



Shelter Planning Task Force

July 22, 2015

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Mike Tarpinian	Opportunity Alliance		Nicole Evans	United Way of Greater Portland
Dana Totman	Avesta Housing		Angela Giordano	City of Portland, HHS, Social Services Division, Oxford Street Shelter
Peter Driscoll	Amistad		Dawn Stiles	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept
Melissa Skahan	Mercy Hospital		Bill Higgins	Homeless Voices for Justice
Cullen Ryan	Community Housing of Maine		Rachel Talbot Ross	City of Portland
Sean Kerwin	Bayside Neighborhood Assn		Jim Hanley	Chamber of Commerce
Dave MacLean	City of Portland, HHS, Social Services Division		Bob Fowler	Milestone Foundation
Cindy Namer	MaineHousing		Claude Rwangje	New Mainer communities
Norm Maze	Shalom House		Julie Sullivan	City of Portland, staff to Task Force

1. Welcome and updates

- Oxford Street Shelter lease update – expires June 2016, no indication from landlord of any interest not to renew
- Update provided to City Council's Public Safety, Health & Human Services Committee on July 7; extension to October 13 granted

2. **Components of adult emergency shelter services model** – please see the attached document with a matrix showing each best practice component, what we currently do, and what we may want to do differently. The attached has been revised to reflect the discussion during the meeting.

- **Coordinated entry**
 - Insufficient outreach to those who are camping out
 - PATH-funded staff supposed to visit them on site, but are too centralized
 - Cullen will follow up with DHHS
 - What does coordinated entry look like? Would clients have to physically go to Preble Street? No, any point of entry is supposed to be able to direct to resources.
 - What about intoxicated/impaired people? How assess? It's only a brief, 5-question basic triage using standardized tool.
 - Supportive services play a critical role – when part of this process? Could be more involved on-site at Oxford Street

- How do hospitals fit in to coordinated entry? Should they use the VISPDAT? Hospitals are a critical point of entry, and could use the brief 5-question triage tool.
 - Important to identify the most appropriate resources. Local availability is a major issue –most of the resources here in Portland, continues the burden on Portland. Would be far more effective if GA statewide required to do the 5-question screening and serve people in their home area.
 - Perhaps with the eventual change that folks can't just come to Portland and hang out – we are going to house you – would make a difference.
 - What about culturally competent services? Those are almost entirely in Portland – other places need to provide them as well.
 - City needs to expand service locations outside of Bayside – keep providing more services and locating them all in the same neighborhood.
- **Emergency shelter**
 - Not required to provide 24-hour services, 3 meals
 - MaineHousing homeless rule change
 - 55% of shelter consumers gone within 2 weeks; 80% within 2 months. Goal is 100% gone within a month.
 - Long-term stayer (LTS) initiative down from 70 to 45 people
 - Averaging 214/night at Oxford Street and overflow at Preble Street. Overflow not always full now. Warming center not needed this month at all, 1 day per month in each of the last two months.
 - Why is this number not lower given all the progress with LTS? Numbers were increasing, so would have risen without the LTS efforts.
 - 214 (current average/night) minus the 45 LTS = 160, which fits at OSS without needing any overflow
 - Also need better triage/diversion at check-in at OSS
 - Bishop St – 30 units – will break ground in September, ready for occupancy a year later. Targeted at those who are medically compromised, which further frees up shelter space since they required cots instead of mats.
 - Amistad and Milestone also have State funding to provide meals and day services
- **Housing placement**
 - Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) Long-Term Stayers (LTS) group continues to be very effective.
 - Sustainability concerns are mitigated by each organization finding resources to serve those who are not MaineCare-eligible – everyone is playing a key role to ensure that everyone can receive the supportive services they need.
 - How can this model be institutionalized?
 - Sustainability guaranteed as long as agency commitments remain
 - Critical to continue to have enough rental subsidies and housing/support services
- **Support services**
 - Warm hand-offs to case management once person is housed is critical

- Lack of reimbursement for these services is concerning; in the short term, we are ok
- Need to communicate with foundations the need for funding these services
- Model may be sustainable because so many agencies are involved; the burden is spread widely.
- Need to market and communicate better to the community about how housing first programs work
- Huge need for advocacy – the resources needed to succeed with this are all external to Portland – eg, federal HUD vouchers, MaineCare reimbursement for support services.

3. Wrap up and **next steps**

- Our new City Manager, Jon Jennings, would like to better understand the various task forces underway and ensure that the work is both useful for the City and a good use of task force members' time. He has asked that we hold off on our August meetings and plan to come back together after Labor Day.
- So, tentatively, our next meeting is Wednesday, September 9, 9-11 a.m.
- All documents, agendas, meeting notes, etc. can be found at:
 - www.portlandmaine.gov/1512/Shelter-Planning-Task-Force
 - User name: taskforce
 - Password: portland15

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