

Report to Council



Date: January 22, 2018
File: 0615-20-02
To: City Manager
From: Co-Chairpersons, Journey Home Task Force
Subject: Journey Home Task Force Update
Prepared by: Social Development Manager, Active Living & Culture

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the update report from the Journey Home Task Force Co-Chairpersons dated January 22, 2018.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on the progress of the Journey Home Task Force and work plan to develop Kelowna's long-term plan to address homelessness.

Background:

At the regular meeting on September 11, 2017, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Journey Home Task Force and the appointment of the Task Force members. The Task Force began meeting in late September and Turner Strategies was engaged to support the work of the Task Force near the end of November.

Journey Home Consulting Team:

The principal of Turner Strategies, Dr. Alina Turner, will be leading the process to build the Journey Home Strategy, bringing expertise in system planning, performance management, and program evaluation specific to Housing First implementation. Dr. Turner is recognized as a leading expert working on homelessness issues and has extensive experience working with communities across Canada to support homelessness strategy development and implementation, including Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Yellowknife, Fredericton, St. John's, Lethbridge, and Red Deer.

As the community of Kelowna was embarking on the development of the Journey Home Strategy to address the issue of homelessness in our community, the need to address the distinct needs of youth who are facing homelessness was clear. Working with the A Way Home (AWH) – Kelowna Steering Committee, the approach has been designed to integrate and embed a strategy to address youth homelessness into the overarching Journey Home Strategy. This will ensure that the unique responses required to effectively address youth homelessness are prioritized.

The approach of embedding a strategy to address youth homelessness within the Journey Home Strategy caught the attention of both the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) and A Way Home (AWH) – Canada. Their interest is in working with our community to extrapolate learnings to assist in developing a model to be promoted nationally. As a result, Turner Strategies has partnered with the COH and AWH - Canada to prepare the Journey Home plan.

The Observatory is a leader in Canada in forming partnerships between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers, and people with lived experience of homelessness to conduct research for more effective solutions to homelessness. The Observatory, led by Dr. Stephen Gaetz will be engaged throughout the scope of the project in an expert advisory role to ensure the approach is grounded in leading edge research while developing locally informed solutions.

A Way Home is a national movement, bringing together a coalition of partners dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness in Canada. Led by Melanie Redman, the co-founder and President, A Way Home Canada believes that by aligning the strategies and resources of key stakeholders, we will end youth homelessness in Canada once and for all.

Journey Home Task Force:

The work of the Task Force to move the Journey Home vision to reality is well underway with a goal to present the Strategy for Council's consideration by late June 2018. The Strategy is being designed to transform Kelowna's housing and homelessness services into an integrated, people-centered, results-focused service system.

The objective of the Task Force, as outlined in the approved Terms of Reference, is to develop a Journey Home Strategy for Council's consideration for adoption. The strategy will:

1. be based on a Homeless-Serving Systems Planning approach;
2. be driven by local and lived experience in the application of best practice principles to ensure a community-wide collaborative process; and
3. become a guide for local decision-making on addressing affordable housing and homelessness issues.

Journey Home Deliverables:

The Journey Home Strategy will deliver a multi-year implementation plan outlining community priorities, system coordination, and integrated information and data system development. The implementation plan will be critical to the success of the Strategy through clear identification of the associated costs, and the resources and funding investment required. The implementation plan will provide a clear and necessary foundation for a strategy to secure senior government and other funding that will be required to bring Journey Home to reality.

The Journey Home Strategy will deliver three components to guide local work to address homelessness over the next five years:

1. *Community Priorities Plan Development*

This first component of the Journey Home Strategy will include the development of community vision and principles. Through a process of community and stakeholder engagement, it will outline the key priorities in the community to reduce and prevent homelessness. Grounded in evidence-based approaches, the Priorities Plan will guide collaborative efforts in Kelowna over the next five years by defining community priorities with clear, measurable, and achievable outcomes encouraging a foundation of inclusion, innovation, collective impact, and partnership.

2. *Systems Coordination Framework*

This component of the Strategy is based on developing a local coordinated approach to housing and supports. The goal is to apply a system planning approach that considers the homeless-serving system, made up of multiple agencies and government services, as an integrated whole, comprised of defined program components working towards a common end moving local responses from managing homelessness and its impacts, to focus on the collective responses to end homelessness.

3. *Integrated Information and Data System Development*

This component of the Strategy will address the development of an integrated information system designed to leverage community-level research to promote effective investment priorities and opportunities. The goal is to develop a system-wide data collection system that will guide the development of performance indicators to measure progress and ongoing effectiveness of the local systems coordination. This will promote system-wide data-driven decision-making and ensure the alignment and effectiveness of all resources and financial investments.

Journey Home Project Roadmap and Key Dates:

The process to develop the Journey Home strategy is focused on providing the community with opportunities to increase their understanding of the underlying issues related to homelessness and to contribute to locally-grown solutions to inform the creation of a realistic plan to address homelessness in Kelowna.

The Journey Home work plan reflects this approach, outlining Journey Home processes through to the completion of the Strategy in June, 2018. The work plan is further outlined in Appendix A.

Summary

The Task Force has engaged Turner Strategies in the development of a long-term strategy to ensure people experiencing homelessness in Kelowna have a clear path to the help they need, when they need it. The approach to embed the Youth Homelessness Plan, A Way Home -Kelowna, within the broader Strategy, will provide an opportunity to understand and address the factors that contribute to youth homelessness. Working with COH and A Way Home - Canada will provide Kelowna with the opportunity to contribute to the national work to end youth homelessness across the country.

The Journey Home project roadmap has been designed to ensure that the Strategy is community-driven and inclusive, representing a variety of voices, including those with lived experience of homelessness. The focus is on community strengths, bringing together knowledge, skills, and

resources to transform the local homeless-serving sector into a coordinated, person-centred and outcomes focused system that will be more effective in meeting the needs of community members experiencing, or at-risk of homelessness.

Internal Circulation:

J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
K. Needham, Deputy City Clerk
L. Ruether, Communications Advisor

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Existing Policy
External Agency/Public Comments
Communications Comments
Alternate Recommendation
Financial/Budgetary Considerations
Personnel Implications

Submitted by:

Journey Home Task Force Co-Chairpersons

Approved for inclusion: J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

Cc: Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services

Attachments:

Appendix A: Journey Home Project Roadmap and Key Dates:
Appendix B: Journey Home Task Force Update Presentation