

5-Year Strategic System Improvement Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Detroit

Project Update to Partners and Stakeholders

July 10, 2023

Purpose of this Message

The City of Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD), the Homeless Action Network of Detroit (HAND), and the Detroit Continuum of Care (CoC) have come together to establish shared goals, priorities, and actions to prevent and end homelessness in Detroit and strongly recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City has engaged Barbara Poppe and Associates (BPA) and its team of consultants, including two Community Consultants with lived expertise of homelessness in Detroit, to provide expert guidance and support for the development of a 5-Year Strategic System Improvement Plan.

Over the course of this planning effort, we will provide regular, public updates to keep all partners and stakeholders, including people experiencing homelessness in Detroit, up to date on the status of efforts, particular areas of focus, and next steps. This message is the first such update.

BPA Consulting Team

Barbara Poppe, Project Lead

David Dirks, Equity and Justice Planning

Donna Price, Community Consultant

Elijah Earnest, Community Consultant

Kourtney Clark, Project Manager

Kristy Greenwalt, System Review and Implementation Planning

Matt White, System Review and Implementation Planning

Matthew Doherty, Strategy Development and Communications

Phases of the Planning Process

This planning process will feature robust engagement with residents experiencing homelessness, community partners, advocates, and other stakeholders, and will be implemented in two phases:

- **Phase 1: Discovery, Research, and Priority Setting** is underway now, with recent and current focus on: formation of a project team and an oversight commission (described further below); engagement and consultation with people with lived expertise and others engaged in addressing and preventing homelessness; initial review and synthesis of relevant information and ideas from recent and current initiatives to prevent and end homelessness in the community; and initial review of governance structure, accountability, system performance, and system funding and investments. The consulting team will be on site during July to engage with a broad range of stakeholders (see more below). More intensive planning work and system modeling activities will commence in September and Phase 1 will culminate by the end of 2023 with the development and adoption of a Strategic System Improvement Plan and the design of an initial Implementation Framework.
- **Phase 2: Implementation Planning and Support** will be implemented from January through June 2024 and will focus on: the launch and facilitation of teams and processes to support successful execution of the Strategic System Improvement Plan; providing guidance and support to implementation leaders; making adjustments to implementation plans and teams based on early implementation and feedback; and development of recommendations for sustaining and strengthening efforts beyond June 2024.

Values Embraced within the Planning Process

The BPA project team will embrace the following values throughout both phases of the process and within products produced through this consultation, and these values may get adjusted or refined over the course of the project:

Centering equity and justice - informed by intersectional analyses, across process.

Providing multiple pathways for input to ensure all stakeholders, and especially people with current and past experiences of homelessness, feel seen and heard.

Designing a process that is collaborative, healing, inclusive, and strengthens partnerships and relationships.

Ensuring the final Plan is centered on people with lived experience, data-driven, action-oriented, built to work and evolve over time, and nimble to respond to the ever-changing dynamics of today's world.

Establishing metrics and process for program and system improvement that can measure progress over time.

Identifying and include organizations beyond the defined homelessness assistance system that interact and support people who are at risk of and experience homelessness.

Please see the [5-Year Strategic System Improvement Plan Project Description](#) and HRD's [Homelessness Strategic Planning Project webpage](#) or more detailed information and to learn about the members of the BPA consulting team.

Formation of the Strategic Plan Oversight Commission

A time-limited Strategic Plan Oversight Commission (SPOC) has been formed to help guide and make critical decisions for the design of these planning processes. The composition of the 10-member SPOC has been purposefully structured to include the following representation:

- **5 residents with lived experience**, including representation from families with children, youth/young adults, and single adults/couples, selected by the Advisors Group
- **3 representatives appointed by the Detroit CoC**, including expertise on families with children, youth/young adults, and single adults/couples
- **1 representative appointed by HAND**
- **1 representative appointed by the City of Detroit**

In alignment with this planned representation, the following people are serving on the SPOC:

DeAndra Matthews, resident with lived experience	Amy Brown, Detroit CoC representative*
Lydia Adkins, resident with lived experience	Dr. Gerald Curley, Detroit CoC representative
Monika Binion, resident with lived experience	Julie Schneider, City of Detroit representative
ReGina Hentz, resident with lived experience	Sarah Rennie, Detroit CoC representative
Taura Brown, resident with lived experience*	Tasha Gray, HAND representative

* was elected as a Champion by SPOC

The SPOC met for the first time on June 14, 2023 and:

- Reviewed and discussed the phases of the planning processes and the planned approaches of the consulting team;
- Defined the SPOC's roles and decision-making processes;
- Adopted a Charter for the SPOC, which may be adapted over the course of the planning process, including through discussion at the SPOC's next meeting of the values that the SPOC will center within its own roles and processes;
- Identified two members who will serve as leading Champions for the SPOC's efforts and success;
- Reviewed drafts of initial community engagement plans and processes for engagement with residents with lived experience; and
- Provided initial feedback on what is working well about the community's response to homelessness, recent accomplishments, and biggest challenges.

Please see the [Strategic Planning Oversight Commission Charter](#) for more information about the SPOC's roles and processes.

Planning Activity Spotlight

Focus Groups with People with Lived Experiences of Homelessness

These planning processes will feature robust engagement with residents experiencing homelessness, community partners, advocates, and other stakeholders. Engagement with people with lived experience will be guided by the values for the planning process as a whole, including:

- Centering equity and justice across process, anchored by a baseline analysis and interrogation of disparities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and other disparities that may be revealed.
- Providing multiple pathways for input to ensure all stakeholders, and especially people with current and past experiences of homelessness, are seen, heard, and involved in the design and implementation of this plan.
- Designing a process that is collaborative, healing, inclusive, and strengthens partnerships and relationships.
- Identifying and include organizations beyond the defined homelessness assistance system that interact and support people who are at risk of and experience homelessness.

The consulting team has initiated this engagement by working with partner agencies to identify and recruit people with lived experience, who will all be compensated for their time, and intends to hold focus groups of key lived experience populations including, but not limited to:

Residents who are currently experiencing sheltered homelessness

Residents who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness

Residents who are currently housed in RRH, PSH, and other housing

Residents of DV shelters

Residents of Family Shelters and Programs

Residents of Men shelters and Programs

Youth

Aging Residents

Beginning in the second week of June, and in partnership with HRD, the consulting team initiated outreach to providers who work with people with lived experience. Through this initial outreach the consulting team began holding virtual focus groups during June and focus groups will also be held during the on-site visit.

Initial feedback has included comments related to the lack of available shelter for women with children, and a lack of supportive services and resources.

One focus group participant stated

“I have been told I did not look homeless and was denied services from numerous providers in Detroit. Homelessness doesn’t have a look.”

The participant further commented on the lack of training for shelter staff and the continuous perpetuation of trauma by people having to explain and relive their story in hopes of receiving help for their situation.

What's Next?

In the weeks ahead, the consulting team will be:

- Continuing to facilitate focus groups and other engagement with people with lived expertise;
- Reviewing and synthesizing of relevant information and ideas from recent and current initiatives;
- Further reviewing governance structure, accountability, system performance, and system funding and investments; and
- Planning for broader community engagement strategies.

In addition, the full consulting team will be on the ground the week of July 24, 2023 and will:

- Conduct focus groups with residents with lived experience.
- Visit homelessness assistance programs to observe how housing and services are being delivered.
- Conduct listening sessions with people who have knowledge about the topic including providers – frontline staff, program managers, and organizational leaders as well as other community members, including people with lived experience. We will gather perspectives on strengths and challenges related to current system/program as well as opportunities for improvement.
- Facilitate individual meetings with key local government and system leaders.

During these sessions and meetings, the team will test emerging priorities and will incorporate equity conversations and collaborative, healing, and trust building features into the design and facilitation of all meetings and discussions.

Please look for our next project update later this Summer!

Please also see information posted at HRD's [Homelessness Strategic Planning Project webpage](#)

To contact the BPA Consultant Team, you can contact the project manager Kourtney Clark at kourtneyclarkconsulting@gmail.com