

Paul Pazen:

First, I want to point out that our mayor was extremely supportive. He saw the value of this as the same thing. You give the fundamentals behind it or you talk about how this fits together and it's a light bulb for many of us. Like, oh, okay, yeah, this makes sense, let's figure it out. So the mayor was very supportive at the beginning and continues to be extremely supportive of this. One of our primary, or really our primary funding source from the beginning was a ballot initiative that's called Caring for Denver, and that's how we were able to launch the pilot and they play a critical role as we move forward. But we worked closely with a state representative, Leslie [inaudible 00:01:17]. She has helped us on other issues as well. She and I traveled to Seattle to take a look at the lead model.

She and I traveled to take a look at the solution center before we've partnered on other issues, trying to focus on getting people the help that they need, and also trying to get police the help that they need to focus on these significant challenges that we have with crime and traffic safety. So we also engaged with several city council members who have been very instrumental at its onset, part of the planning meetings from start and to finish. So I think it is important that you bring the elected official... Well, that you communicate with the elected officials and let them know about this type of approach because they can really help clear the path when we're talking about funding challenges that we may have. And there's a lot of issues when you start talking about delivery of service, indemnification, liability, there's a lot of issues that our elected officials can help us navigate this with.