Ending Homelessness Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

April 21st, 2021 at 1:00 P.M.

Remote participation is provided by calling in to (253) 215-8782; Webinar ID: 924 1477 0760, or by using the Zoom link for this meeting: https://piercecountywa.zoom.us/j/92414770760

Facilitator
Heather Moss, Director of Human Services, Pierce County

Committee Members:
John Barbee, Community Services Manager, Pierce County
Jeff Rodgers, Homeless Programs Supervisor, Pierce County
James Pogue, Executive Director of Homeless Services, Continuum of Care Committee
Dr. Lamont Green, Continuum of Care Committee
Gerrit Nyland, Director of Operations, Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness
Courtney Chandler, Program Manager for Coordinated Entry, Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness
Klarissa Monteros, Senior Policy Analyst, City of Tacoma
Tiffany Speir, Long Range/Strategic Planning Manager, City of Lakewood
Kirstin Hoffman, Emergency Manager, City of Puyallup
Maureen Howard (Alternate), Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Follow-up (1:05 p.m.)

    a. Norms

    b. Data

4. Resources Discussion (1:10 p.m.)

    a. What is needed to write and implement both plans?

5. Action Plan Review by Section (1:30 p.m.)

    a. Have the Committee's discussions been captured accurately?

    b. Is there content missing?

    c. Priorities to be emphasized?

6. Next Steps (2:40 p.m.)

    a. Final Plan Development and Review

      b. Presentation to County Council

      c. Next Phase

           i. Comprehensive Plan Development

          ii. Shelter Plan Development and Implementation

7. Adjournment

ACTION PLAN

Building a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness

Developed by the Ad Hoc Committee

April 2021

Ad Hoc Committee

This Ad Hoc Committee was created by the Pierce County Council per County Council Resolution 2021-30. The committee included the following individuals, identified by their organizations as specified in the council resolution:

> Heather Moss, Director, Pierce County Human Services
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> John Barbee, Community Services Manager, Pierce County Human Services
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> Jeff Rodgers, Homeless Programs Supervisor, Pierce County Human Services
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> James Pogue, Executive Director of Homeless Services, Comprehensive Life Resources
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> Dr. Lamont Green, XXX, XXX
>
> Gerrit Nyland, Director of Operations, Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness
>
> Courtney Chandler, Program Manager for Coordinated Entry, Associated Ministries
>
> Klarissa Monteros, Senior Policy Analyst, City of Tacoma
>
> Tiffany Speir, Long Range Strategic Planning Manager, City of Lakewood
>
> Kirsten XXX, XXX, City of Puyallup

This plan was created by Pierce County Council Resolution 21-30 (?). The intent of the resolution is three-fold:

1. Establish an Ad Hoc Committee to write an Action Plan (due to the Council by April 24, 2021).

2. Direct Pierce County Human Services to use the Action Plan as a guide for writing a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness (due to the Council by September 24, 2021).

3. Develop and implement an aligned plan to provide adequate shelter to all unhoused (target completion date of November 1, 2021).

The Ad Hoc Committee met four times in the month of April 2021 to develop this action plan.

History of Past/Current Plans and Other Regional Efforts to End Homelessness

Since 1996 the Tacoma/Lakewood/Pierce County Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) has received federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement new housing programs for homeless. In 2002, the first ever comprehensive plan to address homelessness was developed. This was the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The goal was to end homelessness by 2013. The plan was robust and identified the resources needed to be successful. Organizations were prepared to expand and develop new housing and supportive services. The challenge was that there were not sufficient resources available to increase housing and services needed to succeed. During this time the CoC increased the amount of federal funding and housing services but not to the level needed to end homelessness.

In 2012, a new plan was developed, the Plan to End Homelessness. This plan had a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015, reducing all homelessness by 50% by 2016, and reducing family homelessness by 50% by 2021. During this time there was an increase in public funding provided by the State of Washington Department of Commerce. As in the past the increased resources were still not sufficient to support the need.

In 2017, a plan was developed to realign the CoC Committee and focus on 8 Key Results to address homelessness. By this time resources had significantly increased and access to housing and services had been realigned to ensure that households are prioritized for housing and services based on vulnerabilities and housing barriers. The CoC Committee was focused on ensuring that the implementation of this new plan was the top priority.

In 2018, the State Department of Commerce shifted priorities and issued guidance requiring counties to develop plans to address homeless with specific outcomes expected. The guidance included outcomes that will make a significant impact on reducing the number of persons who are homeless. Pierce County contracted with a consultant to assist the CoC Committee with the development of a new plan that met the States new requirements. The guidance also required that the plan be adopted by County Council. This plan was developed in 2019 and adopted by Council in December 2019.

Other targeted plans, focusing on populations, have been developed over the years. A Youth Plan was developed in 2014 with a focus on preventing and ending youth homelessness. The plan addressed housing and services as well as education and employment initiatives. The plan targeted homeless youth, ages 12-24. In 2015 the Cognitive Impairments and/or Developmental Disabilities Plan was developed. This plan focused on increased housing and access to existing housing as well as improved health and stability. In 2019 the County commissioned an Ending Veteran Homelessness Task Force that worked on policy updates, resource accessibility for veterans and continuous improvements.

Overarching Goals, Definitions and Guiding Principles

The Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings during the month of April to develop this Action Plan to guide development of a Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness in Pierce County. This section includes guidance on the Plan's overarching goals, suggestions for key word definitions, and proposed principles to lead the planning efforts.

<u>Goals</u>

The Ad Hoc Committee identified the following goals for the Comprehensive Plan to achieve:

1. Prioritize how we spend funds (if we have $X, where does next $ go? What do we fund most, or first?)
2. Clarify intent – are we focusing on long-term versus short-term solutions?
3. Identify what resources our community should advocate/lobby for?
4. Make sure our goals are measurable (SMART)
5. Focus on long-term, high-level policy goals that regional elected officials can support, and that local plans can feed into and/or support
6. Focus not just on what has historically been possible, but consider reach/stretch goals; be innovative, yet practical
7. Aim for "functional zero:" adequate shelter available, and appropriate interventions immediate
8. Develop more than just a plan; include specific steps for action and implementation

<u>Definitions</u>

In its discussions regarding definitions, the Ad Hoc Committee focused on the following:

- Define a process for how we come to shared key definitions that all entities and jurisdictions can adopt and use.
- Clarify how to balance <u>ideal</u> versus <u>realistic</u> plan (what do we have actual capacity to do, and how far should we stretch?).
- Define these terms/phrases:
  - What does "warm/safe" shelter include (and not include)?
  - How does individual autonomy and choice factor in?
  - How does Targeted Universalism define our approach?
  - What is the common definition of being "homeless" we should collectively use?

<u>Principles</u>

The Ad Hoc Committee identified these principles to guide development of the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Focus on diversity, racial equity, and inclusion.
2. Build plans based on the concept of "targeted universalism" and the 5 steps framework.
3. Include experts who've lived unsheltered and other marginalized populations in the planning/design process.
4. Start with a value statement about overall intent of plan (such as "Ensure a place where all people belong").
5. Shelter plan should ensure easier, faster access to shelter for all populations, and should include a wide variety of shelter types.
6. Create a <u>regional</u> approach that many can adopt/support/implement (downtown Tacoma cannot be the only answer).
7. Do not over-focus on specific populations; the plan is for <u>all</u> homeless, while programs can be developed for specific populations (eg., Veterans, families, youth, DV, etc.).
8. Do not reinvent wheel (consider other work already done, eg., SPARC, surveys ==(John facilitated this part when I lost service…get more details from him)==.

Scope

The Ad Hoc Committee discussed the ideal scope of the Comprehensive Plan and determined the following considerations be made:

- Determine how broad we want the comprehensive plan to be; should it address prevention?
- Encourage collaboration across private, for-profit, non-profit, and governmental systems and institutions.
- Recognize we have a unique chance here – don't make this too narrow (Council requested "comprehensive" plan!).
- Systems do not work in isolation – we need to recognize and plan for how so many systems are interconnected.
- Be aspirational – lots of smaller plans happening all over (jurisdictions, specific populations, specific funding sources); they should all feed into this larger comprehensive plan.
- Consider narrow focus on building the homeless system, with connections to other systems that are homeless-friendly (we cannot fix all).
- Focus on understanding flow in system, use data to identify inflow, backlog of current people seeking permanent housing through Coordinated Entry, and outflow of successful achievement of permanent housing.
- Look at various "exit strategies" or interventions to homelessness, and identify connections to other systems.
- Consider cash assistance as a viable response/solution.
- Understand and improve connections between shelters and coordinated entry (there is not a tight connection here currently).

Groups to Include, and How

Representatives from the Coalition to Prevent Homelessness offer the following list of individuals, groups, and stakeholders to be included in the Comprehensive Plan development process:

- Legal support (Tacoma Pro Bono)
- Fair Housing
- Faith Community (Mental health chaplains, CHRP, AM, TMA)
- Public Health
- City and County Council members
- NCS
- Puyallup Tribe
- DV and Sexual Assault
- Private and small TH
- Immigrant communities
- disabilities
- Entity collaboration - not individuals
- Chamber of commerce/private sector
- Builders/developers
- SRO programs (single room occupancy)
- Landlords
- Youth
- LGBTQ
- POC
- Experts who've lived homeless
- Medical field
- Education Field
- Community groups across the county
- Behavioral health system (SUD treatment, MH treatment)
- Provider organizations
- ID provider organizations (AM starting point)
- Soft skill development
- Home ownership assistance
- Shelter providers
- Workforce development (PCCETF)

Other members of the Ad Hoc Committee offered these additional suggestions of groups to include in the plan development process:

- Cities and towns (assoc.)
- School districts
- Emergency/first responders
- Philanthropy partners

- Youth Action Board (ACI)
- Justice system
- Foster care system
- Homeless now, those who've been homeless, others at risk of becoming homeless (Lived Experience Coalition, Users of CE)
  - NOTE: Use trauma-informed practices – be careful to not re-traumatize, ensure safety

Public Engagement Goals and Process

The Ad Hoc Committee had a brief conversation about public engagement goals and processes at their third meeting, and members offered the following input:

- Be sure to include "a ridiculous amount" of public engagement; that should encompass the bulk of time in the comprehensive planning process.
- Go to specific individual groups to identify goals, then take those goals out to for input on how to achieve them for various targeted sub-populations (adopt a targeted universalism approach).
- Make sure to include experts with lived experience – the plan should be developed by those who use, benefit from, and interact with the system.
- Hire/assign someone on the team to be specifically focused on communications and engagement.
- Be sure to include system mapping and modeling to assess shortcomings and gaps; where are the problems/bottlenecks?
- Talk to people on the streets! However, do not rely solely on the homeless outreach teams to do this engagement; it could be in conflict with the work they are doing (and appear as though they are promising something they cannot deliver). This work DOES need to be trauma-informed.
- Develop a layer of accountability for the comprehensive planning team (both the steering committee and the work groups).
- Ensure broad representation on the various teams/committees involved in this effort.
- Consider how to do effective political outreach: include efforts to connect with the Growth Management Committee, Pierce County Cities and Towns, the Puget Sound Regional Council, and other conveners of elected officials and local leaders.
- Reach out as part of "regular" community events, such as local farmers markets, to seek public input.

When discussing who should lead this work and oversee the larger comprehensive planning process, the Ad Hoc Committee generally supported creation of a steering committee. Many of the members of the Committee expressed interest in being part of the steering committee, and offered the following additional suggestions:

- Consider a workable size for the steering committee – large enough to be representative, but small enough to encourage meaningful engagement and input.
- Develop a feedback loop for the larger population of interested parties so they can stay apprised with what's happening.
- Be clear about who/what the steering committee members represent – themselves, their organizations?
- Include the Continuum of Care Committee (COC) in a meaningful way.

Meeting Council's Commitment to Providing Adequate Shelter to All by November 2021

The Ad Hoc Committee recommends separating this specific assignment from the larger comprehensive plan in order to meet the more ambitious deadline of developing and implementing a plan to provide adequate shelter by November of this year. The committee suggests a working group focus solely on this effort, but under the oversight of any steering committee convened as part of the larger comprehensive planning process.

The Ad Hoc Committee is also generally supportive of the PCHS staff proposal to organize this work around an interactive program and cost model reviewed in the committee's third meeting. The model contemplates a multi-step process for building a plan to provide adequate shelter before the end of 2021:

1. Determine the approximate number of people who are unsheltered in Pierce County (PCHS current estimate is approximately 1350 individuals).
2. Identify all of the types of shelters and other interventions we should increase in order to adequately house everyone; those could include:
   a. Diversion
   b. Rapid Rehousing (*is this really appropriate to keep in the shelter model?)*
   c. Critical Time Intervention
   d. Expanded capacity at existing or new congregate shelters
   e. New non-congregate shelters (hotel, pallet shelters, tiny homes, etc.)
   f. Sanctioned encampments and/or safe parking areas
   g. In-patient behavioral health treatment
   h. Medical respite (*need to learn more about this short-term intervention*)
   i. Legal intervention (see NOTE below)
   j. Others (PSH was suggested, but then dismissed because it is not considered emergency shelter)
3. Identify other expanded services for people who are sheltered and may need additional immediate services beyond a place to sleep, such as out-patient behavioral health treatment, transportation to/from work, and storage for belongings.
4. Determine approximate volume of our unsheltered homeless population who will access each type of intervention listed above, and determine per unit costs for each.
5. Build a proposed budget based on analysis, and present to Council for funding.
6. Once funding is identified and approved, work with providers on plans to expand services and create the new shelter options listed in the plan.

NOTE on legal intervention: "Legal intervention" is one option PCHS staff included in the model as a place some homeless individuals may go; that is, despite being offered multiple choices for shelter, some individuals may decline all services. At that point, the community needs to determine a response: do you allow them to continue to live unsheltered, if that is their wish, or do you create a "zero tolerance" policy within the community and enforce loitering laws, detaining them either through law

enforcement or civil commitment interventions? County staff proposed including this as one option in the model, and the Ad Hoc Committee had varied responses: some members supported the idea, while others thought this may be assumed, but should NOT be part of any model or planning (or budgeting) efforts. Still others thought it should not even be an optional response.

See the timeline section below for details on how the committee proposes this work occur over the coming 5-6 months.

Project Timelines

As indicated in the Council Resolution driving this effort, there is a six-month window to achieve a comprehensive plan from start to finish once the Action plan is submitted and approved. It is anticipated this will occur on May 4, 2021, therefore establishing the due date for the comprehensive plan on or around November 4, 2021. The Ad Hoc Committee recognizes the ambitious nature of this deadline, but indicated that "this aggressive timeline spurs action!"

This comprehensive plan may facilitate contemplation of County budgeting priorities in the upcoming 2022-23 biennial budget, as well as spending priorities for funds received from the American Rescue Plan, among other possible revenue sources**.**

After initial discussion of general timeline requirements, a member of the committee offered the following timeline for consideration:

Proposed Timeline – Comprehensive Plan *(need to edit and stretch into October)*
- May 1 - core team work begins
- May 7 - steering committee meetings
- June 1 - draft plan complete
- June 7 - steering committee meets
- June & July - outreach to everyone and their dog
- August 1 core team publishes final plan
- August 7 - steering committee meetings
- September 7 - final steering committee meeting

The Committee was clear that the bulk of the time dedicated to this effort should focus on collecting input and feedback. Committee members representing partner jurisdictions also reminded others that their elected officials will also need time to review and formally adopt (vote on) both this action plan and the comprehensive plan.

Council staff also provided two additional suggestions regarding timing of the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Build in scheduled **maintenance** for the comprehensive plan to allow for a natural and reasonable extension of the planning process; one component of the plan should be regularly revisiting strategies and recalibrating.
2. Include a first phase of the planning process to **use data to clearly define the issue** (both for the comprehensive plan and the street homelessness plan).

As described earlier in this Action Plan, the Ad Hoc Committee does recommend this effort be clearly divided into two separate efforts: the Comprehensive plan, due in early November, and the Street Homelessness Plan, due and implemented by early November. Accordingly, one committee member offered the following timeline for consideration:

Timeline – Shelter Plan

- May 1 - shelter team begins
- May 15 - shelter provider Retreats (1 for providers, one for guests/clients, one for neighbors)
- May 15 - June 15 - outreach - what shelter do we need
- July 1 - shelter plan
- July 1 -Nov 1 - get funding and stand up shelter

Resources Needed

<u>Data</u>

In order to inform the Comprehensive Planning process, the Ad Hoc Committee briefly reviewed homeless data available from the County from both the annual Point in Time Count (PIT) and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The Committee made the following observations:

Regarding the Point in Time Counts for 2020 and 2021
- PIT is generally known to be an undercount.
- 2021 Point in Time Count did NOT include a count of unsheltered population due to COVID-caused constraints on recruiting volunteers and ensuring public safety.
- Note that minority pops almost doubled from last year to this year (perhaps this is an issue of not counting street homelessness in 2021?).
- According to PCHS staff, HUD uses an extrapolation methodology to estimate race and ethnicity data across whole distribution based on those who answered PIT survey (there are no "NA" or "unknown").

Regarding HMIS
- According to PCHS staff, we lost enrollment data when we switched servers; need to fix this or acknowledge impact on data quality.
- According to PCHS staff, there are large differences in data quality across providers, leading to overall data quality inconsistencies.
- The Committee specifically encourages those involved in the comprehensive planning process to "look at HMIS data with a critical eye," given variability in data quality.

The Ad Hoc Committee suggested the Comprehensive Plan include the following data considerations:

- Focus on racial/ethnic demographics, geographic distribution, program success in permanency.
- Use data to highlight various pathways and their inflow/outflow rates.
- Add qualitative data to tell stories not found/explained in quantitative data.
- Consider indicators (why people become homeless) to understand need and to focus on prevention efforts.

<u>Funding, Coordination, Meeting Support, Staffing</u>

Staffing ideas:

- Project Manager/Leader role (Coordination of local government, funders, etc)
- Data Analyst (thoughtful analysis)
- Communication (ADA, social media, disconnected, Culturally appropriate, etc)
- Community Engagement Position
- HMIS Data Quality (Data often doesn't match reality)
- Policy Analyst (uses local data, learns local needs, researches best practices)

Appendices (?)

Resolution

5 year plan, other plans?