

## Strategic Plan Oversight Commission July Meeting Minutes

Attendees: BPA team, Julie Schneider, Lydia Adkins, Donna Price, Safiya Merchant, DeAndrea Matthews, ReGina Hentz, Sarah Rennie, Gerald Curley, Amy Brown, Tasha Gray, Taura Brown

### Reviewing and Refining SPOC Charter

SPOC Champions Amy Brown and Taura Brown developed proposed norms and values by which the SPOC should operate, including:

- We are learning how to honor the humanity of everyone. We value all lived experiences we each bring to the table.
- We ensure the inclusion of all voices and center those of the people who are most impacted.
- We practice transparent communication & frequent information sharing to avoid assumptions and build trust.
- We invest in authentic & courageous relationship building, in moments of triumph, challenge and crisis.
- We will listen, listen, listen, & process.
  - We allow space for misunderstanding and for inviting moments of clarification.
  - We assume the best intentions of others.
  - In oops and ouch moments, we acknowledge intention vs impact and clean up what you mess up

SPOC members approved the above norms and values for the commission.

### Review of Team Initial Findings

Since the BPA consulting team started their contract, they conducted reviews and research into the Detroit homelessness response system's governance structure, past strategic initiatives, system performance, and funding. As part of this initial review, the BPA team reviewed system documents, conducted interviews with key stakeholders, and talked to residents with lived experience of homelessness.

The consulting team presented their initial findings and the key themes/priorities that have emerged from this review process to the SPOC, which were:

- Detroit's homelessness response system includes many people – including people with lived experience, public and private sector leaders and staff – with expertise and strong intentions for advancing progress and change
- Individuals who have experienced Detroit's homelessness response system firsthand report that they find the system, as well as many of its programs and services, to be unhelpful, unresponsive to their needs and concerns, and in some cases, even abusive and traumatic.
- Despite intentions to focus on racial equity and support the leadership of people with lived expertise, processes and actions do not appear to truly center or embrace those intentions across all elements of the work

- While all elements of the homelessness response system (e.g., prevention, outreach, shelter, coordinated entry, PSH) are operational, most need strengthening, and while organizations are tackling issues to improve the system, the impact of those efforts are not clear yet
- There is a pattern of lack of follow-up and inefficient or ineffective implementation activities across a variety of initiatives and efforts
- The community lacks a clear and coherent system vision and values statement that drive and structure priorities and efforts within its response to homelessness
- System leadership roles are not being played by anyone, either independently or collaboratively, contributing to ineffective system management and other issues
- There are significant trust and partnership issues across and throughout the system that limit progress and impact of efforts – and that have major implications for development and implementation of the Strategic System Improvement Plan

In their discussion of the themes and priorities, the BPA team said that residents have identified great resources in the community but that the execution of these programs is sometimes lacking. The consulting team highlighted that it's not always clear how priorities are determined in the homelessness system and that there is a pattern of lack of follow-up and lack of clarity about who is responsible for carrying out the implementation of initiatives. The team also said that through their research, one theme is that system leadership roles are not being played by anyone, individually or in partnership, akin to a large ship without a captain.

The SPOC then discussed their initial responses to the listed themes and emerging priorities. Some SPOC members said these findings really resonated with them. SPOC member Gerald Curley said the system does tend to do a lot of planning and visioning but these plans often “fall into an abyss” and struggle to become fully implemented and operational. SPOC member Tasha Gray said one of the reasons why it feels the system is a ship without a captain is that the system lacks a strategic plan and a clear direction that all system partners are moving in. SPOC member Julie Schneider reiterated the importance of having a definition of what success looks like system-wide and that metrics of system impact are more effective when measured against a plan of priorities.

SPOC member ReGina Hentz said she believes HAND is doing a good job at steering the system.

When discussing other themes, the SPOC talked about barriers residents face in accessing supports in the community. SPOC member Taura Brown said when you don't have housing, it affects everything else, like the ability to reach doctors' appointments since shelters are located further away from health care and schools. SPOC member Lydia Adkins said it can be difficult when resources are not centralized in one place. SPOC member Tasha Gray said focus groups with people with lived experience of homelessness indicated that residents had the most success when they had an advocate helping them navigate the homelessness system.

[Review of July site visit and community engagement plan](#)

The BPA team went over their upcoming visit to Detroit from July 24-27, where they will be meeting with government and system leaders, conducting listening sessions with provider staff, talking to residents with lived experience of homelessness, and visiting homelessness service facilities like shelters.

#### Next Steps

At the August SPOC meeting, the BPA team will present its interim report on community priorities and its recommendations for the structure and process for planning sessions to develop the 5-year strategic system improvement plan.