

# Journey **HOME**

## KELOWNA'S **JOURNEY HOME STRATEGY**

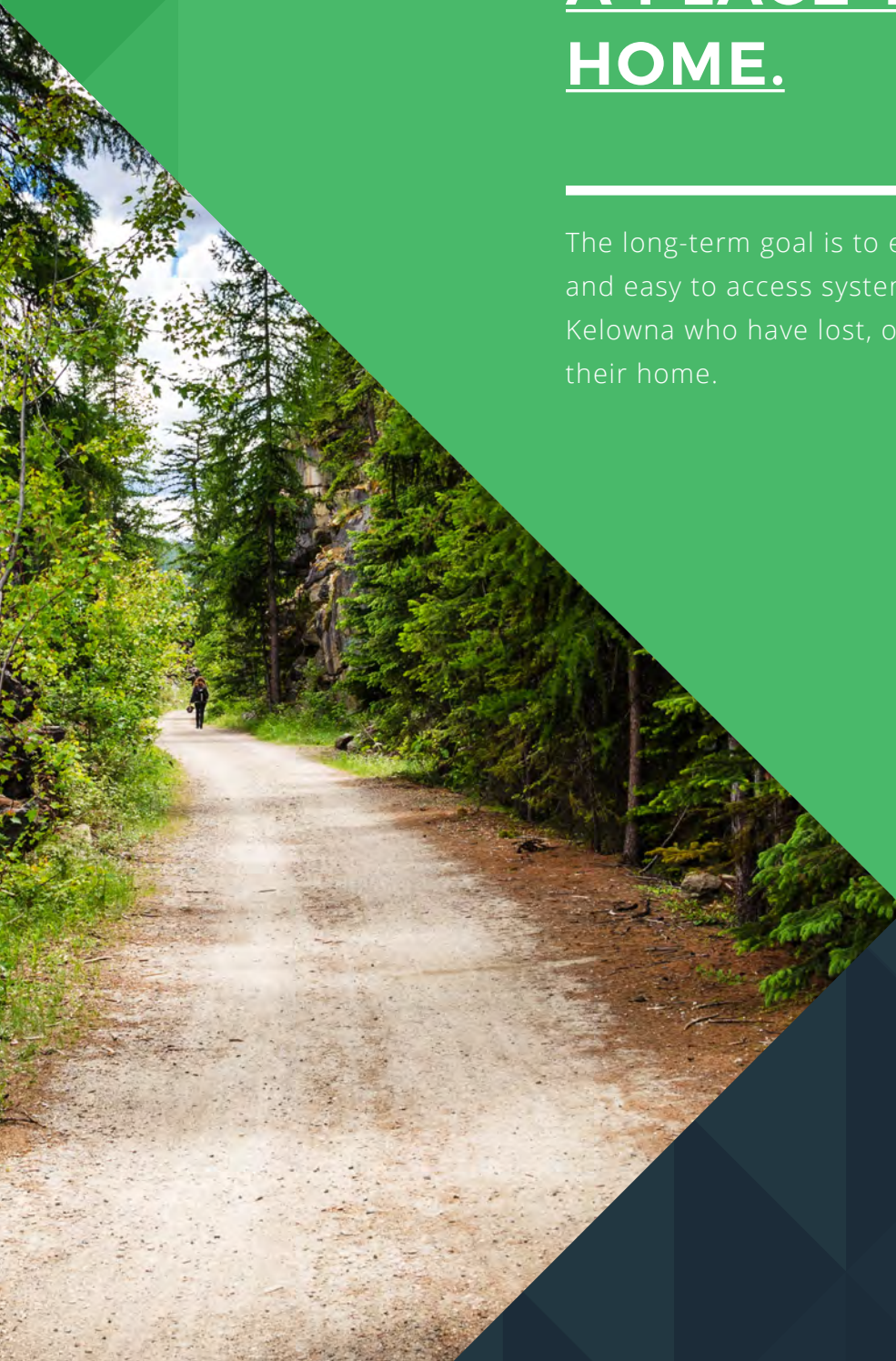
COMMUNITY REPORT

*Kelowna's Strategy  
to Address Homelessness*

# FOCUS ON ENSURING EVERYONE HAS A PLACE TO CALL HOME.

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The long-term goal is to ensure a coordinated and easy to access system of care for those in Kelowna who have lost, or are at risk of losing their home.



The development of the Journey Home Strategy is led by Dr. Alina Turner of Turner Strategies in collaboration with the Journey Home Task Force, the City of Kelowna, A Way Home Kelowna, A Way Home Canada and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.



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- Jennifer Houde/Shawna Whitney on behalf of Okanagan Nation Alliance
- Tina Larouche on behalf of the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
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- Brenda Plitt
- Kelly Taverner
- Shane Worman



## JOURNEY HOME

*Long have I roamed  
city streets with no name  
my heart full of empty  
a bag stuffed with shame  
searching endlessly  
for a place to rest my head  
sharing my woes  
so I could have a bed  
we all have a story  
which leads us here this day  
I'll tell you one I've heard that makes me  
want to stay  
there once was a poor, wise man  
his wisdom did save a town  
he was broke and therefore not able  
to buy himself a crown  
he did not live for fame  
nor desire endless glory  
but little did he realize  
the town became his story  
Now we the battle scarred  
have gathered to sit  
at your table  
hoping this journey home  
is more than just a fable  
Can we speak our truth?  
will it fall on a hardened heart  
or can we believe that together  
there is power for that brand new start?*

**Diane Larsback**

March 2018

“

*“Things will only change when people get to know  
us . . . we need to put faces to the experience.”*

*~ Lived Experience Circle member*

# COMMUNITY REPORT

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## CO-CHAIRS MESSAGE

We are pleased to introduce you to the Journey Home Strategy, to share the journey that we have been on as a community, and to reveal the exciting outcomes of our efforts. Building this Strategy has been much more than just building a document. It has been both a revealing and inspirational experience. The Strategy embodies our community's voice. It is the product of a community that is motivated and ready to make a change. We present to you the Journey Home Strategy as the result of our joint passions, combined strengths, and collective hopes for Kelowna and each other.

It is evident in every fibre of our community that Kelowna is experiencing significant growth and change. Kelowna's vibrancy as a thriving urban centre attracts investment, tourism, and migration from near and far. Along with this growth come significant challenges as our most vulnerable citizens struggle to find their place. We know we need to create change that will ensure everyone has access to the right supports to thrive. In the face of these challenges, the Journey Home process has revealed a strength and resiliency in community spirit that is unfolding as people come together in a new way. The Journey Home Strategy has been designed to intentionally tap into and nurture this community energy.

While Journey Home has taught us about our strengths, it has also given us a clear picture of the challenges we face. Data from local shelters together with the 2018 Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count) indicates homelessness has increased by 20% over the last two years, and we know that if we do not create a realistic action plan tailored to Kelowna's unique needs, the number of people experiencing homelessness will only continue to increase. The Journey Home message is clear: the time to act is now.

The decision to name this Strategy "Journey Home" was intentional. Kelowna's Journey Home Strategy reflects the often-difficult path from homelessness and marginalization to having a home, gaining a sense of belonging, and being a part of a community. It illustrates the journey from a place of uncertainty and fear to one of safety, security, and acceptance. And it demonstrates the journey of a community from complacency to action.

***The Journey Home Strategy reflects a collective vision grounded in the belief that all people have the right to safe and dignified housing as well as the supports required to sustain it. We know that 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.***





The voices of community members from across multiple sectors and all walks of life came together in 2018 to tackle this issue, and we were inspired by their level of engagement. We are also extremely grateful for our 180 citizens with lived and living experience of homelessness who contributed to the conversations. We have learned from them, and their voices have guided the development of this strategy.

What follows is the Journey Home Story that will provide you with an overview of how we got to where we are in our current situation – including what we learned, what surprised us, what we found motivating, what we are doing well, and what needs to change. Journey Home paints a clear and targeted strategy outlining how to move forward. It provides a realistic path that demonstrates that if we work collectively, addressing and preventing homelessness in our community is within our grasp.

Thank you to the passionate and engaged community members who participated in the development of the Strategy. We invite you to stay involved and work with us as a collective community to put the recommendations into action. Our journey is truly just beginning.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Helen Tzouh".

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Matt Green".

# JOURNEY HOME STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

BY KELOWNA, FOR KELOWNA

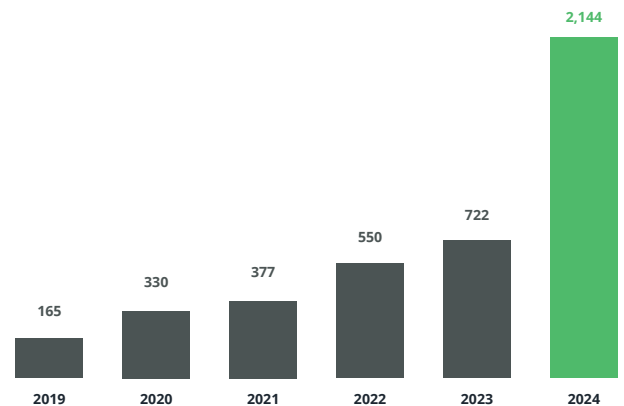


• Based on proven practices

• Embeds a youth plan

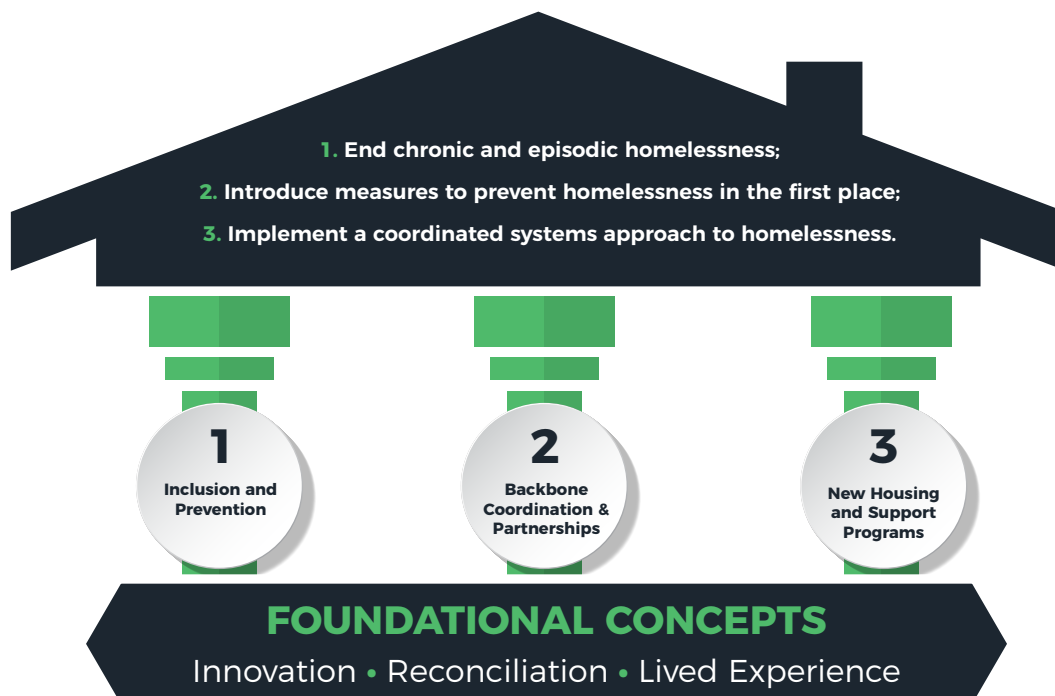
• Action & results-focused

2,100+ people will be helped stay or get housed during the course of the Journey Home Strategy



Projected # of Individuals Served Yearly

## JOURNEY HOME STRATEGY FRAMEWORK



3 PILLARS

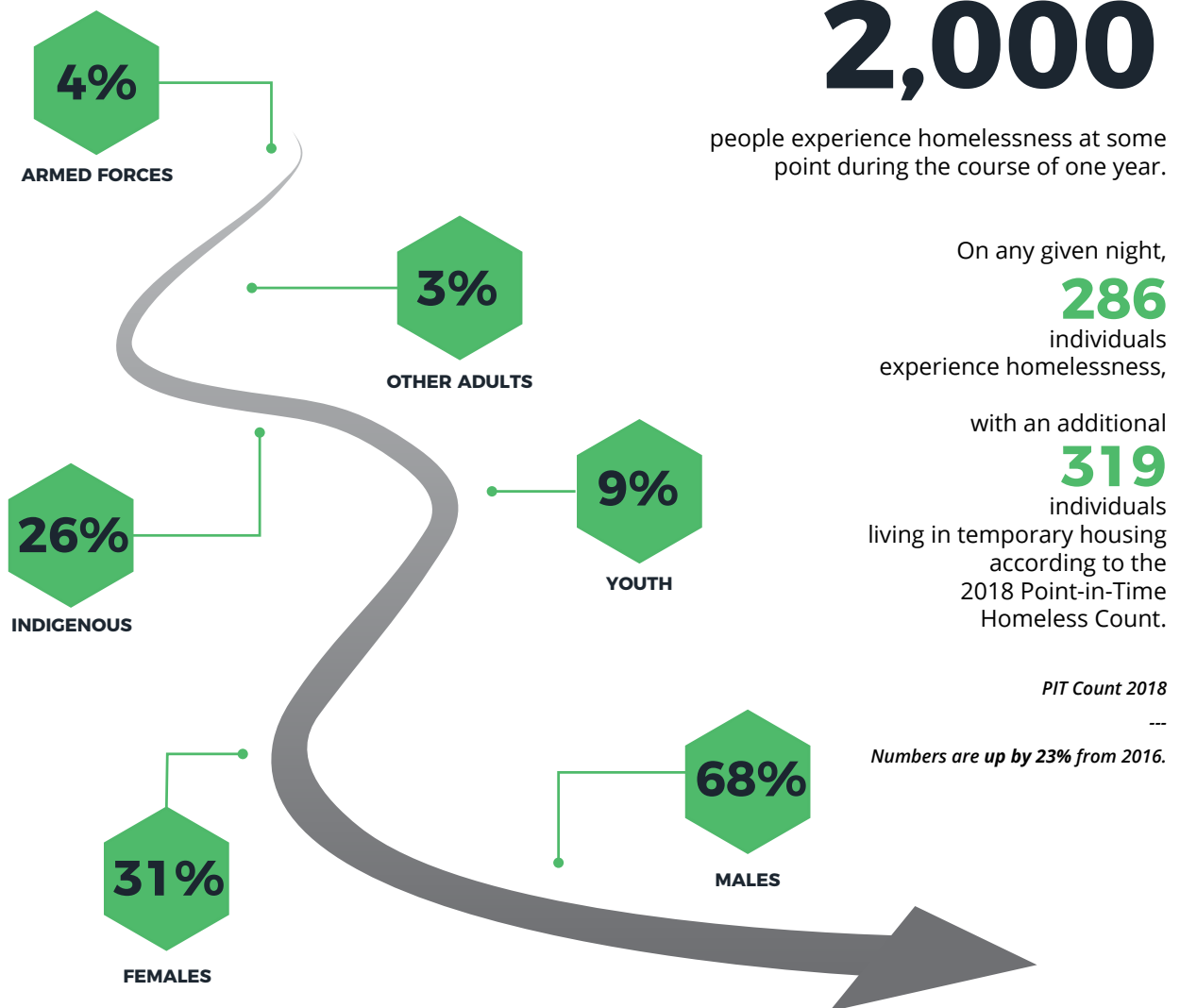


## BY THE NUMBERS

Demand for housing in Kelowna has been increasing steadily year-over-year. Kelowna is an attractive community with an excellent climate and a strong, growing economy that is attracting migration, and consequently, driving demand for both rental and ownership housing.

This growth is also evident in the homeless population, which has challenged local service providers despite recent coordinated efforts to improve access to services, shelter and housing.

### WHO IS HOMELESS?



### *Reasons for Homelessness*

The most frequently recorded reason in the 2018 PIT Count for housing loss was an inability to pay rent (19%). In addition, 12% of individuals reported a loss of employment, and 3% reported an inability to find housing as their reason for housing loss.

# THE JOURNEY HOME STORY

At the heart of the Journey Home story is the coming together of the Kelowna community: over 2,000 points of contact with community combined to shape this Strategy. It is through the collective wisdom of these voices that we gained our strongest learning. The intentional approach of bringing new and different perspectives into an open discussion on this complex issue has been a game changer for our community. It opened doors we never thought possible with new ideas and access to new resources to drive a strategy based on action.

These new possibilities began with a collective request from organizations, which provide services to those experiencing homelessness, for the City of Kelowna to take a leadership role in facilitating the development of a long-term strategy. With City Council's priorities of housing diversity and addressing homelessness, the City was well-positioned to take a leadership role. In May of 2017, City Council agreed. In assuming the lead, the City approved a Terms of Reference for an interim committee of Council named the Journey Home Task Force. The Task Force was committed to ensuring that all citizens had an equal voice in the consultation processes, and to honour the strengths and build on the good work, passion, and dedication of the community while identifying the things that needed to change.

***A further commitment was to learn from the past. Home for Good, Kelowna's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, was completed in 2009 and while many of the recommendations were solid and remain relevant today, implementation proved to be elusive. Lacking ongoing accountable leadership to convene commitments to implementation and investment, the plan did not move forward. Understanding these challenges helped guide the directional decisions made for Journey Home.***

The journey to build the Strategy began with a recognition that an effective community response needed to be grounded in approaches that are proving to be successful. A concerted effort was made to learn from other municipalities across Canada that are demonstrating success in their responses and sharing their learnings. In tune with the spirit of learning, this guided the design of processes where members were engaged through facilitated sessions which provided a safe and non-judgmental setting to support the difficult and often emotional discussions. The outcomes, both individually and as a community, were described as transformational by many.

## Lived Experience Circle

*A voice for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness; creating openness with understanding, releasing fear and judgement and initiating change.*

# JOURNEY HOME TASK FORCE SELECTION

The design of the selection process for the Journey Home Task Force was thoughtful and intentional. The first step was to select Co-Chairs to lead the Task Force. In recognition of the strong sentiments shared by the stakeholders, this selection was made to support the need for neutrality, and to encourage engagement across sectors, especially including those that had not participated in the past. Dr. Kyleen Myrah and Mr. Martin Bell agreed to take this role and were appointed by Council. The next step was to select the Task Force members. Key organizations were identified and agreed to be at the table: BC Housing, Central Okanagan Foundation, Interior Health, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty, Okanagan Nation Alliance, RCMP, and Westbank First Nation. See Appendix A for list of the Task Force's 23 members.

Selection of the remaining members was rooted in the goal of bringing multi-sector, community-wide strengths to the table. A matrix containing selection criteria was designed that identified the skills, knowledge, and experience that would enrich this process. The call for members resulted in a resounding response that populated the matrix, and in September of 2017 Council appointed the additional Task Force members including two members with lived experience of homelessness. The diverse membership of the Task Force helped to kickstart new partnerships by introducing a new model for learning from one another, and setting the stage for new ways of thinking and innovative approaches. It was this start to the Journey Home process that inspired the design of the robust and inclusive consultation processes that have provided a new energy and momentum that is embedded throughout the actions proposed to guide our journey as a community.

## TOGETHER, THE TASK FORCE WORKED TO DELIVER A STRATEGY THAT:

- provides a blueprint with concrete actions that are realistic;
- will result in measurable, positive change for those experiencing or those at risk of experiencing homelessness, as well as residents, businesses, and public systems;
- embeds an Indigenous response aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action;
- incorporates the A Way Home Kelowna (AWHK) Youth Strategy within the overall Strategy to ensure youth homelessness is addressed and prevented;
- is supportive and reflective of diverse perspectives and needs (youth, women, Indigenous, newcomers, seniors, LGBTQ2S+);
- builds awareness and shared accountability across stakeholders;
- advances a system planning approach grounded in evidence;
- identifies accountabilities, targets, and resource needs for implementation;
- is solution-focused and strengths-based, building on what works; and
- balances short, medium and longer-term interventions for diverse groups.



The dedication, passion, and commitment of the 23 members of the Task Force is woven into every aspect of the Journey Home Strategy and beyond into the transition and implementation phases. Their commitment to learning and listening has been inspirational. The multi-sectoral approach to selecting the Task Force members has created an environment that brings out the best and the strengths of all. The ability to view challenges, ideas, and potential solutions through a multitude of perspectives all gathered in one room is a model that has set the bar for future community work.

The Task Force members' commitment to listening and learning has been demonstrated in their genuine interest in learning from the voices of the community. With a total of three community summits and 23 Design Labs, the Task Force members not only attended, but hosted, listened, participated, and encouraged others. They worked hard to bring new voices to the table, including those that had never been engaged but held important pieces of the puzzles in the quest for solutions. Their commitment, stamina, and persistence in understanding the realities and finding the solutions can be found in all the actions within this plan.

The community expressed their confidence in and their gratitude to the Task Force members at the Check-in Community Summit in April. The confidence they have in the Task Force will undoubtedly resonate as stakeholders commit to the implementation of the Strategy.

## ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

From the beginning there was a strong commitment to honouring, listening, and learning from the voices of those that have, or currently are, experiencing homelessness in our community. The formation of the Journey Home Task Force alongside the development of the Lived Experience Circle reflected this commitment.

The response of the lived experience community has been overwhelming. Starting as a group of eight in the first session, the Circle grew to over 100 members by later sessions and over the duration of the engagement process included 180 unique voices with 287 total visits. Their experiences of discrimination, the effects that stigma has had on them, and their ongoing challenges to navigate and access a complex system of services has been imprinted throughout this strategy. Their wisdom, and their hope for change and a better life in the future, vibrates through the list of actions in the Implementation Plan that will guide us as we move forward.



This piece was created by Lived Experience participants in a Brain-Trust Art Class to contribute to the Journey Home Strategy

# EMBEDDING A YOUTH STRATEGY FROM THE START

Embedding a strategy to address youth homelessness within Journey Home has also created new connections and opportunities by convening sectors that have not been connected before. The passionate community response to address youth homelessness is integrated throughout the strategy and will be guided by A Way Home Kelowna. Key to this approach is the Strategy's acknowledgement of the distinct and unique needs of youth (individuals under 24 years of age) along with the recognition that addressing and preventing youth homelessness must be guided by a robust and collective effort.

Service providers of Kelowna in 2017 identified youth homelessness as an issue that needed to be addressed. A Way Home Kelowna was initiated in the community in late 2017 with the creation of the A Way Home Kelowna Steering Committee (see Appendix B in Journey Home Technical Report for a list of members) to begin the process to develop a plan to prevent and address youth homelessness. This would acknowledge the unique factors that contribute to youth homelessness along with the specialized supports required to prevent and address youth homelessness.

***Early on in this process the opportunity to align, embed, and partner with Journey Home was identified. Collectively, the actions resulting from the process propose to transform the response to youth homelessness by shifting from reactive responses to a proactive, youth-centred focus. Partnering with Journey Home provides an opportunity for our community to understand and work collectively to bridge the gaps between the youth and adult serving systems.***

The youth voice of those with lived experience has been fundamental to expressing perspectives and defining needs to inform Strategy actions. With the youth actions and priorities embedded within the overarching Journey Home Strategy, the proposed investments include funds specifically targeted at the implementation of these actions. Going forward, supporting the development of a Youth Advocates for Housing group will provide a venue for youth with lived experience to be an ongoing and driving force in the work to address and prevent youth homelessness in Kelowna.



*"A home is a safe place where no harm can come to you, it's also a place to keep my stuff"*

*~ Youth Focus Group member*

## COMMITTING TO RECONCILIATION

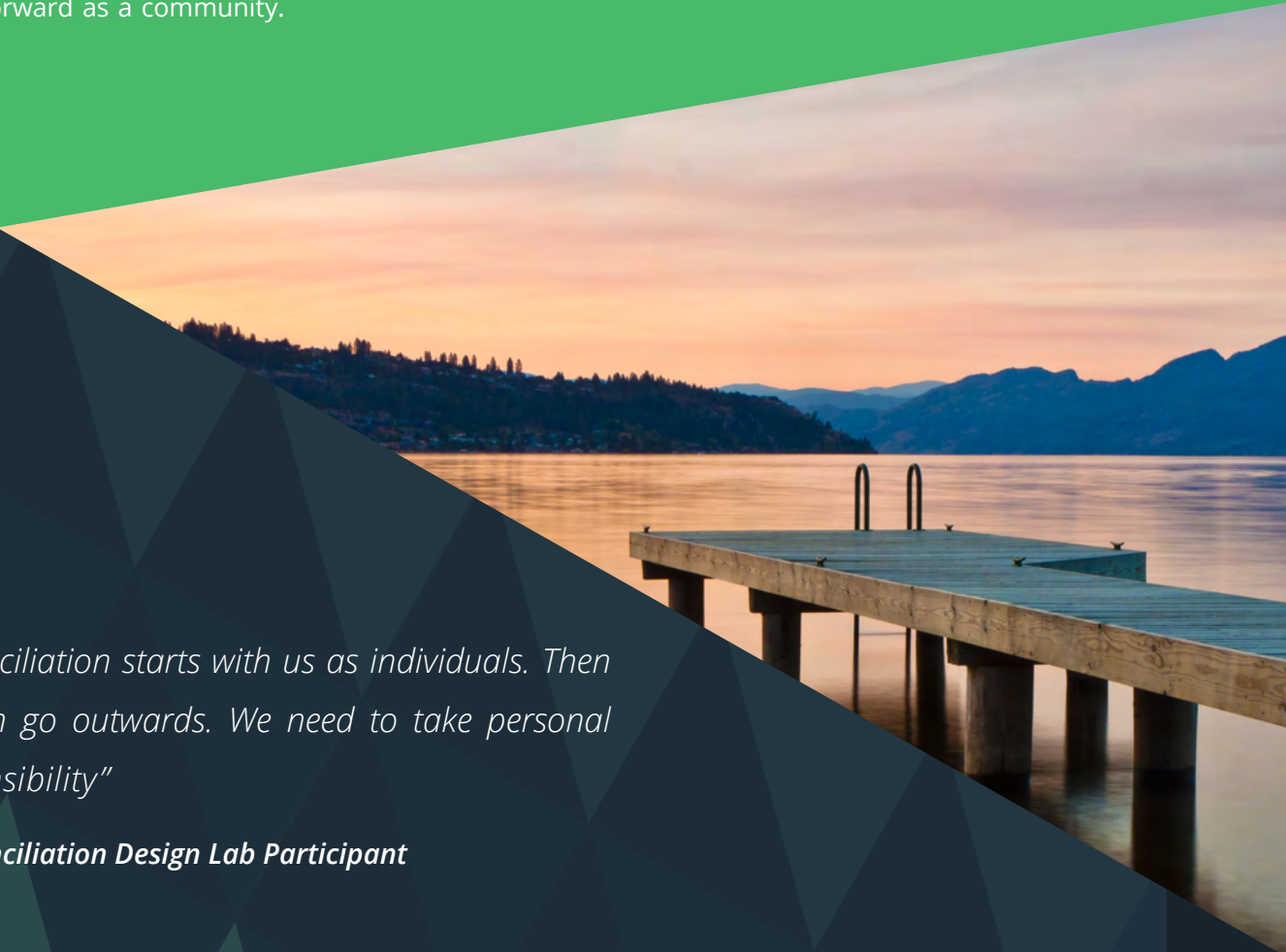
Engaging Indigenous partners and leaders to participate in the discussion regarding community-driven solutions is critical to the success of Journey Home. We know that we have a lot to learn as a community from our Indigenous partners, and we are extremely grateful for their willingness to work with us. What we have learned is that we need to walk alongside our Indigenous partners, and listen and learn from their wisdom.

Bringing a lens of Reconciliation and understanding homelessness through an Indigenous perspective will be an important part of the journey. The Journey Home actions reinforce this need and have been designed to guide as we grow this partnership into the future. With the high percentage of our homeless population having Indigenous heritage, along with the message that re-colonization is embedded throughout our current system, the guidance of our Indigenous partners will be critical if we are to move forward as a community.



*"Reconciliation starts with us as individuals. Then we can go outwards. We need to take personal responsibility"*

*~ Reconciliation Design Lab Participant*





# IGNITING ACTION & INNOVATION

Journey Home was designed to intentionally inspire diverse and inclusive engagement. The community responded in an overwhelming fashion. The richness of the conversations that emerged through the cross-pollination of the strengths of diverse sectors and individuals was expected. However, the strong, passionate commitments that emerged still surprised us. The new connections created through the consultations have continued to evolve and several new initiatives are underway. Connections to Journey Home with the technology sector, research sector, developers, and the faith community are all strong examples of the mobilization of new strengths that are underway.



*"We need leadership that inspires and drives action" ~ Backbone & Coordination Design lab participant*

*"I wanna help kids through what I'm going through because it's horrible" ~ Youth Focus Group member*

All these new connections have carved a unique path for Kelowna. Drawing from a new and growing culture in our community, innovation has been built into the foundation of the Journey Home actions. We have learned so much as a community, and know that we have so much more to learn about how these new connections will contribute to a new path forward. What we know now is that our community has been inspired to work together to find new and innovative ways to support our most vulnerable populations, so that they feel valued and supported, and all their journeys lead home.

## GRAPHIC RECORDING = INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO CAPTURING LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTISE



Lived Experience Session held March 14, 2018: This session explored experiences during homelessness, what keeps people homeless and what could help. The discussion focused on community resources and supports, mental health and well-being, hygiene and personal care, nutrition, changing relationship with authority, and discrimination.

The overarching themes of this session were: increased access to services and being able to access the level of support a person needs, public education and awareness to start to break down stigma, and that "we need a space away from our problems."

# LINKING JOURNEY HOME TO THE CITY OF KELOWNA HEALTHY HOUSING STRATEGY

*The Journey Home Strategy works alongside the City of Kelowna Healthy Housing Strategy to address Council's top priorities of "homelessness" and "housing diversity". This builds on a new and innovative approach to understanding housing in our community developed through the City of Kelowna's 2017 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) that emphasizes the need for housing diversity and choice.*

The concept of a new housing "Wheelhouse" (Figure 1) was introduced through the HNA. This circular model has been designed to demonstrate the relationship between housing types, and to recognize the interdependence of the housing system – changes in one part of the system affect the other parts. The alignment of the Healthy Housing Strategy and Journey Home to address our communities housing needs are demonstrated by the Wheelhouse in Figure 1. The "Wheelhouse" circular model design also promotes equity and inclusion. It is designed to recognize that people move through housing forms, tenures, and price points as their life circumstances change, and that home ownership is not an ultimate goal for everyone.

By design, there are numerous action items that intersect in both strategies. These include: policy and zoning updates required to promote building the right supply; financial tools and partnership opportunities to increase the amount of rental housing; and advocacy and leadership steps to ensure alignment between senior and local government actions. Both strategies will guide the work and investment decisions required to shift the needle significantly on housing and homelessness. The two strategies are mutually reinforcing and are being aligned both through their development and implementation. (See Appendix C in Journey Home Technical Report for a chart detailing the alignment between the strategies.)

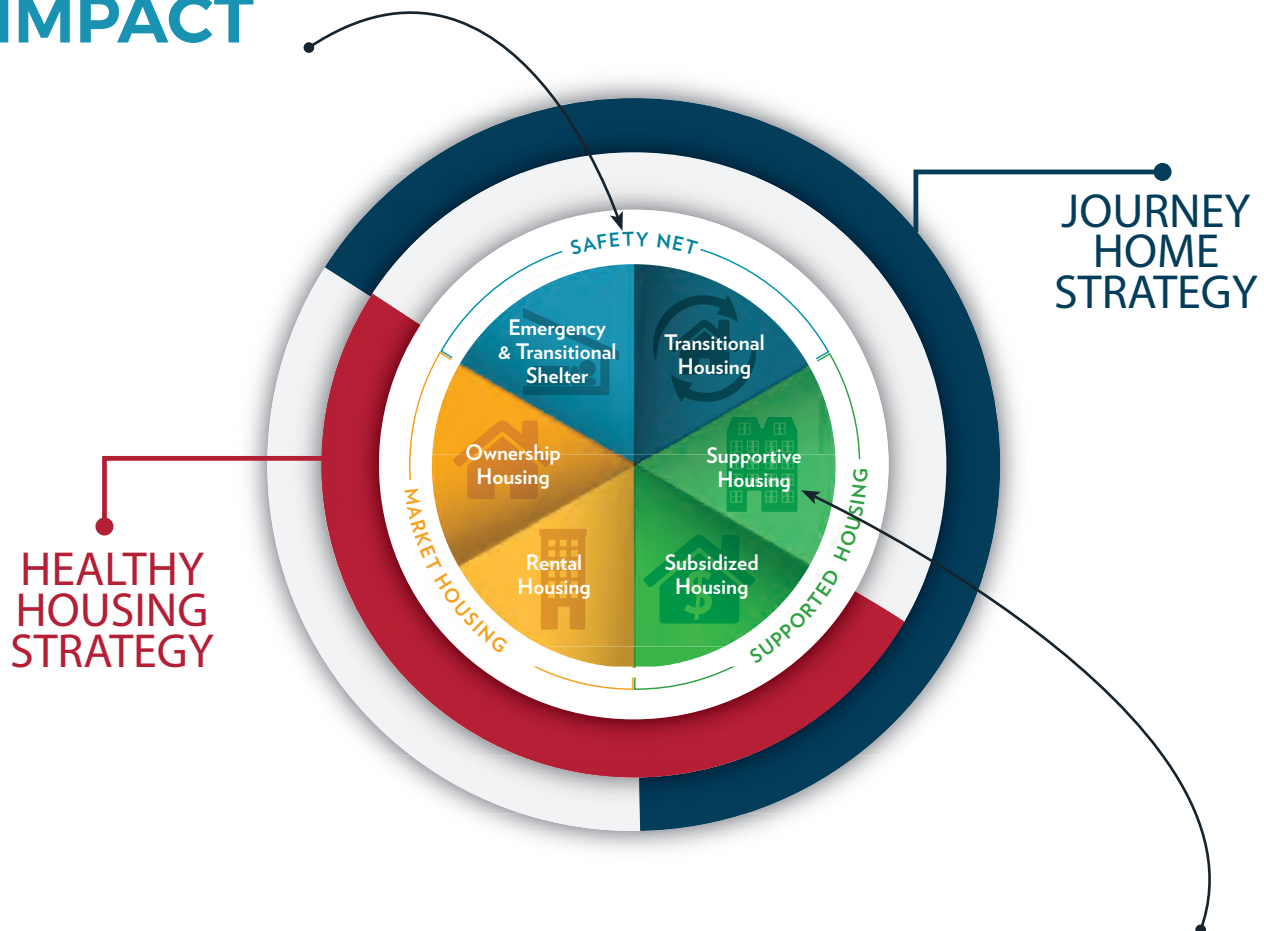


*"Need more space/ housing for the homeless; location of services; more people for homeless to talk to; more work opportunities for homeless"*

*~ Lived Experience Circle member*

Figure 1 Wheelhouse

## IMPACT



## JOURNEY HOME CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOCUS

The Journey Home Strategy addresses programs and services throughout the areas of the Wheelhouse indicated in Figure 1. *Of note, capital investment called for in Journey Home is focused on Long Term Supportive Housing.*



## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Kelowna has a strong history of collaboration crossing over multiple sectors including business, governments, the faith community, social services and volunteers. Building on this history, 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 that will strengthen the implementation of the strategy. As a result, we are building on and strengthening a foundation made up of connected, collaborative, and innovative stakeholders.

We have a multitude of organizations supporting those at risk of or experiencing homelessness that we can rely on in this work. We will work together to shore up the gaps identified, embrace innovation, and actively engage with a growing willingness to work collaboratively as a community. It is from this wealth of knowledge, experience, and practice that this Strategy emerged. Kelowna has remarkably strong resources that have committed to Journey Home including over 80 agencies and government departments involved in the homeless serving sector.

Significant progress has been achieved by these stakeholders in developing a response through working together in the past. To build on this strong foundation, the Journey Home Strategy proposes a new organization - the Backbone - that will assume the role of convener to strengthen existing, and forge new, relationships. A key responsibility of the Backbone Organization will be to connect Key Collaborators to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy.

Figure 2 Community Collective Response is a sample of current efforts to help demonstrate how extensive the collective community-based response has been over the course of the process to build the Journey Home Strategy as well as the strong foundation that we have to build on as a community. The data shared in Figure 2 was compiled as most recent statistics became available as of June 2018.



Figure 2 Progress on Homelessness during Journey Home Process

COMMUNITY EFFORTS UNDERWAY	ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMS	IMPACT
Foundational Research Completed	Housing Needs Assessment	First comprehensive study of housing needs across all categories of housing, providing guidance and alignment for both Healthy Housing and Journey Home Strategies
Broad Sector Engagement	Journey Home Engagement	<p>Inspired discussions across multiple sectors leading to innovative and realistic solutions.</p> <p>Public Survey (<i>501 surveys completed</i>)  Lived Experience Circle (<i>287 total participants</i>)  Youth Focus Groups (<i>50+ participants</i>)  2 Community Summits (<i>180+ participants</i>)  Plan Strategy Check-in (<i>119 participants</i>)  23 Design Labs (<i>636 participants</i>)</p>
Lived Experience Voice	Lived Experience Circle and Advocates for Youth Housing	The voices of 180 unique adults and over 50 youth have contributed their expertise and perspectives to the Strategy. Hearing from those who are currently, or have, experienced homelessness in their lifetime is foundational to the ongoing work of Journey Home. The Lived Experience Circle is working on establishing a permanent Circle that will work alongside the Backbone Organization.
Initiatives Building a Strong Foundation for Journey Home	Coordinated Access led by BC Housing including Common Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT), Coordinated Access Table, and Integrated Housing Application Process	Coordinated Access programs are key to providing recommendations and referrals for families, children, and youth to better access support and services in the community.
	Housing First provided by Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kelowna – first official Housing First Program (began in 2016)	Highly successful program with 28 individuals supported into housing (as of June 2018) with 90% maintaining their housing status.
Long Term Supportive Housing supplied by BC Housing	Gordon Place	Opened in Fall 2017 – currently housing 47 individuals with 24/7 supports
	Heath House	Set to open in Fall 2018 with 42 units of long term housing with 24/7 supports
	Hearthstone	Set to open in Fall 2018 with 46 units of long term housing with 24/7 supports

Figure 2 Progress on Homelessness during Journey Home Process continued

COMMUNITY EFFORTS UNDERWAY	ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMS	IMPACT
Collaborative Efforts Underway	Police and Crisis Team (PACT) RCMP and Mental Health Nurse Car response	Successful in diverting people away from Hospital Emergency and connecting to appropriate services in a timely manner. This year 53 clients were diverted from hospital emergency. 100% of individuals sent to hospital have been admitted which attests to the success of PACT assessments.
	Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team	Supporting a current caseload as of June 2018 of over 60 individuals, the ACT team provides flexible, community-based supports for adults with persistent mental illness and significant functional impairments who have not responded well to traditional rehabilitation services. 9 ACT clients remain homeless compared to the 25 that were homeless at intake into the program, and there has been a 33% reduction in Hospital emergency visits.
	Foundry – Opened in September 2017 with 25 agencies providing mental health, primary care, substance use, counselling and social services for youth aged 12 – 24 years.	As of May 2018, 900 youth have visited the Foundry, and for 65%, it is the first time they are seeking help.
	Community Action Team formed in Spring 2018 to activate a Community Response to the Overdose Crisis	Multiple stakeholders have come together to form a partnership to design a community-driven response to the overdose crisis.
	iSearch – Online Navigation Tool developed through collaborative partnership with UBCO, Okanagan College, and Central Okanagan Foundation	Launched in Fall 2017, this online tool is designed to assist individuals searching for housing in Kelowna
	Transitional Storage Program hosted by Kelowna Gospel Mission through partnership with BC Housing and City of Kelowna	The storage program is designed to support individuals to better connect with services. 248 participants since Fall 2016, 60 of whom are now housed.
Integration of Sectors to Address Homelessness	Researchers Table	University, College, and Community-Based Researchers working to form a Research Collaborative to conduct local research to support Journey Home efforts into the future.
	Faith Community	Currently embarking on a process to work in an integrated fashion to map strengths and determine best ways to contribute to Journey Home implementation.



Figure 2 Progress on Homelessness during Journey Home Process continued

COMMUNITY EFFORTS UNDERWAY	ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMS	IMPACT
Community Readiness	System Approach Training	140 participants attended representing 40+ agencies. The training helped to create a common understanding of the approach to set the foundation for Journey Home.
	Housing First Training hosted by CMHA with Federal Housing Partnership Strategy (HPS) Funding	Ongoing series of workshops and training sessions designed to increase stakeholders' capacity to deliver Housing First aligned programs.
	Street to Housing Outreach Training hosted with Federal HPS Funding	100 participants attended to be introduced to the approach and tools designed to support unsheltered individuals directly from the "street" into housing.
Community Initiatives Under Development	Application for a local Integrated Community Court – to deal with individuals charged with less serious offences who have underlying health and social issues.	Steering Committee has been formed to support this application for a court designed to play a role in supporting individuals to address their underlying issues.
	Personal Belongings Carrier – partnership project between Metro Community and UBCO Okanagan School of Engineering to create a highly functional personal belongings carrier.	Designed to help facilitate independence and lessen the burden of managing belongings during the process of finding permanent housing or accessing supports.



Design Lab in action

# THE JOURNEY HOME STRATEGY IN BRIEF

Journey Home consultations have informed the development of a community vision, a set of action-oriented values, and guiding principles that will be critical to instilling a community-wide common agenda and approach. The vision, values, and guiding principles are at the foundation of all the actions found in the Strategy, and have been designed to provide guidance for our collective work in implementing the Journey Home.

Consistently throughout all Journey Home consultations, the message was clear: we have strong organizations, but they are disconnected. Individuals and their families with lived experience shared their stories of the how difficult their journeys have been, and how lost and disheartened they felt, trying to understand and navigate between the different organizations. The discussions centred on moving to an integrated and coordinated approach where every door would become the right door. The Journey Home Strategy embraces this concept and the implementation plan has been designed to support a coordinated systems approach.

Kelowna's community discussions were inspired, passionate, and genuine. The uniqueness of these conversations inspired the framework for the Journey Home Strategy that is based on three Foundational Concepts supported by three strategic Pillars for action. This framework unfolds with 35 actions that will be implemented over a five-year period.



The 10 Top Actions have been drawn out of the Implementation Plan to demonstrate immediate action and lasting impact to support the level of investment and change that will be required. Milestones have been identified to provide benchmarks for us to measure success over the five-year period.

To ensure implementation, a realistic and achievable investment model has been designed to support the overall strategy. In fact, as the development of the Strategy is in its final stages, the Journey Home Task Force's work is coming to fruition with commitments in place for several of the needed investments. A detailed Implementation Plan further details the key stakeholders, timing, and action steps to make the Strategy a reality (Appendix I).

Moving the Strategy forward is now in the hands of the community. The connections and foundation have been built; it is now up to us all to come together in a new way. And the best news is that we have now demonstrated this is possible.

### VISION, VALUES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The vision, values, and guiding principles are at the foundation of all the actions found in the Strategy. They have been designed to provide guidance for our collective work over the course of implementing the Journey Home Strategy. As our journey as a community progresses, this guidance will be instrumental in keeping us on track, in assisting us as we endeavour to align our goals, and in helping us to aspire to be consistent in applying principles, best practices, and standards as we learn to work more effectively across our sectors and mandates.

### COLLECTIVE VALUES

- |                                                |                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Guided by <b>LIVED EXPERIENCE VOICES</b>     | • Committed to <b>INCLUSION</b>                                            |
| • Enlightened through <b>RECONCILIATION</b>    | • Driven by <b>COURAGE</b>                                                 |
| • Inspired by <b>INNOVATION</b>                | • Grounded in <b>INTEGRITY</b>                                             |
| • Rooted in <b>COMPASSION</b>                  | • Rooted in <b>DIGNITY</b>                                                 |
| • Committed to uphold individual <b>CHOICE</b> | • Founded on <b>HONESTY</b> and <b>TRANSPARENCY</b>                        |
| • Compelled to ensure <b>EQUITY</b>            | • Energized by innovation to <b>RESPOND</b> and <b>ADAPT</b> appropriately |
| • Strengthened by <b>COLLECTIVE</b> action     | • Dedicated to nurturing <b>RESILIENCE</b>                                 |

## VISION

*Driven by a commitment to action, the entire community is inspired to contribute collectively to an integrated system of care where every person feels valued and supported, and every journey leads home.*

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



*"We need services that are culturally appropriate"*

*~ Lived Experience member*



01

## LIVED / LIVING EXPERIENCE

We place people and their experiences at the centre of the work always. This involves recognizing and respecting people who are homeless as experts in their own lives, their values, life situations, and expressed needs. To understand this perspective, we strive to directly engage people with lived and living experience in developing and implementing the Journey Home Strategy.

This lens recognizes there is no one "type" of person experiencing homelessness and no one size-fits-all response. We recognize the intersections of race, socio-economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, and religion, and respect that services will need to be flexible and adaptive to diverse needs and choices.

02

## INNOVATION

As a collective, we endeavor to challenge ourselves as a community to be creative and innovative in our response to homelessness, leveraging best practices to inform made-in-Kelowna solutions. Being innovative also means bringing in expertise from other sectors, creating partnerships, and thinking creatively about housing and supports. We have dug deep to draw in usual and unusual suspects in our community, and defined new collaborations and potential ways of achieving the Strategy goals through social innovation, social enterprise, and leveraging technology.



03

## HOUSING FIRST

Housing First is a person-centred approach rooted in the belief that all people deserve housing, and that anyone, even those with the most complex needs, can move directly from homelessness to housing in concert with appropriate supports. Viewing housing as a primary need was in direct contrast to the traditional service response, which required people who were homeless to stabilize their addictions and mental health prior to receiving housing. Housing First instead argues that in order for someone to address their illnesses or related-challenges, they must first be housed. Additionally, Housing First must be tailored for special populations such as Indigenous people, youth and individuals experiencing domestic violence.

This approach has a wealth of research to support its effectiveness, and has been adopted in several cities across Canada due to its effectiveness in ending homelessness long-term, and its positive impact on public system use by reducing the cost of homelessness to health, justice, and community.

04

## JOINT LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

This principle reflects the recognition that for this plan to be successful, everyone needs to be involved and do their part. Homelessness is a complex social issue involving multiple sectors and systems. Adequately responding to it, therefore, will require our collective effort and commitment. The Strategy will require commitment and action from all levels of government, including Indigenous government, non-profit providers, private sector, academia, living/lived experience, and Kelowna residents.

05

## PREVENTION

A true functional end to homelessness requires that we not only think about how we can respond to current homelessness, but also think upstream about how to prevent it in the first place. This requires the development of more affordable housing and changing policies to ensure vulnerable groups, such as youth leaving care, are not discharged into homelessness. It entails the provision of the resources and supports to stay housed, improve integration and social inclusion, and reduce the risk of recurrence of homelessness.

## A SYSTEM PLANNING APPROACH

Kelowna is home to many excellent services run by dedicated and experienced staff. We have a community ready and willing to collaborate. As we developed this Strategy, we heard loud and clear that we will need to shift from a response that relies on a program-by-program approach to one that coordinates our efforts at the system level.

Within the community there are a multitude of organizations that all contribute to providing the services that support the homeless population. These services span over multiple sectors including not-for-profits, government agencies, and faith organizations. Currently there is no mechanism to coordinate and align their efforts even though they serve the same population. A system planning approach is a road map for addressing this need as it involves focusing on a functional end to homelessness and preventing future homelessness. It uses the concept of Functional Zero as a measurable benchmark to assess progress on homelessness. A summary of Functional Zero indicators can be found in Appendix E of the Journey Home Technical Report. Achieving Functional Zero means that we develop responses that ensure homelessness is prevented whenever possible; if homelessness occurs, it is a rare, brief, and a non-recurring experience.

***To achieve this, Kelowna will require an increase of supportive and affordable housing supply, a greater focus on prevention, and the right wrap-around supports, at the right time. We will need to bring diverse service and housing providers together into a well-coordinated homelessness-serving system supported by integrated funding, data sharing, and performance management. System-level tangible metrics will be implemented to help assess collective impact and course-correct in real-time.***

Within this system approach, the unique needs of youth, women, seniors, families, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+, and other groups must be considered while ensuring a seamless, person-centered approach. Further, working with the Indigenous community to further develop partnerships and increase knowledge and understanding for culturally informed responses will be another step on a journey of healing and Reconciliation.





## FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS & PILLARS

Journey Home consultation processes were designed to provide multiple avenues for input including: an online public survey, community summits, design labs, and lived experience tables. These processes are described in detail in Section 3 along with the feedback and rich discussions that provided the bases for the development of the Strategy.

By combining learnings from all the consultations with currently recognized best practices, a new and inspiring approach has emerged providing a framework for the Journey Home Strategy. The Strategy is grounded in the foundational concepts of Innovation, Reconciliation, and Lived Experience that are woven and embedded in every aspect of the strategy and are critical to its successful implementation. Building on these foundational concepts, specific actions are outlined in the three Pillars of Inclusion & Prevention, Backbone Coordination & Partnerships, and Housing & Supports laid out over a five-year period.

## TOP 10 ACTIONS

Within this framework, the Strategy proposes 35 specific actions to be implemented over the five-year span of the Strategy. Within these actions, the Top 10 have emerged as highlights that demonstrate the commitment to change. These priority actions are paramount and appear in the Implementation Plan (Appendix I) as immediate, high-leverage activities of the highest priority.



***“Actions speak louder than words” ~ Public Survey Participant***



Rollout a Backbone Organization solely dedicated to implementing Journey Home Strategy by building community capacity and engaging in systems planning.



Launch The Upstream for Youth pilot in partnership with the School District to identify and support youth at risk of becoming homeless.



Support the addition of 300 units of long-term supportive housing in purpose-built buildings targeted to support people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness with higher needs.



Support efforts to increase treatment beds, especially for young people in Kelowna.



Support people in the rental market through 500 new program spaces grounded in the Housing First model and the right to housing.



Support innovative solutions to address the criminalization of homelessness, such as a Community Court.



Continue the Lived Experience Circle and Youth Advocates for Housing and formalize relationships to the Backbone Organization governance.



Ensure a population focus is embedded in Strategy implementation; this includes youth, Indigenous, women, families, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+, seniors, and men.



Recognize accountability for the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in that Indigenous Homelessness is an ongoing form of colonialism.



Launch a Homelessness Innovation Lab to partner with technology sector to develop solutions for information management and access, and data analysis.



***“We have good momentum and we are ready to move forward from being reactive to proactive - with a commitment not to leave anyone behind”***

***~ Design Lab member***





*“Our conversation as a community  
is not finished, it’s only just begun”*

*~ Coordinated Access*

*Design Lab Participant*



## MILESTONES

The design of the Journey Home Strategy recognizes that the implementation plan will continue to evolve as new learnings and information emerge. The measure of the success of the Journey Home implementation will be gauged through the evaluation of the Milestones described within this document.

- 01 End chronic & episodic homelessness;
- 02 Introduce measures to prevent homelessness in the first place;
- 03 Implement a coordinated systems approach to homelessness.

The Strategy has a built-in review process to ensure rapid and agile development is ongoing. A mid-point strategic review and recalibration (year three) is earmarked during implementation. Appendix H provides a detailed overview of the Implementation Plan for the Strategy along with timelines and key collaborators.

Our ultimate objective is to prevent and achieve a functional end to homelessness in Kelowna. We will gauge our success against the following benchmarks.

## THE MILESTONES AND ANTICIPATED TIMELINES FOR THE JOURNEY HOME STRATEGY ARE:



### ELIMINATE CHRONIC AND EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS

By **2024**, 100% of individuals experiencing **chronic or episodic homelessness** will be housed with appropriate supports – a total of about 350 people.

By 2024, at least **1,700 people experiencing homelessness** will be housed with wrap-around support through Journey Home programs implemented by the Journey Home process.

By 2021, 100% of those entering Homeless-Serving System will be **connected through Coordinated Access to housing and supports within 14 days**.



### MOVE UPSTREAM TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Introduce System-Wide **Coordinated Access** by March 2020 to connect people to the right resources, fast.

By **2020**, at least 400 people will be **diverted** from entering the Homeless-Serving System with an immediate link to community-based prevention supports within 5 days wherever possible and appropriate.

By **2021**, corrections, health and child intervention will report on the number of people discharged into homelessness from public systems on a biennial basis at minimum. Based on figures reported, annual targets will be introduced to achieve **zero discharge into homelessness by 2023**.



### IMPLEMENT A COORDINATED SYSTEMS APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS

Create an independent **Backbone Organization** to lead system planning and Journey Home Strategy implementation in early 2019.

By March 2020, complete a **Homelessness Funding Framework**, which identifies resource and funding coordination processes, roles and accountabilities to support Journey Home Strategy implementation with key funding partners.

By March 2020, ensure **Homelessness Management Information System** coverage and **Coordinated Access** participation will include all Homeless-Serving System providers regardless of funding source.



*“Coordinate existing groups and services in a more intensive way to minimize duplication and increase awareness”*

*~ Public Survey Participant*

# PROPOSED INVESTMENT

*The funding of the proposed Journey Home Strategy will require an investment of \$47M from various sources over its five-year implementation. There is significant evidence that beyond the human cost of homelessness, the economic cost of homelessness includes the overall cost to the social services, health care, and justice systems of caring for a homeless person on the streets which far exceeds the cost of providing housing with supportive services for them.*

To ensure unique needs of priority populations are reflected in implementation, funding targets will be developed to ensure Journey Home resources are being distributed across population groups in equitable manners. This can be determined by the Board of Directors of the Backbone Organization and may include setting targets based on Kelowna population or homeless population levels. Youth are a priority population in this strategy, as such funding targets for this population will be based on representation in community. Youth generally comprise 20% of the homeless population, factoring in under representation, are reflected in proposed program funding and budget allocations.

01

## HOUSING



\$18M

300

### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS NEEDED

Long-term housing in buildings with supports onsite for people with complex needs (addictions, mental health, medical needs):

- BC Housing has currently committed to development of two buildings (88 units) and are in ongoing discussions regarding an additional 102 units.
- This leaves 110 units that are still required, an estimate of 3 buildings at a total estimated cost of approximately \$18M.

02

## BACKBONE ORGANIZATION & COORDINATION



\$2.7M

A neutral Backbone Organization is proposed with focus on/and accountability for Journey Home Strategy implementation:

- Funding Coordination
- Homeless System Planning
- Capacity Building
- Leadership and Accountability
- Partnerships and Innovation

03

## SUPPORTS



\$26M

500

### NEW PROGRAM SPACES

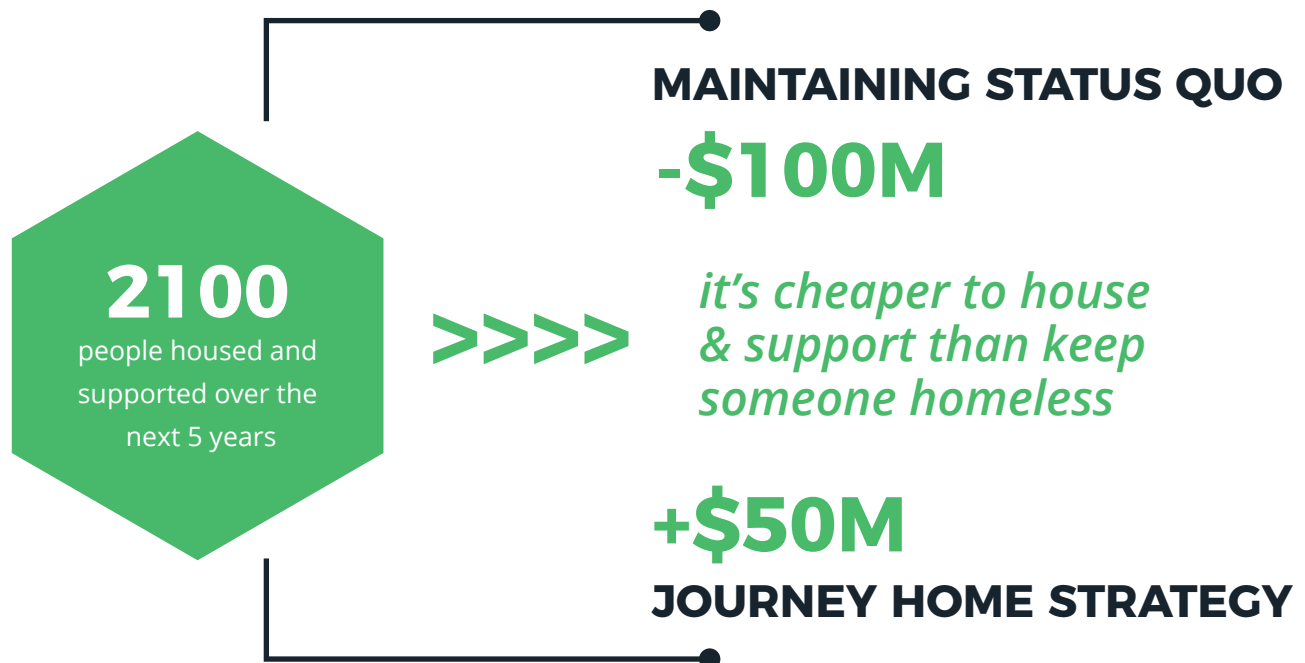
supporting people in rental housing across communities with wraparound supports following the Housing First model, including:

- Assertive Community Treatment
- Intensive Case Management
- Rapid Rehousing
- Prevention



*"Don't be afraid to think outside the box to try something different - it's going to take some drastic changes to make it a better place for everyone" ~ Public Survey Participant*

## DOING NOTHING TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS HAS A GREATER COST THAN TAKING ACTION



This response to homelessness will be underpinned by the continued good work of the Kelowna community, together with the new partnerships formed, that will work collectively to guarantee that people who are homeless are treated with dignity and respect, and receive the quality services they choose when they need them.

**NOW Canada - An example of supportive housing being proposed for the Journey Home Strategy.**





A photograph of a long, straight wooden boardwalk bridge with railings, stretching into a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The bridge is made of light-colored wood and has a central path. The forest is lush and green, with sunlight filtering through the trees. The image is partially covered by a dark blue geometric overlay on the left and a green geometric overlay on the right.

## MOVING FORWARD

The Task Force has laid the foundation for moving forward with the implementation of the Strategy. A transition plan is in place to ensure no loss of momentum between the completion of the Strategy and its implementation. Resources have been gathered to support the development of a Backbone Organization to lead, to convene partners, and to ensure accountability for the Strategy implementation. Resources and commitments are presently being aligned to support the beginning of implementation.

The foundation has been set for the ongoing engagement of the Youth Advocates for Housing and the Lived Experience Circle. They are already developing plans regarding the important role they will play in the Strategy implementation.

The Task Force and City of Kelowna are moving forward with the setup of a Backbone Organization to lead implementation efforts. Already, a partnership with Accelerate Okanagan and the Okanagan Innovation Centre has been established to locate the Backbone Organization in a central location embedded in a space dedicated to innovation: this builds on the Strategy's strengths by engaging new partners and thinking differently to support implementation.

The final commitment is the one that we all as a community have to make: to continue to participate and contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. In an effort to encourage commitment to participate in the implementation of the Journey Home Strategy, a Stakeholder Pledge was designed to demonstrate the wide-spread support of Journey Home (Appendix H). The Pledge, along with the list of the organizations and individuals that have signed it, will be presented alongside the final Strategy for Council's consideration.

***The stage is set, the Journey Home Strategy is our script, and now it is up to us as a community. Our journey begins...***



# USEFUL TERMS

*A full Glossary is available in the technical report; the terms below will be of use for people new to this topic in reading this report:*

## DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

**HOMELESSNESS:** Homelessness describes the situation of an *individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it*. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

*In Kelowna, we estimate about 2,000 people experience homelessness during the course of a year.*

**INDIGENOUS Homelessness:** a human condition that describes *First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing*. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their indigeneity or lost relationships. There are 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness defined nationally.

## 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

- 1. Historic Displacement Homelessness:** Indigenous communities and Nations made historically homeless after being displaced from pre-colonial Indigenous lands.
- 2. Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous lands, after colonial control.
- 3. Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous worldviews or connection to the Creator or equivalent deity.
- 4. Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness:** Mental homelessness, described as an imbalance of mental faculties, experienced by Indigenous individuals and communities caused by colonization's entrenched social and economic marginalization of Indigenous Peoples.
- 5. Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness:** Homelessness that totally dislocates or alienates Indigenous individuals and communities from their culture and from the relationship web of Indigenous society known as "All My Relations."
- 6. Overcrowding Homelessness:** The number of people per dwelling in urban and rural Indigenous households that exceeds the national Canadian household average, thus contributing to and creating unsafe, unhealthy and overcrowded living spaces, in turn causing homelessness.

**7. Relocation and Mobility Homelessness:** Mobile Indigenous homeless people travelling over geographic distances between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, legal and childcare services, to attend spiritual events and ceremonies, have access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends and community members.

**8. Going Home Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual or family who has grown up or lived outside their home community for a period of time, and on returning “home,” are often seen as outsiders, making them unable to secure a physical structure in which to live, due to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal bureaucratic barriers, uncooperative band or community councils, hostile community and kin members, lateral violence and cultural dislocation.

**9. Nowhere to Go Homelessness:** A complete lack of access to stable shelter, housing, accommodation, shelter services or relationships; literally having nowhere to go.

**10. Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness:** Indigenous persons fleeing, leaving or vacating unstable, unsafe, unhealthy or overcrowded households or homes to obtain a measure of safety or to survive. Young people, women, and LGBTQ2S+ people are particularly vulnerable.

**11. Emergency Crisis Homelessness:** Natural disasters, large-scale environmental manipulation and acts of human mischief and destruction, along with bureaucratic red tape, combining to cause Indigenous people to lose their homes because the system is not ready or willing to cope with an immediate demand for housing.

**12. Climatic Refugee Homelessness:** Indigenous peoples whose lifestyle, subsistence patterns and food sources, relationship to animals, and connection to land and water have been greatly altered by drastic and cumulative weather shifts due to climate change. These shifts have made individuals and entire Indigenous communities homeless.

***Indigenous people are over-represented in the homeless population. We don't have exact numbers, but estimate about 25-30% of people experiencing homelessness are Indigenous compared to 6% of the general population.***

**YOUTH HOMELESSNESS:** refers to the situation and experience of *young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence*. Youth homelessness is a complex social issue because as a society we have failed to provide young people and their families with the necessary and adequate supports that will enable them to move forward with their lives in a safe and planned way. LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit and other gender/sexual identities) are disproportionality represented among youth experiencing homelessness often as result of family conflict.

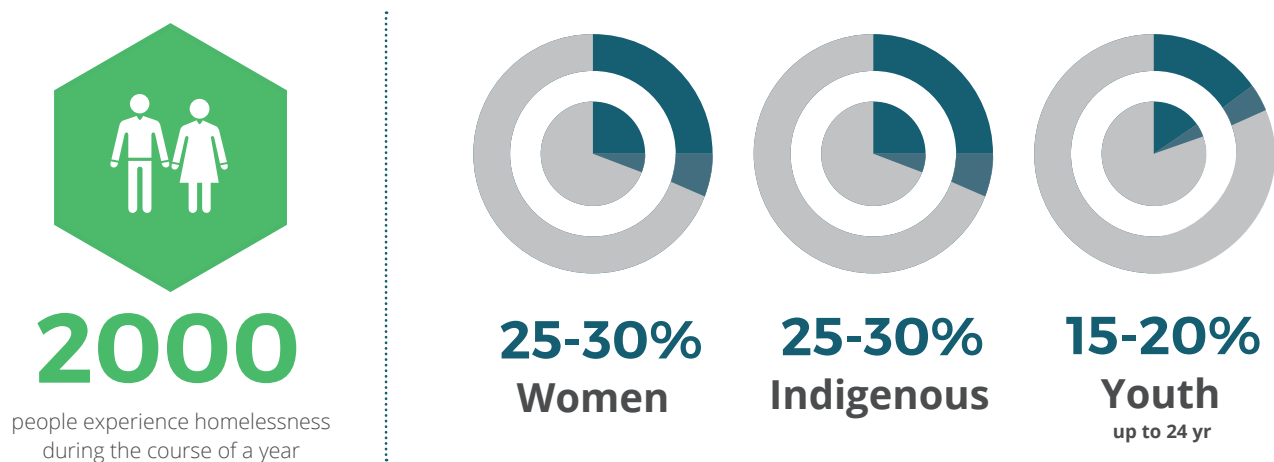
In addition to experiencing economic deprivation and a lack of secure housing, many young people who are homeless lack the personal experience of living independently and at the same time may be in the throes of significant developmental (social, physical, emotional and cognitive) changes. As a result, they may not have the resources, resilience, education, social supports or life skills necessary to foster a safe and nurturing transition to adulthood and independence. Few young people choose to be homeless, nor wish to be defined by their homelessness, and the experience is generally negative and stressful. Youth homelessness is the denial of basic human rights and once identified as such, it must be remedied. All young people have the right to the essentials of life, including adequate housing, food, safety, education and justice.

***In Kelowna, we estimate between 15-20% of people experiencing homelessness are youth up to the age of 24.***

**WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS:** Women are less visible in their experiences of homelessness and as a result they are relatively *under-represented in homeless counts at about 25%-30%* of those enumerated, due to their hidden homelessness. However, it is of importance to highlight their experience of housing instability – be it couch surfing, living in unaffordable or inappropriate housing, or unsafe situations (i.e. women prostituting for places to rent). Often, lone-parent households led by women have to manage housing instability with limited incomes and the need to balance childcare needs.

Women require specific attention due to gender-related histories of exploitation, violence and victimization. As women they face the ongoing and systematic gender effects that lead to a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty and low income. In addition, the connection between domestic violence and homelessness is often prevalent for women. The exploitation of girls and women remains a reality in our society, as is their disproportionate experience of gender-based violence.

*While women make up about 50% of the population, they tend to be under-represented in visible homelessness at about 25-30% as they are likely to be couch surfing (staying temporarily with friends, family, acquaintances) or living in unsafe and insecure housing.*



## HOMELESSNESS PATTERNS

**AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS:** people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. We look at renter households in EXTREME CORE HOUSING NEED who are paying more than 50% of income on housing AND have annual incomes of \$20K or less as being at even higher risk. About 2800-3000 individuals are estimated to be in this situation in Kelowna.

**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS:** refers to situations where people are experiencing long-term homelessness, living on the streets or shelters over the course of years. About 140-160 individuals are estimated to experience chronic homelessness in Kelowna.

**EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS:** refers to situations where people experience recurring episodes of homelessness coming in and out of housing over long periods of time, sometimes throughout their lives. About 190-220 individuals are estimated to experience episodic homelessness in Kelowna.

**TRANSITIONAL HOMELESSNESS:** refers to short-term (several days or weeks) homelessness situations- which is the **most common pattern** we see across communities in Canada. About **1500-1700** individuals are estimated to experience transitional homelessness in Kelowna.



## HOMELESSNESS INTERVENTIONS

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Housing is considered affordable when 30% or less of your household's gross income goes towards paying for your housing costs.

**COORDINATED ACCESS & ASSESSMENT (CAA):** A process to ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness have fair and equitable access to appropriate housing and support using a common needs assessment process and consistent access points for help.

**FUNCTIONAL ZERO:** A Functional Zero end to homelessness means that communities have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

**HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM:** A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. This data is used to inform planning for housing and services.

**HOUSING FIRST:** a proven recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing followed by provision of additional supports and services as needed.

**SUPPORT SERVICES:** may include services to maintain housing, employment and life skills programs, medical services, addictions treatment, or mental health services among other services.

**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** Long-term housing with on-site supports and services.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM THE JOURNEY HOME TASK  
FORCE TO ALL THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THE CREATION OF  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY.

**FUNDED BY**



Contributions for community consultation provided by the Government of Canada's Homelessness

Partnering Strategy. Matching funds for the Lived Experience Circle from Central Okanagan Foundation.



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