

# Report to Council



**Date:** January 30, 2017  
**File:** 0610-50  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Social Development Manager  
**Subject:** Homeless-Serving Systems Framework Update

---

## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receive, for information, the report from the Social Development Manager, dated January 30, 2017, regarding an overview of the framework for the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness and provide an update on current initiatives being implemented to address homelessness.

## **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an overview of the framework for the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness, and an update of the current community initiatives related to addressing homelessness.

## **Background:**

At the December 5, 2016 morning Council meeting, staff provided Council an update on initiatives related to housing strategies and an overview of best practice research, key local findings, and a proposed framework for the development of a strategy to address homelessness. During this meeting, Council also endorsed the framework as a basis for continued collaboration in the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness.

This report provides highlights of the December 5, 2016 report related to the Homeless-Serving Systems Framework but also expands on the current initiatives.

The December staff report provided Council with an update on some of the most notable current and short-term municipal actions to ensure there is appropriate housing for all citizens in our community, at all levels of the housing continuum. Although this is not the focus of this report, it is important to note that while some of the solutions will be long-term in nature and involve policy change and Federal and Provincial commitment along with significant funding, others are occurring immediately through municipal action which will have a noticeable, short-term positive impact on our community.

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. 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.

Partnerships with all levels of government, non-profit and profit sectors, and faith communities are critical in working together to develop and implement local plans that focus on prevention and support services for vulnerable populations by:

- identifying local housing and service needs;
- defining community priorities and objectives;
- developing integrated support systems that are coordinated and simple to navigate;
- targeting public investment towards the goal of reducing homelessness.

#### **Update on Long-term Strategy to Address Homelessness:**

##### ***Best Practices and Framework for Strategy Development***

Local plans to address homelessness and housing insecurity have become a common feature of cities across Canada and are contributing to a body of best practices research of which Kelowna can draw from, including:

- The Housing First model, based on coordinating program level services to rapidly rehouse individuals and support them to maintain housing stability, is proving to be successful. However, research shows that the disjointed nature of policies and programs of the homeless-response service mandates and priorities is creating coordination challenges in the application of this model.
- A Systems Planning approach is proving to be effective in achieving the integration of policies and practice required to support a Housing First approach. The focus is on redesigning the local homeless-serving system to support overall coordination, alignment, and integration of planning, funding, and services with a goal to:
  - Design services 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, whereby a person can access any service they need and want at any given time;
  - Develop partnerships to design policies, strategies, and investments that focus on preventing homelessness and ensure that when it does occur it is rare, short-lived, and non-reoccurring;
  - Increase coordination and efficiency based on client-centered and outcome-focused approaches.

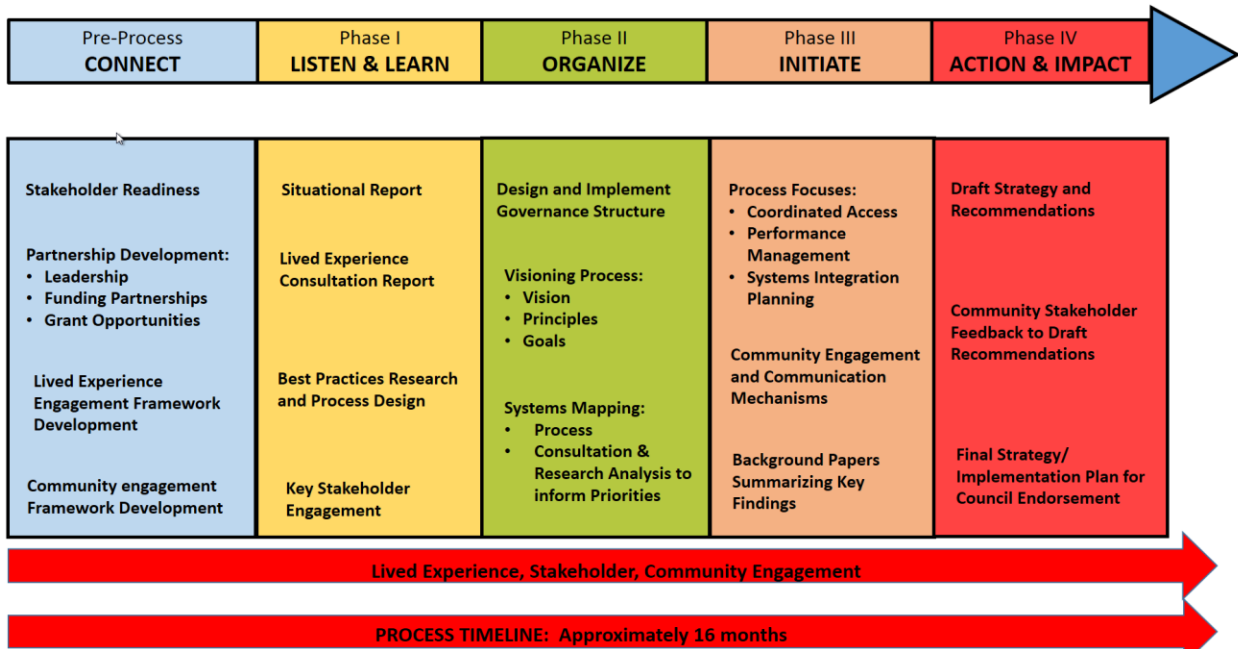
Staff have been directed to work with partners to develop a Homeless-Serving Systems Strategy which will be based on the application of a Systems Planning Framework. This framework will provide direction on several key elements that are critical in reducing the incidence of homelessness, and ensuring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

- Translating Best Practices 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.
- Clear and well-defined implementation strategy development, including specific targets and timelines.

The development of a Homeless-Serving Systems Strategy will help to transform Kelowna’s housing and homelessness services into an integrated, client-centered, outcome-focused service system. This will be designed to assist residents to achieve housing stability and improve their well-being, and the overall safety, health, and sustainability of the community.

The framework proposed to Council in December, 2016 was developed to reflect the stakeholder input to date and 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 to develop a long-term strategy, it is important to note that the phases of the framework overlap, with some activities occurring concurrently. In addition, 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. Additional detail of components of each phase is provided in Appendix A.

While the planning process is expected to take up to 16 months, there are several current initiatives that have been identified that are beneficial to building a strong foundation for the systems planning initiative. As the process unfolds, there will be ongoing efforts to align the systems planning project with these initiatives, as well as new opportunities that emerge. Connecting to new opportunities will be evaluated and pursued based on potential benefits and resource availability.

***Current Community Initiatives:***

Kelowna benefits from a multitude of strengths within the homeless serving sector including quality resources and services that are responding to new and emerging needs. Despite being faced with a lack of formalized structures, mechanisms, and partnership agreements to support community-wide collaborative planning and services, there is a strong foundation of local strengths to build on. Examples of current initiatives that are making positive impacts through collaborative efforts include:

- **City Bylaw Services** - Working closely with Outreach Services in the community. The goal is to provide Bylaw staff with the ability to connect individuals with local outreach services, as well as with the pilot transitional storage program.
- **Transitional Storage Program** - In partnership with BC Housing and Gospel Mission:
  - It is well documented that for people living without homes, being able to store their belongings can be transformative. Implemented in the fall of 2016, this program has been effective in supporting individuals to connect with services:
    - 17 individuals began using the shelter system for the first time after accessing the storage program;
    - In the first three months, seven individuals who accessed the storage program have moved on into housing.
- **Coordinated Access** - BC Housing is leading work with local service providers to implement a coordinated approach across service providers to assess needs; integrate housing applications across 8 housing providers; and facilitate housing referrals. Through the application of this coordinated approach:
  - 34 people have been housed at Gordon Place, and there are seven more apartments under renovation that will eventually be filled;
  - The individuals housed have come either directly from the shelter system or have vacated spaces for people to move out of shelters.
- **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team** - Implemented by Interior Health Authority in April, 2015 this team provides flexible, community-based support for adults with serious and persistent mental illness and significant functional impairments who have not connected with, or responded well to, traditional outpatient mental health and rehabilitation services.

The Province created ACT Teams to ensure people with mental health challenges remain housed and to reduce the strain on emergency services dealing with mental health crises. These teams reach out to people living with severe mental illness to help them improve their mental health, manage other health problems and prevent hospitalization. A small group of professionals such as a psychiatrist, nurse, counsellors and outreach workers provide 24-hour emergency care and follow-up services with a capacity of 80 clients that

receive the individualized care they require in order to follow through on treatment plans and services.

- **Housing First** - Canadian Mental Health Association Kelowna (CMHA) received funding from the Federal Government Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) to deliver the first official Housing First program in Kelowna which began in April, 2016.

Participants are accepted based on their level of vulnerability, with the most vulnerable prioritized first, including those that are the highest users of emergency services such as RCMP, Hospital, and Paramedics. Priority is given to the chronically homeless, meaning they have been homeless for at least a year or have had several episodes of homelessness with only brief periods of housing. The current number of participants in the program is 10, and allows for additional intakes ongoing. Of the 10 individuals currently in the program 8 are living in their own homes, one is in transitional housing and the most recent person to be added is currently engaging in the housing search process.

- **Housing First Training for Homeless-Serving Sector** - In addition to service delivery, CMHA Kelowna has arranged for community based training for multiple community organizations, including:
  - Housing First 101: In June 2016, staff from CMHA Kelowna and Interior Health Authority attended a training led by facilitators from Pathways to Housing and Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness;
  - Housing First Community Education event: In June, 2016 CMHA hosted a community education event on the basics of Housing First;
  - Intensive Person-Centered Case Management training - Hosted by CMHA in December, over 20 staff from a number of organizations participated;
  - A community based "Systems Design Clinic" - Currently being planned for early March through a partnership between City, CMHA, and Service Canada HPS as a part of the Homeless-Serving Strategy stakeholder readiness process.
- **Housing & Integrated Task Team Program (HITT)** - HITT is a pilot program new to Kelowna under the Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation (MSDSI). Implemented in the summer of 2016, the program is designed to promote safe housing through integrated services and partnerships within the community. This program is designed to create a responsive, ongoing accommodation review process for MSDSI whereby Ministry staff liaise and build cooperative partnerships with local agencies and stakeholders to promote safe and affordable housing for clients.

HITT is proving to be a valuable resource in the local collaborative efforts to support people to maintain or acquire housing. Examples of successes include:

- Working with clients and stakeholders to secure safe and affordable housing;
  - Assisting clients in dealing with household emergencies;
  - Expediting the processing of Shelter Documents to secure housing for clients facing multiple barriers.
- **Integrated Court** - John Howard Society is currently investigating the opportunity to apply this spring to the Provincial Court for an Integrated Court in Kelowna. The goal of an Integrated Court is to reduce crime, improve public safety, and provide integrated justice, health and social services approach designed to address the root causes of crime. This type of approach is designed specifically to address the ineffectiveness of the

traditional court approach for the population whose interactions with the criminal justice system are a result of their substance use, mental health and housing challenges. An Integrated Court is designed to break the cycle of criminal justice involvement by:

- Engaging the community and its resources at an early stage;
  - Allowing the court to be better informed about the offender;
  - Providing sentences that have a higher prospect of effecting some degree of rehabilitation.
- **Mapping for Change** - A partnership between Central Okanagan Foundation, United Way of the Central/South Okanagan/Similkameen, UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College, Mitacs and Innovations in Wellness Fund. By utilizing current and innovative technology, the project is designed to benefit the broader community through improved access to real-time, locational information on homelessness services in Kelowna. Having access to this resource will also provide homelessness stakeholders, including funders and local government, with current, real-time information on which to base their planning and decisions related to resource allocation.

The project is a case study of best practices in the use of Geoweb as a mechanism for enhancing informational exchange and collaboration between homelessness stakeholders including non-profits/charities serving the homeless. Using geoweb technology developed in the Spatial Information for Community Engagement (SPiCE) Lab at UBC Okanagan, the project involves implementing and monitoring/evaluating the use of a web-based mapping application that functions as an accessible and searchable spatial database of housing and related services for the homeless in Kelowna. The resulting online tool called i-Search Kelowna, will be launched in March 2017, after which time the evaluation will commence.

- **Foundry Kelowna** - One of a series of centres across BC recently announced by the province. It will open this coming spring providing a new integrated youth-service centre for youth in need of mental health care and social services. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kelowna is the lead agency working with 25 partner agencies to bring existing services under one roof so families and young people can access a 'one-stop shop' for primary care, mental health and substance use, and social services.
- **Personal Belongings Carrier (PBC)** - The City is working with UBC Okanagan's School of Engineering and community partners on a project to create a highly functional personal belongings carrier (PBC). The initiative seeks to offer a dignified solution for homeless individuals by designing a cart that is user-friendly, secure, and portable. It is hoped the PBC will facilitate independence and help homeless individuals to find more permanent living situations. The City of Kelowna, Waterplay Solutions Inc./WMI Manufacturing, Metro Community and the RCMP are all partnering with UBC to make the PBC a reality. Initial trials are set for June 2017.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps for the Systems Framework are:

- Framework Refinement, Identification of Key Milestones and Timelines;
- Plan for utilizing City's Commitment to Leverage Partnership Commitments and Grant Opportunities;
- Partnership Engagement and Development;
- Key initiatives from the Pre-Phase and Phase I including:
  - Stakeholder Readiness Presentations and Workshops;

- Design and Implementation of Systems Planning Governance Model;
- Design of Consultation Processes and Engagement Mechanisms;
- Completion of the Situation Report;
- Completion of the Lived Experience Consultation Report.

**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

**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 systems
 The 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.