

Report to Council



Date: December 5, 2016
File: 0610-50
To: City Manager
From: Active Living & Culture and Community Planning & Real Estate Divisions
Subject: Housing and Homeless-Serving Systems Framework Update
Prepared by: Sue Wheeler, Social Development Manager

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Active Living & Culture and Community Planning & Real Estate Divisions, dated November 30, 2016, regarding an update on current initiatives underway to address the housing and homeless-serving system needs of the community;

AND THAT Council direct staff to continue collaboration with stakeholders in the development of a long term strategy to address homelessness as outlined in the report dated November 30, 2016.

Purpose:

To provide Council an overview of current initiatives related to housing strategies, and in addition, an overview of best practice research, key local findings, and a proposed framework for the development of a long term strategy to address homelessness.

Background:

Kelowna is currently facing the same challenges that cities across the nation are experiencing related to homelessness and a lack of non-market and affordable housing to meet community needs. Cities are often the first line of response to ensure locally appropriate and effective action-focused strategies are in place to address the complex social issues that impact the safety, health, and wellbeing of our community.

Drawing from best practices that are demonstrating positive results in addressing homelessness, municipalities are recognizing the importance of local leadership in building and strengthening the capacity of the services and systems that serve the homeless in the community. Focusing on collaboration and coordination of services designed to address the root causes of vulnerability is at the foundation of building a safe, healthy, and sustainable community.

As a result, many municipalities are recognizing that it is critical to develop partnerships with all levels of government, non-profit and profit sectors, and faith communities to work together to develop and implement local plans that focus on prevention and support services for vulnerable populations. These plans are proving to be important tools to:

- identify local housing and service needs;
- define community priorities and objectives;
- develop integrated support systems that are coordinated and simple to navigate;
- target public investment towards the goal of reducing homelessness.

This report provides an overview of housing initiatives and initiatives focused on the development of a long term community strategy to address homelessness.

Housing Update:

It is fully recognized that appropriate housing for all citizens in our community, at all levels of the housing continuum, is a complex and multi-faceted issue. Some of the solutions will be long-term in nature and involve policy change, Federal and Provincial commitment and significant funding, while others can occur more immediately through municipal action and which will have a noticeable, short-term positive impact on our community.

The notable current and short-term actions are noted below:

Partnership Housing

The City of Kelowna has been extremely successful partnering with BC Housing over the past number of years, securing significant affordable housing investment and corresponding housing units in our community. On six previous occasions the City has contributed land in exchange for construction and operational arrangements for housing throughout Kelowna. Just recently, two additional City owned properties have been awarded funding for BC Housing projects in our community. Advancement of these projects will begin in earnest in 2017.

In addition to direct partnerships with BC Housing, City staff continue to work with BC Housing staff to identify property/building options that will address emerging needs in Kelowna (i.e. emergency shelters, single room occupancy buildings, etc.).

Housing Incentives

The City of Kelowna continues to provide incentives for purpose built rental housing, in the form of grants as well as tax relief. Council recently increased the amount of grant funding available under this program, for the next two years, as well weighting the incentive more heavily towards family friendly housing.

With a significant amount of rental housing currently in the development stream (3 x the annual projected goal in the OCP), staff will continue to monitor the need for incentives going forward; both by housing type and by location.

Housing Supply

An important policy role of the City of Kelowna is to ensure a reasonable supply of appropriate zoned land is available for the development of various forms of housing. The City continually monitors and reports on the development trends in our community and the availability of land relative to the projected supply acknowledged in the Official Community

Plan (Community Trends Report, OCP Indicators Report). An OCP update is anticipated to take place in 2017-2018.

Healthy City Strategy

Council recently endorsed the 2017 theme area for the Healthy City Strategy, 'Healthy Housing' which is envisioned to be a joint initiative with Interior Health focused on improving health outcomes through improved housing policies and practices. An update to the Housing Strategy will be one of the outcomes of the Healthy Housing project.

Strategic Acquisitions

Working with BC Housing and other partners the City plays an important support role in identifying opportunities for acquiring land or buildings for future affordable housing and we will continue to do so in order to attract both investment and needed housing units to our community.

Homeless-Serving Systems Strategy Update:

Best Practices Findings - The Need for a New Approach

The current focus on developing a comprehensive and well-integrated national plan is encouraging. However, in the absence of a national strategy, plans to address homelessness and housing insecurity have become a common feature of municipal policy-makers and community-based planning. These plans have contributed to a body of best practices research of which Kelowna can draw from.

There is a focus on Housing First which is based on coordinating program level services to rapidly rehouse individuals and support them to maintain housing stability. However, the complex and silo-oriented nature of homeless-response service delivery is creating challenges for the transition to this model of delivery. The disjointed nature of policy and program mandates and priorities, creates even greater challenges for vulnerable populations.

A more fundamental move towards systems planning is necessary to achieve the integration of policies and practice required to support a Housing First approach. Systems planning focuses on redesigning the local homeless-serving system to support overall coordination, alignment, and integration of planning, funding, and services.

Systems planning is based on a community-wide, formalized, and coordinated approach to integrating service delivery with the goal to:

- design coordinated responses based on a clear understanding of who is becoming homeless and why, their needs, and the pathways that have led them to homelessness;
- use a "no wrong door" approach, meaning that no matter where a person enters the system, that person can access any service they need and want at any given time;
- develop effective early intervention strategies aimed at reducing the time anyone experiences homelessness, and the negative consequences that result from that experience;
- achieve shared commitment partnerships to design policies, strategies, and investments that enhance housing stability, and access to crisis intervention and support when individuals and families need it;

- promote system integration by aligning services to avoid duplication, improve information sharing, and increase efficiency and performance based on client-centered and outcome-focused approaches.

Summary of Key Local Findings

Kelowna benefits from a multitude of strengths within the homeless serving sector. There are a number of quality resources and services that are responding to new and emerging needs. Like other communities, the services and resources that have been developed to address housing support needs are embedded in a complex and multi-layered system with a multitude of agencies and organizations involved in different pieces of the housing process.

In order to effectively prevent homelessness and to support individuals when homelessness does occur, the local agencies are working together. While they are currently faced with a lack of formalized structures, mechanisms, and partnership agreements to support community-wide collaborative planning and promote integrated services, there is a foundation of local strengths to build on:

- responding to emerging trends and issues by coordinating front-line support services;
- addressing individual needs and matching clients with services and housing;
- a growing willingness to support existing and develop new collaborations.

While there have been recent initiatives that have focused on reducing the challenges related to accessing and transitioning between services, there is currently no comprehensive map of services, resources, and supports. Nor is there a local structure for community-wide prioritization and planning that promotes coordination, alignment, and integration of resources, services, and efforts.

Several key themes have emerged through discussions with multiple stakeholders expressing a growing recognition that there is a need to:

- gain a deeper understanding of the individual needs and system-related challenges through consultation with those with lived experience;
- work differently and more collaboratively to address the increase in homelessness, the increase in complexity of needs, and the challenges presented by the lack of appropriate housing;
- combine local sources to obtain reliable data related to social housing stock supply and demand, together with the development of mechanisms to collect and report this information over time;
- monitor the impact of policies, programs and services on specific segments of the homeless population to identify gaps or shortcomings of systems and services, and to revise or develop new approaches, systems, and services to meet the unique needs of these groups;
- implement a local planning approach to address the systemic disjointedness, fragmentation, and access/navigation challenges being faced by those accessing services;
- strengthen the shift in focus away from managing homelessness to housing people;
- build the capacity of the homeless-serving system to work within a system-wide framework that is action-oriented, targeted, and measurable;
- identify local leadership to convene stakeholders and promote participation and accountability.

Moving Forward - Framework for Strategy Development

As best practice research shows, community planning activities by other Canadian municipalities have become more robust, strategic and forward-thinking. For a made-in-Kelowna plan, the following objectives need to be kept at the forefront:

- innovative approaches to improve collaboration in the development of new policies, programs, and partnerships geared towards preventing homelessness and ensuring that when it does occur it is rare, short-lived, and non-reoccurring;
- designing meaning and purposeful opportunities for people with lived experience to inform and shape all levels of systems planning solutions and strategies;
- better coordination to improve access and transition between services, especially for people with complex needs who need to access multiple services simultaneously;
- increased knowledge and information sharing designed to establish clear timelines with specific benchmarks and targets to increase housing access and reduce homelessness;
- rigorous approaches to monitor, evaluate, and report progress at different stages of plan implementation to track performance against targets and to provide flexibility to adjust goals, objectives and investment strategies in response to new emerging information over the life of the plan.

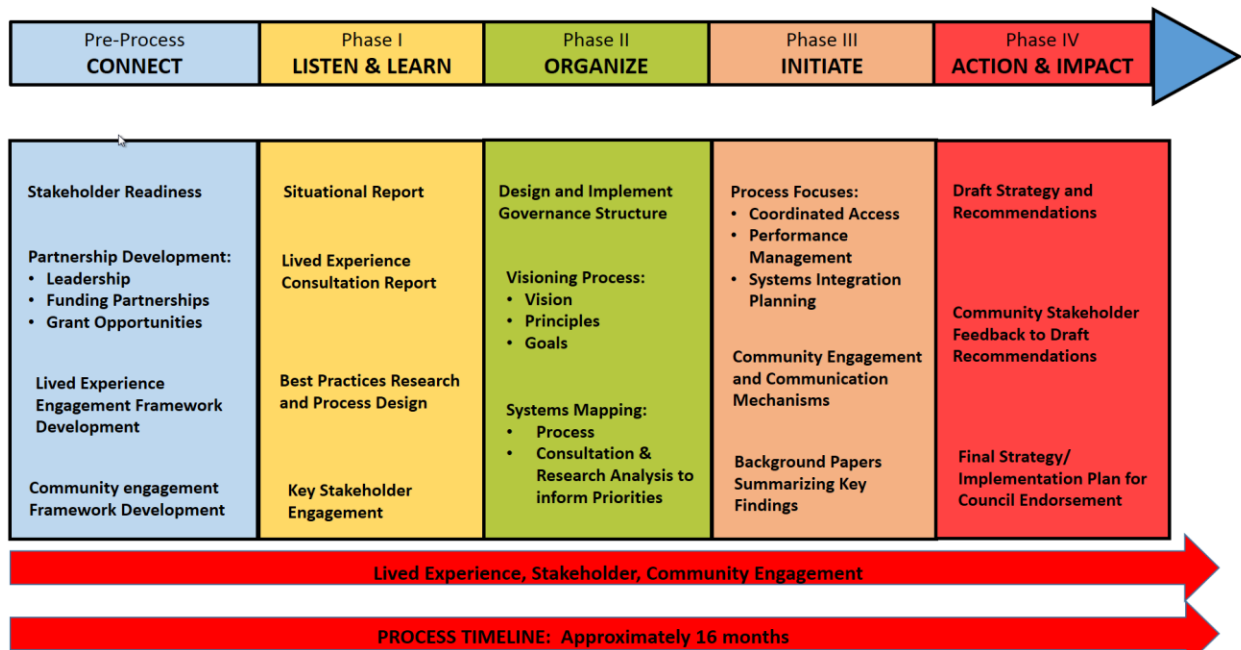
Staff propose to work with partners to develop a Homeless-Serving Systems Strategy based on the application of a Systems Planning Framework that will provide direction on several key elements that are critical in reducing the incidence of homelessness, and when it does occur, reducing the duration. The proposed strategy framework focuses on:

- Best Practice translation to local context;
- Capacity building to transition to a Systems Planning Framework approach;
- Leadership capacity building and Sustainability planning;
- Systems Planning focused on the development of:
 - Integrated Systems, Coordinated Service and Prevention Delivery;
 - Client-Centered Informed System and Delivery;
 - Performance driven, Outcome-Focused Services System.

The development of a Homeless-Serving Systems Strategy will help to shape the transformation of Kelowna's housing and homelessness services into an integrated, client-centered, outcome-focused service system that will enable residents to achieve housing stability and improve their well-being, and the overall safety, health, and sustainability of the community. Local leadership, inclusive engagement, local knowledge garnered through in-depth consultation with stakeholders, community, and those with lived experience will all be critical to the development of an effective local systems strategy.

The framework has been developed to reflect the stakeholder input to date, and it is expected that it will continue to evolve as partnerships and stakeholder commitments expand. Applying a Systems Planning Framework to the local context will be best achieved through a phased approach focused on developing a coordinated homeless-serving system.

Proposed Systems Framework:



While the framework above provides a guideline in the development of a longer term strategy, it is important to note that the phases of the framework overlap, with some activities occurring concurrently. Additional detail of components of each phase is provided in Appendix A.

Ongoing Initiatives

While the planning process is expected to take up to 16 months, it is important to note that additional initiatives will continue to be identified and pursued:

- Continuing to develop a community-wide understanding the strengths, challenges, barriers, and opportunities within the homeless-serving sector;
- Continuing to strengthen existing, and build new, partnership-focused relationships with other levels of government, local stakeholders, and agencies;
- Continue to explore and support opportunities to strengthen connections, leadership capacity, and promote data-informed outcome-focused approaches to understanding and addressing the needs of the homeless population;
- Build on the successes of initiatives such as the Transitional Storage program, and the cross-sectoral relationships that are developing as a result of this initiative.

It is expected that as local background research and consultation are underway, the design process and partnership contribution commitments for the development of a local strategy will continue to evolve. It's worth noting that the final plan recommendations will also provide City decision-makers with an outline of the City's potential role in the plan implementation.

Next Steps

With Council's endorsement for continued collaboration in the development of a long term strategy to address homelessness, the next steps will be:

- Budget consideration;
- Partnership Engagement and Development;
- Framework Refinement and Timelines;
- Design of Consultation Processes and Engagement Mechanisms;
- Planning for Research, Consultation, and Readiness Process.

Internal Circulation:

J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

D. Gilchrist, Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate

R. Mayne, Divisional Director, Corporate and Protective Services

C. Weaden, Divisional Director, Communications & Information Services

J. Foster, Communications Supervisor

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

To support the development of a long term strategy, a budget request for \$200,000, that includes \$125,000 from taxation, has been submitted for Council's consideration as part of the 2017 preliminary budget. The budget submission reflects the City's commitment to advancing this initiative and is key to leveraging additional funding partnerships and grant opportunities. The budget submission includes a conservative estimate of potential partnership opportunities. The ultimate scale of the initiative will be need to be adjusted based on the funding commitments achieved.

For instance, there was a recent grant opportunity under the Federal Homelessness Partnership Strategy where a call was issued for the Innovative Solutions to Homelessness Contribution funding stream. Even with a very tight deadline, sixteen partnership commitments were obtained. A City proposal, based on best practices principles, was submitted. The submission indicates that City financial commitment is pending Council approval.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements

Existing Policy

Personnel Implications

External Agency/Public Comments

Communications Comments

Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:

S. Wheeler, Social Development Manager, Active Living & Culture

Approved for inclusion: Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
 Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate

Attachments: Appendix A - Proposed System Framework
PowerPoint Presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services
Divisional Director, Communications & Information Services

Appendix A

Proposed Systems Framework - Outline of Phases:

Preparation Process Phase: “Connect”

In order to prepare to undertake a community systems planning initiative, it is imperative that the readiness of stakeholders to undertake a systems approach be addressed and the commitment to participation be developed to lay the foundation for this work:

- *Stakeholder Readiness*: Engagement of stakeholders to ensure readiness, capacity building, and buy-in for participation in a homeless serving systems planning process;
- *Partnership Development*: A collective of partners and contributions to a community systems planning initiative will be critical to strengthen commitment and accountability to this process. A partnership contribution exploration with other levels of government, stakeholders, community foundations, and private donors will be conducted.
- *Lived Experience Engagement Framework*: The design of an engagement framework that recognizes that people with lived experience must have meaningful and purposeful opportunities to inform and shape all levels of the Systems Strategy planning and implementation.
- *Community Engagement Framework*: The design of an engagement framework that recognizes engaging the broad public in a system of care development leads to better solutions and a deeper public understanding and ownership of the community’s future.

Phase I: “Listen and Learn”

- *Situational Report*: Research to combine multiple stakeholder data and information to provide a comprehensive inventory and overview of non-market housing stock supply and demand to inform targets;
- *Lived Experience Consultation Report*: Gathering needs assessment data along with consultation with persons and their families with lived experience to gain a deeper understanding of unique needs and systemic challenges at the sub-population level to better inform a community systems planning approach. Garnering lived experience expertise will be instrumental in informing and strengthening local solutions to homelessness and poverty.
- *Best Practices Research and Process Design Application*: Garnering local expertise and knowledge will be foundational to the application of relevant best practices. Designed to ensure a community-wide impact approach, the process will include the application of:
 - Housing First Principles;
 - Beyond Housing First: Essential Elements of System Planning;
 - Nothing About Us Without Us: Seven Principles for Leadership and Inclusion of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness;
 - Developmental Evaluation (to be applied across all processes).
- *Key Stakeholder Engagement*: Engaging the Homeless-Serving Sector at-Large will help to inform the overall Framework implementation. A communication mechanism designed in the Organize Phase will assist in keeping the entire sector engaged and informed regarding the process as it unfolds.

Phase II: “Organize”

- *Design and Implementation of Governance Structure*: The design of a governance structure, based on a best practices approach, is critical to ensure that an effective organizational infrastructure is in place to support the development of a Systems Strategy based on common goals.

- *Systems Mapping*: A process will be undertaken to create a “living” services map designed to gain an understanding of:
 - current programs and services, and their role and capacity to meet the needs of the local homeless and at-risk populations identified through the consultation with individuals with lived experience;
 - points of intersection between programs and systemsThe map created will help to identify gaps, overlaps, barriers, and opportunities which will ultimately inform decisions during the Systems Planning process.

Phase III: “Initiate”

- *Process Groups*: The structure of will be designed based on the outcomes of the System Mapping process and will be organized to align with the three focus areas of work:
 - coordinated access and services delivery,
 - integrated information and performance management,
 - and systems integration;
- *Community Engagement*: Communications mechanisms will be designed to keep the community engaged and informed of the progress. The information gathered from these processes will help to inform the work of the Process Groups.

Phase IV: “Action and Impact”

The work of the Process Groups, together with the stakeholder engagement processes, will inform the recommendations which will be outlined in a Draft Strategy, and based on direction of the Task Group, will be vetted by all stakeholders. The development of the final Strategy will include an Implementation Plan that will include recommendations regarding:

- leadership and structure to support the strategy implementation,
- performance indicators;
- and annual funding amounts required to achieve the strategy recommendations.