

Dan Meeting Insights (6.4.2019)

Current High-Level Problem

There is a supply of houses that is currently untapped that could be used to substantially help solve the homeless problem

- ~800,000 units of housing that we can potentially leverage in LA for shared housing (need to check/validate this stat)
- We believe there are 55-60,000 people on the street
 - Last year we housed 18,000 people
 - 14,000 people became homeless last year for the first time ever
 - *Why are more people becoming homeless so rapidly?*

North Star

What is a driving goal to think about through the project

- A sense of camaraderie both tenants, landlords and the community can have in bringing people in need of help in and helping them reengage with society

Most important thing for us to get right

A sense of empathy and understanding of who the addressable audience is

- Dan really wants our team to understand mentally what it means to be homeless and how finding housing might work for you

Background of the Process

This is a background of the process as it exists now with what happens and who it applies to

Steps

1. Identifying a unit that can support multiple people
2. Negotiate with LL
 - There may need to be changes added to the house to make it livable/work
3. Present place to Case Workers
4. Caseworkers hold an open house
 - Gather as many homeless people as possible
5. Application of interested parties are collected

6. Case workers gather to discuss who would be a good fit
 - Based on what they know about the homeless people
7. Bring the housing seekers together to test compatibility
8. Fill out a roommate agreement
 - We have a document of the agreement
 - Discuss bills, cleanliness, visitors, etc...
9. Lease signing is done

Filling housing and vetting

More background on who would be filling the houses and what type of houses/units

- Who will fill the housing?
 - Vetted people on the streets (can they meet income requirements)
 - People on the streets have less mental illness than you think
 - Only 20% of people actually have mental illness
 - Some homeless people would most likely be okay if they had a proper living situation
- How are people vetted?
 - Through a questionnaire
 - People that are compatible would be targeted to move in to a house together
 - There would need to be a pool of people to choose from to speed up the process
- House Scenarios
 - Rent out an entire house to multiple people in need (each different rooms)
 - Rent out a single room in a house

Roles

There are both internal and external roles to account for when thinking of the different people who take part in steps of the process

External - Outside of the Shared Housing team

- Landlords
 - Typically own 10, 20, 50, 100 buildings that have units we can leverage
 - Need to build trust and a structured relationship
- Tenants

- Homeless People
 - People that are less likely to score high on SPDA (tool to gauge likelihood to die on the streets)
 - Probably someone who has potential income of over a thousand a month
 - Able to work
- Seniors
 - We need more research/understanding on this

Internal - Members of the Shared housing team or alike-organizations

- Housing Location Team
 - Identifying the unit
 - Inspecting it
 - Holding open house
 - Relationship w/LL
 - Paperwork collection
- Housing Navigation Team
 - Work with people on the streets
 - Drive interest by selling to participants
 - Know them and identify housing for them
 - Maintain files needed for payment
- Housing Stabilization Team (social workers)
 - Ensure housing situation is stable after the fact
 - 24 months of stabilization

Who else is in the shared housing space?

- Additional Organizations
 - There are 8 total organizations working on similar things
 - PATH (people assisting the homeless)
 - If we worked together, we could fill houses much quicker

Problems In the Process Now

A list of the current problems the process faces according to Dan. We should think of these as addressable problems we want to further understand.

- Takes too long to fill housing

- A month between identifying unit and signing a lease
- We need to tighten that window up as much as possible
- Ensuring physical tenant paper file is correct
 - It's difficult to ensure that all areas of the document are accurate
 - Needs to be audit-proof (w/case notes and eligibility requirements)
 - Making sure all signatures are in place is a blocker
- Organizing compatible roommates
 - Scheduling is tough between X amount of schedules for homeless people and case workers
 - Ensuring there is enough interest in a unit
- Really big units
 - It's difficult to maintain stabilization of all of the individuals in the house
 - It is very time consuming to do so
- Complications for 'user'
 - Answering questions and building relationships is tough
 - People we work with have communication issues (everyone from illiterate to master's degrees)
 - People that have a hard time concentrating and others that are fully functioning
 - The UX of a tool needs to make sense
 - Neighborhoods in LA is difficult to select all from (there are so many)
- HIPPA Compliance
 - You might want to know something about your roommate...
 - You can't reveal roommate info to someone else...
 - What about when it comes to living with someone transgender?
 - Can we have this as a screening criteria?
- Dealing with issues that happen after people are placed in homes
 - Severe personality disorders
 - Very ill family coming to stay in a house with someone
 - Ensuring each individual lease is managed correctly and easily and finding a new tenant when needed
- There are many agencies that deal with homeless

- Homeless info is spread across multiple agencies/roles
- It is near impossible to now match a family with someone who might fit well with a family due to separate agencies

What works well in the process?

- Private entries to units
 - This is desired
- Enough bathrooms for number of people
- Transparency and other information about the benefits of units
 - It helps spark interest in a unit if someone knows about walkability score, crime rates, local schools, etc...

Potential Tool

Dan describing the potential tool and what impact it might have—[Match.com](#) for roommates

- Using questionnaire to identify people that work with one another
 - Move way quicker in identifying people that are compatible
 - Make sure all question combinations that cannot match are covered and identified quickly
 - Case manager would probably need to be present helping the homeless person fill out their questions
- Could the housing navigator fill out the questions on behalf of the user?
 - Then have the potential tenant ensure answers are correct?
- It would solve the needs of
 - Large housing
 - Matching across organizations
 - Time-constraints
 - Filling places where one tenant leaves

Possible Outcome/Impact

- Getting people back on their feet
- Saving money for people
- Creating relationships
- Reducing anxiety and fear of becoming homeless again
- Helping loneliness
- *Dream outcome*

- End homelessness in LA

Benefits of Shared Housing

- Cut costs of living
 - Buy groceries in bulk
 - Split rent
 - One car among multiple people?
 - Help watching kids
- Feel-good
 - A sense of camaraderie in bringing people in and helping them

Follow Up

Questions we still have

We'll add to this list after we meet...

- Questionnaire
 - Will there be a different questionnaire for someone already in the house vs someone coming in from the street?

Metrics

Dan will connect us with 'Martha' who has access to more metrics that can help us

- 500 families and 500 single adults were housed last year (~10% was shared housing)

Misc Info

- Metro staff (Case workers and MGMT) all have tablets