

GNAC September 16, 2024

In attendance: Richard Harrison, Christine Walter, Peter Fry, Susan Lindsay, Jens Knudsen, Rick Johnson, Hayden Miller, Stacy Borke, Alicia Temple, Dorothy Elmore, Anthony Jordan, Lindsay Christensen

Virtual: Lexie Gordon, David Watnick, Kisun Peters, Natalie Amar, Commissioner Meieran

Absent: Mike Zupan

Business:

- Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.
- The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved.
- Staff introduced Lindsay Christensen from In-Accord, who is joining the group as the facilitator and observing this meeting.
 - A discussion was held regarding the ability of facilitators to be neutral and the ways that individuals' actions may be changed because they are being observed.

Update on Deflection:

- Staff provided an update on the first two weeks of deflection. They shared that the program had been operating for 16 days and there were two options for deflection available: field based, available Monday - Friday 8 am - 8 pm, where a peer who can respond within 30 minutes meets an individual in the field; and a court-based program where the District Attorney determines if someone should have been eligible for deflection and has a peer meet them when they show up for court. As of the end of day the previous Friday there had been 27 deflections, with 24 coming from Portland Police Bureau. Staff are seeing a lot of what was expected: individuals needing detox, outpatient treatment, people being connected directly to Unity, and getting folks referrals to shelter and housing. Staff expect to have a better sense of how many people are acting on their care plan at the first 30-day mark. Staff noted that there are days where they have a very small number of people utilizing the Court-based deflection and other days with larger numbers. Staff are learning a lot and are very eager to have the Pathway Center open. Staff noted that the limitations on availability in certain hours is creating inequities. Staff noted they still expect the Pathway Center to open in mid-late October and that Tuerk House has been doing a great job hiring but that overnight staffing is still the primary challenge. Tuerk House is operating in the facility.
- Staff additionally noted that they are seeing a consistent volume and that they cannot extrapolate too much from the numbers but that to-date there had been a fair amount of consistency in the number of deflections and not a large spike day-to-day. Staff expect to have enough data to begin understanding if modifications to the program need to be made in October or November. Staff noted that as they make final decisions around opening the Pathway Center they are looking at how to continue to offer the field based deflection and to offer communities around the county and partners options that work for them as well, with a focus on what they think will promote recovery outcomes. Staff are particularly focused on identifying new ways for how to ensure people follow up on their care plans and they are constantly iterating and trying new things as they receive

feedback from partners and peers. A priority for this program is to remain nimble and able to recalibrate as needed.

- A GNAC member asked if the staff at the Pathway Center will be County or Tuerk House employees.
 - Staff responded that most staff at the Pathway Center will be Tuerk House employees but that there will also be a number of Health Department employees working there from 8-5 pm and that County security would have two officers on-site 24/7.
- A GNAC member asked if a map had been created of where deflections were occurring and requested that one be created.
 - Staff acknowledged that request and noted that the vast majority of deflections were occurring in Central Precinct.
- A GNAC member asked about the change in the name of the center from the dropoff to the deflection to the pathway center.
 - Staff noted that the model has not changed and that only law enforcement and the District Attorney can refer someone to the Pathway Center, but that the name has iterated over time.
- A GNAC member asked how many people who were deflected received further services, noting they had seen on the news stories about the shortage in District Attorneys.
 - Staff responded that they will have a better sense after the first 30-day mark but that some individuals did receive immediate access to services at the time of their assessment.
- A GNAC member requested a list of the providers who individuals were being referred to.

Briefing on updated safety and security plan

- Staff provided a briefing on the updated safety and security plan and requested that questions and feedback be held until the end of the presentation
- Multiple GNAC members noted that they would have to go through organization-specific processes to sign on to a GNA.
- Staff stated clearly that they hope to have a GNA in place by the time the Pathway Center opens but that the Center will be opening as soon as it is ready to operate.

Discussion on updated safety and security plan

- A GNAC member stated that the County has made its goal clear to get the center open GNA in place or not. Their feedback included: the stretch of 12th needs to go down to Morrison. Lots of dealers on that corner. Needs to be on both sides of Alder, Portland Parks owns property next to Revolution Hall. Zone 2 should stretch down to Washington between 9th & 10th.
- A GNAC member provided the following feedback: moving into these three zones is much improved over what we had before. Blue zone (zone 3) needs to be expanded in targeted areas, doesn't need to be a neat square. Buckman Elementary, Revolution Hall and the area just south. They are a bit worried about only two patrols per shift. Times of day could be better for additional patrols like lunchtime at Escuela Viva, nighttime when

kids aren't there. Maybe 3-4 times per day, focus times based on the specific cadence of EV. Expand zone 3 based on areas of high importance.

- A GNAC member provided the following feedback: They agreed with the previous speaker. Zone 3 needs to go further up in the neighborhood, you're just driving people into the neighborhood. It's one thing to have a business in the business district, another thing when you live here, you deal with it daily, it's part of your life. They noted they had had conversations about selling their house and moving every time something comes up like St. Francis, County programs. Calling 911 is not effective. A GNAC member recently had to call them over at 7:30 am because the police wouldn't come to respond to an incident. We have people coming up to Buckman Elementary, drug deals, janitors say they see needles and people camping. You decided to put this next to a residential neighborhood, we fought St. Francis for years. Now without any input/open meetings you've decided this is where this will go, find that frustrating if not illegal. You need someone we can call who's a mental health provider 24/7 to respond to people who are passed out on our sidewalks or threatening our neighbors.
- A GNAC member noted they did not see this program only lasting two years.
 - Staff responded that they have a limited term lease and are actively developing another facility.
- A GNAC member provided the following feedback: the facility perimeter is your frontage zone. They thanked staff for including the swell in the frontage zone, we've had a lot of problems in that swell. They liked the third map a lot. Middle map doesn't do much for them. Safety is a feeling, a matter of being safe in a place, people around you you feel safe with. Doesn't mean they look or are like you, but present a sense of purpose and calmness. Safety is Disneyland, having people around that are dressed in uniform but not police. People will escalate themselves to what they're being threatened by. This GNAC member was at a meeting at OMSI where a PPB officer in full uniform was talking about understanding trauma but he was in full uniform and they went up and said they were scared of the officer because their gun and presence caused them to escalate. This member liked the idea of Portland Street Response and people being out there who are conscious of their impact. They should just be there, everywhere, and police as security shouldn't be there at all times but there as needed. They noted they didn't feel two security patrols would be effective because people would know when those patrols were coming to the area.
- Staff noted they had seen support in the room and on the call for the idea of having patrols engaged at particular times related to the preschool's operations.
- A GNAC member felt that patrols would not be effective and that security should be on-call instead, and that the community needed someone they can call to report concerning behavior and have a security team come out to address it.
- Another GNAC member noted that they used to be able to call Central City Concern to have a non-law enforcement response.
- A GNAC member provided the following feedback: the problem is you're taking a countywide problem and concentrating it in this area. Bringing people with an illegal problem to this area, saying we brought you here in handcuffs but you're free to go, and we can't make you take a ride. If you can solve the transportation issue, if you can

compel the person to leave, you've solved a lot of the reasons to worry. If your goal is to get a GNA signed by opening, why not just make accepting transportation a component of successful deflection?

- Staff noted they had responded in writing to the question of why transportation away from the facility could not be compelled and that mandating that someone enter a vehicle was off the table. Staff noted that they will have transportation at the site and that people will prefer to take that transportation over walking. They noted the County has committed to continuous quality improvement and is willing to come back to the table and evaluate what may not be working.
- The same GNAC member stated that if the County is not willing to mandate transportation that they should offer incentives, and that if they are concerned that individuals would use cash incentives to purchase drugs they could offer gift cards.
- A GNAC member noted they had heard clearly from the County that transportation could not be mandated and noted that community members had asked for a specific legal precedent. They asked whether it is a case of the County cannot mandate it because of a specific legal issue or that it would not as a policy position.
 - Staff responded that they cannot legally mandate accepting transportation, but they could make a policy choice to make accepting transportation part of engaging in deflection but that someone could then choose to not accept it.
- Commissioner Meieran stated that if someone chooses deflection they have to be transported to deflection, they're choosing to transport to deflection. She asked why is it that they can't choose not to be transported away? If they're not arrested then they're agreeing to be transported to the facility. They could agree to be transported away from the facility when they're done at the time of accepting deflection.
 - Staff asked the Commissioner what they suggested the consequence be in the moment if someone chose to not accept a ride away from the facility.
 - Commissioner Meieran stated: one, is the question if it's legal or not, I'm saying it's legal, if the County is saying it's not legal ...if you have chosen that you are not requiring people to accept transportation. To keep saying it's not legal is not meeting us with honesty. If it's legal, bounce the question back, what would the consequence be?
 - Staff asked what the Commissioner was proposing as the consequence if they do not accept transportation.
 - Commissioner Meieran stated that they could fail deflection, which would result in them going to jail, but that they would then likely be immediately released from jail.
 - Staff engaged in a conversation with a GNAC member about a hypothetical situation in which the staff member was deflected, arrived at the center, engaged in all required actions at the center, and then refused to accept a transportation option away from the center and inquired what the expectation was from the community as to the consequence for refusing to accept transportation.
 - The GNAC member responded that they felt it was reasonable to make accepting transportation a component of successfully completing deflection and that if they

did refuse transportation and then were encountered by law enforcement again while possessing drugs that they would be ineligible for deflection.

- Staff noted that the deflection program is broader than the center. Having a center-focused deflection process doesn't make sense because there are other components of deflection. And in phase 2 there will be people in the center who are not part of deflection. The goal here is to prevent people from creating safety and security risks in the neighborhood. The County is talking about ensuring multiple ways that they can offer transportation so there is never a lack of transportation options. They noted that they expect 2-3 people to be deflected through the center per day. Staff noted that with outreach workers, additional security patrols, constant police presence, and increased penalties for dealers around treatment facilities it was likely there would be improvements in the situation around the facility.
- A GNAC member stated that mandating transportation undoes the County's action of concentrating people who have addiction in this one space.
- Staff noted they felt there was a lot of clarity gained in this conversation and stated that the GNAC has staff's commitment to come back next week with more on transportation.
- A GNAC member expressed high level frustration that the County doesn't offer transportation because they don't know where to take them. They stated that the County can't transport someone to a homeless encampment or a situation they've been deflected to. They stated that they buy into Jessica's theory of deflection: taking someone away from the place where they are engaging in bad behavior, but that the County doesn't know where they're going, which is the same problem we have with TASS sites and encampments. The County doesn't have room in the jail, in shelter. To make this conversation more honest going forward we need to recognize that you don't have a place to transport people to because you don't have anywhere to take them.
- A staff member noted that they have been doing a lot of research about drop off centers and transportation around the country. They stated: they have found no programs anywhere where people are forced into transportation. Even when you talk about incentivization, people generally take transportation. Typically the community around facilities improves. Even the camps that were in the area around the center. Your neighborhood is going to get better because of the outreach services that won't be available in other neighborhoods. The idea that people don't generally take transportation, it's very few people that do that because people want to go back to their things. There are places where we can take people. Police are picking them up where their property is at. People take transportation because that is how they get back to their stuff. Not minimizing your concerns, what I'm offering is that there may be other ways that we look at how we do transportation outside of mandating. A GNA is to balance the concerns of the neighbors and the desire to help people succeed in deflection.
- Commissioner Meieran stated: I think about the BHRC for example. Having been part of that process there was the expression of predictable outcomes around safety and security issues external to the facility. Nothing was done proactively to address those, which led to a disaster and had to be reactively addressed in a less effective and more traumatic way to those involved. I would suggest that we accept the predictable situation that there will be people intoxicated, whatever happens in the facility, and they may want

to hang out in the area. Not that they'll try to find a bicycle to take, assume they will be there, and it is better to plan for a problem and not have it arise than not plan and have the problem come up. Would plan for people loitering outside the place, maybe going a bit further out. Plan for dealers coming there, people using substances. What is a reasonable and rational approach to that? In terms of transportation, where does one transport them? It's on the County to answer those questions. It's not a punishment, it's saying you can't be here and not arresting them and throwing them into a vehicle. It's outreach workers talking to them. Vast majority of people do choose to go, there are ways to talk to people to get them to take the transportation. That's outreach, peers. And we need to plan for when they won't.

- A GNAC member stated: I feel like we gathered there is not a legal basis, but an objection to what it would be and that the County doesn't want this to result in people having a failed deflection and going to jail, I can understand and agree to that sentiment to an extent. There needs to be an accountability metric for people who choose alternative ways to depart. If they're found and had a report called on them in the neighborhood, that might be something that results in automatic failed deflection because they stuck around in the neighborhood. It could look like an exit protocol, maybe a bus pass if that's what they're comfortable with, and identify where they intend to go, and if they didn't originate in the Buckman neighborhood they shouldn't be going somewhere in the neighborhood. It's that 1 in 20 that decline transportation that will have the chance of encountering a dealer. Not mandating accepting transportation, but providing a variety of options. If they're leaving and not accepting transportation, ask where they intend to go, if they don't go there and loitering in the area and then cause a disturbance and have another interaction with PPB or outreach workers, that would be a reasonable reason to fail deflection.
- A GNAC member noted that they heard staff say there would be additional police patrols.
 - Staff clarified they had said an additional police presence, not additional patrols.
 - The same GNAC member stated that they think increased patrols should also be contemplated.

Close-out/next steps:

- Staff thanked the GNAC for the feedback on the zones and said that it would be incorporated into the updated plan. They appreciated that concerns around transportation are persistent and that staff will explore some alternative suggestions and continue to flesh them out over the next week. Staff noted that they had a chance to review the notes from the informal GNAC meeting Commissioner Meieran had convened the previous week and saw that there was a desire for an escalation mechanism. They noted that the Laurelwood Center's GNA had a provision for mediation if there are sustained issues. Staff provided a copy of that language and said that they would like folks to reflect on it and that they hoped while that specific language was shelter-specific, they hoped it was closer to what was expressed as a desire.