

# Report to Council



**Date:** June 25, 2018

**File:** 0615-20-02

**To:** Acting City Manager

**From:** Co-Chairs, Journey Home Task Force

**Subject:** Journey Home Task Force – Final Journey Home Strategy

Report Prepared by: Social Development Manager, Active Living & Culture

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Task Force Co-Chairpersons, dated June 25, 2018, with respect to the Journey Home Strategy;

AND THAT Council endorse the Journey Home Strategy as attached to the report of the Journey Home Task Force Co-Chairs dated June 25, 2018;

AND THAT Council direct staff to support the Transition Plan to develop the Backbone governance and organization which will focus on implementation of the Strategy outlined in the Journey Home Strategy as attached to the report of Task Force Co-Chairs dated June 25, 2018;

AND THAT Council direct staff to report back on the process of the Transition Plan as required.

## **Purpose:**

To present Council with the Journey Home Strategy for endorsement.

## **Background:**

The Journey Home Task Force has now completed the development of the Journey Home Strategy. The five-year, \$47 million-dollar homelessness Strategy has been tailored to address Kelowna's unique needs. In May 2017, Council agreed to take leadership on the development of a plan to address homelessness. Over the past year, the Journey Home Task Force, comprised of 21 members led by two co-chairs representing a diverse range of sectors, have been working collectively to develop a comprehensive Strategy. Journey Home is locally-focused and draws on the expertise and perspectives of those closest to the issue of homelessness in our community.

## **Journey Home Strategy**

The Journey Home Strategy is designed to share the journey that we have been on as a community and to unfold the community-driven and innovative outcomes from the process. It is important to note this has been much more than just building a strategy; it embodies the voices of our community with a clear message reflecting the community's readiness to make a change. The Strategy presented is a result of our community's joint passions, combined strengths, and collective hopes for Kelowna and each other.

It is a collective vision that in essence was developed by the community, for the community. It's grounded in the belief that all people have the right to safe and dignified housing as well as the supports required to sustain it. Providing homes, establishing a foundation for realizing peoples' potential, and enabling their participation in our community in a meaningful way (both socially and economically) are key to reducing the risk of homelessness in Kelowna.

## ***Strategy Premise***

The Journey Home Strategy is presented as a five-year strategy, with a plan to review progress in year three. The strategy premise is focused on:

- Ending chronic and episodic homelessness
- Introducing measures to prevent homelessness in the first place
- Implementation of a coordinated system approach to homelessness

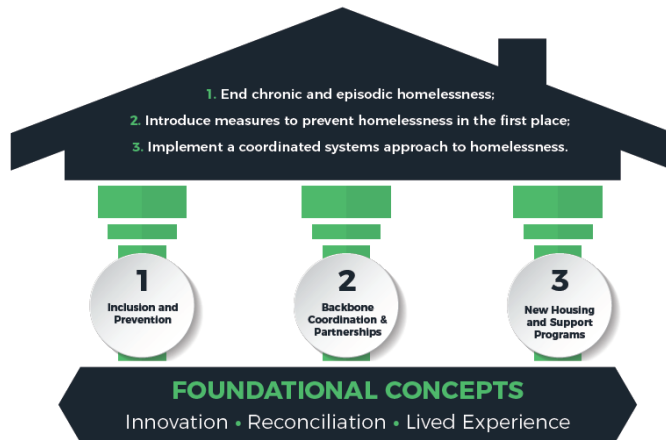
## ***Journey Home Vision, Values, and Guiding Principles***

The vision statement, collective values, and guiding principles are at the foundation of all the actions found within the Strategy. They have been designed to provide guidance for the community's collective work over the course of implementing the Journey Home Strategy. As work on implementation progresses, they will keep the collective on track, assist with the alignment of goals across sectors, and ensure consistency in application of best practices and standards as stakeholders learn to work more effectively across sectors and mandates.

## ***Proposed Strategy Framework***

Incorporating the findings from the extensive community consultation processes outlined in the Strategy, including a strong emphasis on lived and living experience guidance, 38 actions are proposed. The Strategy is presented using a framework based on three foundation concepts and three strategic pillars (see image).

The Foundational Concepts: Innovation, Reconciliation, and Lived Experience are woven and embedded in every aspect of the strategy and are critical to its successful execution. The Implementation Plan for the Strategy includes 10 actions related to the Foundational Concepts.



The Foundational Concepts are supported by three strategic pillars: Inclusion & Prevention, Backbone Coordination & Partnerships, and Housing & Wraparound Supports which support a further 28 actions in the Implementation Plan.

### ***Strategy Organization - Community Report and Technical Report***

The Journey Home Strategy includes a Community Report which summarizes key elements and learnings within the Strategy, as well as a Technical Report which is to serve as a guiding document for those undertaking the important work of implementing the strategy.

- The **Community Report** is designed to provide an overview of how the Strategy was developed. It speaks to the significant challenges our most vulnerable citizens face in finding their place in our community. The Journey Home story demonstrates how this process has revealed a strength and resiliency in community spirit that will guide our community to take action. The report shares the community's journey including what we learned, what surprised us, what we found motivating, what we are doing well, and what needs to change.

The Top Ten Actions are highlighted on page 26 of the Community Report. These have emerged as highlights within the Journey Home Strategy's Implementation Plan. They clearly demonstrate the community's commitment to change and are elevated as immediate, high-leverage actions of the highest priority.

- The **Technical Report** is a roadmap to implement the Strategy. It provides an overview of the current situation in Kelowna and strategic solutions to overcome challenges. A detailed review is provided of the process and outcomes from the over 2000 points of contact that contributed to the development of the Strategy. A thorough overview of the Strategy framework is provided including details related to the community voices that contributed to the solutions within the Strategy.

The Technical Report includes a robust and comprehensive Implementation Plan. The proposed actions for the Foundational Concepts and Strategic Pillars are outlined with detailed action steps, proposed timing, and identification of key collaborators that will be critical to successful implementation. The Implementation Plan is presented as a *living document* that will require

ongoing refinement. In order to ensure success, the proposed Backbone Organization will assume accountability and be focused on driving and supporting the implementation of the Strategy.

### **Strategy Milestones**

It is important to note that the Journey Home Strategy has been designed as a *living document* with the recognition that the Implementation Plan will continue to evolve as new learnings and information emerge. With this flexibility built-in, the measure of success of the Journey Home implementation will be gauged through the evaluation of milestones described within this document.

With the milestones identified to measure success over the five-year period, the Strategy has a built-in review process to ensure rapid and agile progress is ongoing. A mid-point (year three) strategic review and recalibration is earmarked during implementation.

### **Proposed Investment**

The total funding proposed in the Strategy will require an investment of \$47M from various sources over the five-year implementation. The recent BC Housing commitments to develop long-term supportive housing, along with the Task Force's effort to garner financial commitments to fund the Backbone Organization, have significantly reduced the original projected costs which were far greater than the proposed \$47M. The proposed investments are divided into three broad categories:

1. Housing - \$18M – 300 units of Long-term Supportive Housing needed. This includes units in buildings with supports onsite for people with complex needs that require ongoing support.
  - BC Housing has currently committed to two buildings (88 units) that are currently under development, and are in ongoing discussions and planning for an additional 102 units.
  - 110 units are still required with an estimate of three buildings at a total estimated cost of approximately \$18M.
2. Backbone Organization and Coordination - \$2.7M – A neutral organization is proposed to focus on, and take accountability for, the implementation of the Journey Home Strategy. Contribution commitments secured to date include:
  - City of Kelowna - \$300,000 total over the first two years
  - Funders Table - \$204,000 total over the first four years
  - Accelerate Okanagan – partnership to provide two co-working office spaces
  - Urban Systems - \$6,000 per year over two years to cover cost of office spaces
  - United Way CSO - \$20,000 over the first two years
3. Supports - \$26M – 500 new Program Spaces to support people in rental housing across the community with wraparound supports following the Housing First model.

The Strategy suggest that funding long-term and realistic solutions to homelessness is a smart investment. Not only is it important to care for all citizens, no matter their income or circumstance, but not doing anything, puts immense pressure on our health, justice and shelter systems.

Put simply, it is cheaper to house and support someone than it is to have them remain homeless. If the current situation in Kelowna is left as is, costs could run as high as \$100M over the timespan of the Strategy. In contrast, if we house and support those same people, we will avoid costs associated with major systems of about \$50M.

### ***Embedding a Youth Strategy***

Embedded within Journey Home is a population specific strategy focusing on addressing youth homelessness with the acknowledgement of the unique and distinct needs of youth under the age of 24 years. Input to guide the youth-focused recommendations included community stakeholders and youth with lived and living experience of homelessness in our community. The community response to address youth homelessness is integrated throughout the strategy and will be guided by the combined efforts of A Way Home Kelowna (AWHK), the Youth Advocates for Housing, along with the proposed Backbone Organization. The Strategy sends a clear message that addressing and preventing youth homelessness will require a robust, concentrated, and collective effort.

### ***Building on Success – Collective Community Response***

Kelowna has a strong history of collaboration with a multitude of organizations supporting those at risk, or those experiencing homelessness. As a result, Journey Home builds and focuses on strengthening this foundation made up of connected, collaborative, and innovative stakeholders. It is from this wealth of knowledge, experience, and practice that the Strategy has emerged. Kelowna has remarkably strong resources within the homeless serving sector, many of whom have already committed to participation in the Journey Home implementation.

A detailed sample of the efforts currently underway to address homelessness is included in the Strategy (Community Report, Appendix I, pages 18 – 21). This demonstrates how extensive the collective community-based response has been and the progress already made during the building of the Strategy. This work will provide a strong foundation to build on as the community moves forward with Journey Home.

### ***Healthy Housing and Journey Home Strategies Alignment***

The Journey Home and Healthy Housing Strategies are designed to address Council's top priorities of "homelessness" and "housing diversity". Both Strategies build on the learnings compiled in the 2017 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) that emphasizes the need for housing diversity and choice.

By design, these Strategies are closely aligned as is demonstrated by the numerous action items that intersect in both strategies as reported in Appendix C of the Journey Home Technical Report. The two strategies are mutually reinforcing and their implementation plans are aligned. Going forward it will be important to ensure that the implementation of the Strategies stay closely linked and that they are considered in tandem.

## **Moving Forward**

### ***Transitioning to Implementation***

Efforts to increase community understanding and buy-in has already begun through the Strategy engagement processes and by mobilizing potential funders. A transition plan is in place to ensure no loss of momentum between the completion of the Strategy and its implementation. The Task Force has supported the development of a Transition Team with the Co-Chairs and the majority of members committing to stay on for the nine-month transition process. This Team will guide the development of a governance structure and model for the proposed Backbone Organization, develop a funding and advocacy plan, work towards securing remaining funds for operation of the Backbone, and support interim measures to build a strong foundation for coordination efforts.

The foundation has been set for the ongoing engagement of the Youth Advocates for Housing and the Lived Experience Circle. These groups are already developing plans regarding the important role they will play with both the transition period and the Strategy implementation.

In the spirit of cooperation and in an effort to show commitment to support the implementation of the Strategy, organizations and individuals were encouraged to sign a Stakeholder Pledge. The pledge has garnered over 100 signatures, and is attached to the final Journey Home Strategy (Appendix III).

### ***City of Kelowna Role***

The Strategy identifies the importance of engaging all levels of government to work collectively with the community to support implementation. Throughout the process participants noted that for successful implementation of Journey Home it would be critical to have a formal and ongoing relationship with the City of Kelowna. Beyond the leadership, funding, and support contributions already made by the City, it is anticipated that there will be a need for ongoing commitments as the Strategy implementation unfolds. The Strategy suggests that there will need to be strong alignment of efforts and long-term planning, as well positioning of City contributions to leverage additional funding. It also will be critical to have the City's assistance in advocating to senior government for system change and the necessary financial and resource investments needed for the Strategy implementation. The City's ongoing role will be further defined throughout the transition period and early development stage of the Backbone Organization. This will lead to a formalized partnership arrangement between the City and the Backbone Organization.

### **Summary**

The Journey Home process has been inspiring. The timing is right to move forward on this Strategy, our community is ready to take action. The momentum and collective will to work together to address homelessness is evident. Kelowna's Homelessness Strategy is well timed as the priorities of senior levels of government are aligned with our municipal focus on addressing homelessness. Our extensive consultation results have clearly identified that addressing homelessness is a priority and that action needs to be taken now. All these factors are positioning Kelowna well to move forward with the implementation of Journey Home.

Journey Home delivers a well-informed, targeted, and measurable Strategy driven by current data and best practices outlining how as a community we need to move forward. It provides a realistic path that demonstrates if we work collectively, addressing and finding a functional end to homelessness is within our grasp.

Building on a history of collaboration, Journey Home has provided new opportunities that have brought non-traditional players into the discussion. What has emerged is a new understanding of homelessness in the Kelowna context along with new and innovative partnerships. Drawing the best from each sector has strengthened our willingness and ability to work together to shore up the gaps identified, embrace innovation, and take action. The journey is not complete, it's just beginning, and it will definitely take the entire community to impact significant change.

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

The current City funding commitment to the Backbone, including transition period, is \$125k for 2018 and \$150k for both 2019 and 2020. The City's financial and resource contributions to both the Strategy development as well as the transition period have successfully assisted in leveraging additional contribution commitments.

During the 2019 budget process an additional contribution for funding for the Backbone Organization will be brought forward for Council's consideration. The request will be for an additional \$150k for 2021 which will bring the Backbone Organization to a check-in point. At this time, it will become clearer on the City's requirement for ongoing support. The City's continued financial commitment to the Backbone operation will provide further leverage to attract additional funding contributions.

**Internal Circulation:** Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture; Divisional Director, Financial Services; Divisional Director, Communications Manager; Communications Advisor; Policy and Planning Manager; Sustainability Coordinator

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

**Submitted by:** Journey Home Task Force Co-Chairpersons

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

Attachments:

Appendix I – Journey Home Strategy – Community Report  
Appendix II – Journey Home Strategy – Technical Report  
Appendix III – Journey Home Stakeholder Pledge and Signees  
Journey Home – June 25<sup>th</sup> PowerPoint

Cc: Divisional Director, Community Planning & Strategic Investment  
Divisional Director, Strategic Corporate Services  
Divisional Director, Financial Services