address food deserts), community is asset rich but underutilized

The A Team

Spaces: All schools, several parks on Colfax corridor, police and fire stations, two golf courses, military base, medical campus, faith institutions, bike and walking paths, libraries

Places: DAVA, CCN, Del Mar Senior Center, Aurora HOPE Center, parks and rec centers, AWN, Second Chance, Aurora Mall, City and County Building, CCA, Our Inheritance, local restaurants, lots of assets but people don't know about them

People: Dr. Shannon Bannister, Keith Dorsey, Barbara Jones, Commander Dudley (Dist 2) Pastor Combs, Rhonda Fields, Papa Dia (African Leadership Group), elected officials, faith leaders, NAACP, Aurora Chamber, Rotary, educators

Activities: Oktoberfest, Omega Leadership Academy, Street Fraternity, Jack N Jill, Club sports, DAVA, theaters, dance and music groups, rec centers, Heavy Heart and Heavy Hand

Other: All private companies, Denver Health, Human Services, TCHD, Justice system – public defenders, diverse groups, age, income, experience, etc.

AAA

Spaces: Community gardens, MLK, Aurora Hills, lots of parks, Del Mark Park and Rec Center, Senior Center, Lowry Park, City Park, Westerly Creek/Montview Park, Moorhead Rec Center

Places: Schools, Stanley Marketplace, RISE, Worthmore, Mango House, APDC, YMCA, AMH, Comitis, AWN, Second Chance, VEC, Fox Theater, Boys and Girls Club, Resilience Center, APS Schools and charters, Day Labor Center, The Eddy-Rapids

People: Poet Laureate – Xango, Rhonda Fields, Mayor Hogan, Davon Vas, Barbara Shannon Bannister, refugees, teachers, parents, families, police, immigrants, Robert Jolinus, Jovan Melton

Activities: Fox Arts Center, ACAD, schools and aftger school programs, Salvation Army, Kids and Cops, Economic Development Center, businesses

Other: Innovation efforts in APS, Hood Monsters – sports programs, On the Right Path, Colorado Titans – semi-pro football team

Wendy observed how this exercise brought out so much more than what would be revealed through the single story about North Aurora as a place of challenge and deficit.

Defining North Aurora

Folks stayed in their small groups to work on a mapping exercise to determine what the boundaries of North Aurora should be for the purposes of the Transforming Safety grant program. At the end of the small group discussions, each group shared the boundaries they came up with and the reasons they chose these boundaries. It was noted that the boundaries can be changed by the LPT in future years.

A Team - Iliff on the south, city limits on west and north, and Chambers on the east. One group member noted that the map of poverty for Aurora is shifting south and east, where there currently are fewer services. A group member also observed that if the boundaries are larger the TS program may be able to have impact at a county level, and will also be able to stack resources for areas that qualify for different streams of funding. Another group member commented that since the TS program is serving as a pilot program, the smaller the focus and the greater the possible successes, the better “role model” the program will be for other communities. Based on a comment from the group, the A Team said it would be open to moving the eastern boundary to Airport Blvd.

NA Group - 35th on North, city boundary on the west, 6th Ave. on the south, and Airport/Buckley on the east. The main reason for the shorter southern boundary is to concentrate the area for more effective use of the grant funds.

AAA – City limits on west and north, Airport/Buckley on the east, and Iliff on the south. One of the keys for their consideration was the placement of nonprofits in the boundaries. There was a discussion about whether nonprofits would have to be located in the boundary area physically, or just serve residents in the boundary area regardless of where the nonprofit is headquartered. There was also discussion about whether nonprofits located within the boundaries could serve people outside the boundaries. There was not agreement about how to answer this. There was further discussion about the relative values of concentrating funding in a small area or scattering funding across a large area. A group member also noted that in order to make effective boundaries the group needs to know what the outcomes it seeks to accomplish with the grant funds will be.

2G2B – City boundary on the west, south to Iliff, north to Smith Road, and east to 470. This group tried a number of different boundaries and made the point that whatever boundaries are chosen, they will have to be defended. And a further point was made that the outcomes from the program must show clearly and decisively that these funds have transformed public safety in these communities, made them safer by investing in the communities rather than locking people up.

There was general conversation about outcomes, priorities, and how we will demonstrate progress in the short time of the grant. Wendy asked the group to focus right now on the task of determining boundaries for North Aurora, not on outcomes and priorities.

The group then discussed the areas of alignment among all the presentations and tried to come to some consensus on the initial boundaries of North Aurora.

Western and Northern Boundaries – The LPT agreed quickly that these boundaries should be the Aurora city limits.

Eastern Boundary – A majority of the LPT thought that the eastern boundary should be Buckley. A smaller group suggested the eastern boundary go to Watkins, arguing that there are several schools east of Buckley that should be included, and that there are also several housing developments that have significant gang activity out by Picadilly that should be included. A further argument was made that the boundary should include every school in APS, which would call for the eastern boundary to be Watkins. Wendy asked if the group would be willing to start in year 1 with the boundary at Buckley, and then expand the boundary to Watkins in year 2. Or start with the boundary farther to the east and contract to Buckley in year 2? While there was some consensus with this approach, the LPT deferred the final decision about the eastern boundary until the next meeting.

Southern boundary – A significant large majority of participants believed that the southern boundary should be Iliff. A small group thought it should be 6th Ave., although they were willing to go as far south

as Mississippi. This group thought the program should be much more focused geographically, and that extending to Iliff would dilute the effect of the grant funding.

At this point the LPT ran out of time. The group agreed to make final decisions about geographic boundaries on the east and south at the next meeting on January 18, 2018. The meeting will be at the Village Exchange Center from 5:30 – 8:30 pm.