



Addressing Homelessness in Topeka Using the Path to Innovation Approach

Council Update | May 21, 2024

BY

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The focus of our charge is to...

Decrease homelessness

by promoting a safe and unified community, that addresses the complexities of homelessness, through community education and using data driven approaches that increase the accessibility of housing and transformational services.

Two “teams” have led this initiative

CORE TEAM

(the day-to-day, core working group for the initiative)

Members:

- **Housing Navigator — Irma Faudoa (co-lead)**
- **Topeka Police Department — Major Jana Kizzar (co-lead)**
- City Attorney — Amanda Stanley
- Senior Paralegal — Bonnie Williams
- Housing Services Division Director — Carrie Higgins
- Property Maintenance Division Director — John Schardine
- Streets Operations Manager — Todd Workman
- CEO Valeo Behavioral Health Care — Bill Persinger
- Topeka Rescue Mission Executive Director – La Manda Broyles
- President Topeka Housing Authority — Trey George
- District 2 Business Owner — Pedro Concepcion
- Assistant Shawnee County Counselor – Ashley Biegert

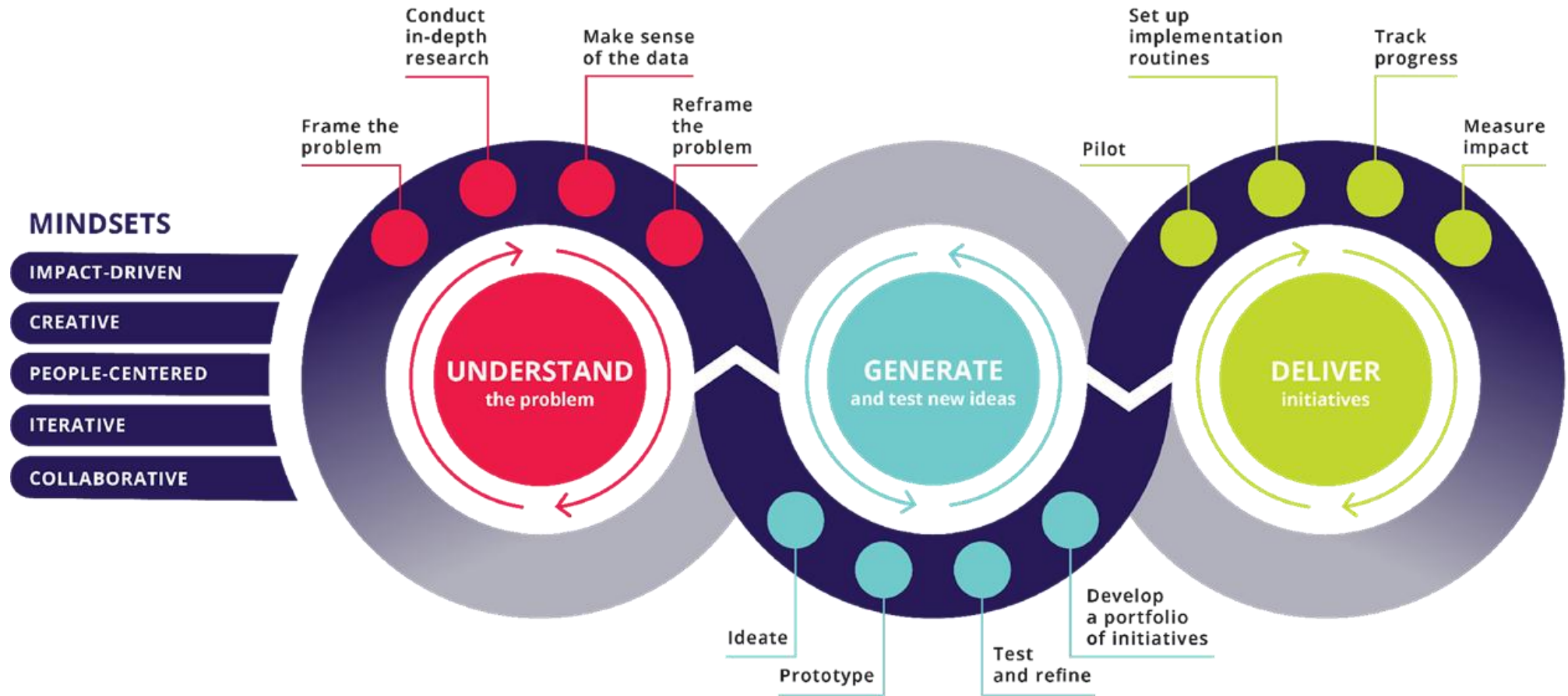
AUXILIARY TEAM

(the advisory group consulted at various points)

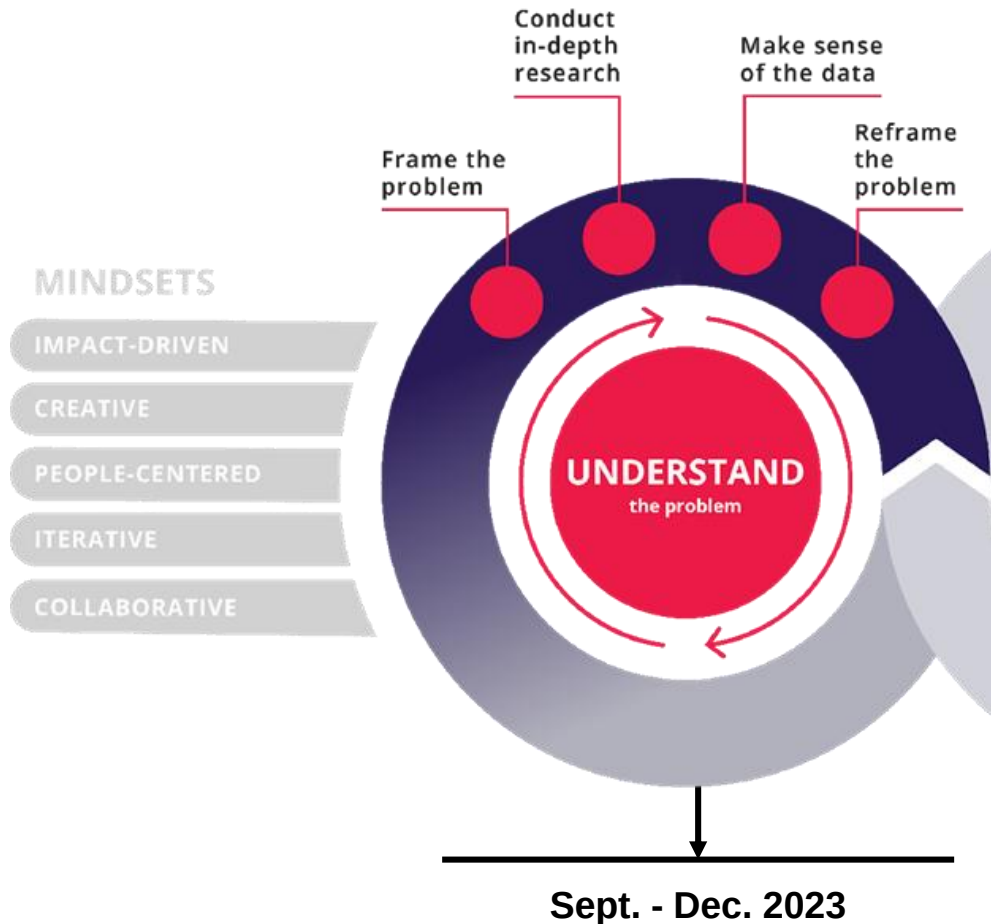
Members:

- Topeka Fire Chief — Randy Phillips
- Topeka Police Department — Captain Colleen Stuart
- Director of Planning and Development — Rhiannon Friedman
- Director of Communications — Gretchen Spiker and Rosie Nichols
- Director of Community Engagement — Monique Glaude’
- District 2 — Councilwoman Christina Valdivia-Alcalá
- CEO Compassion Strategies — Barry Feaker
- Director of the Shawnee County Department of Corrections — Brian Cole
- President of the Shawnee County Landlords Association — Steve Vogel
- Program Director YWCA — Becca Spielman
- CEO Habitat for Humanity — Janice Watkins
- Topeka Rescue Mission – Haleigh Hipsher
- Community Member — Cory Chandler

The “Path to Innovation” methodology has guided our work



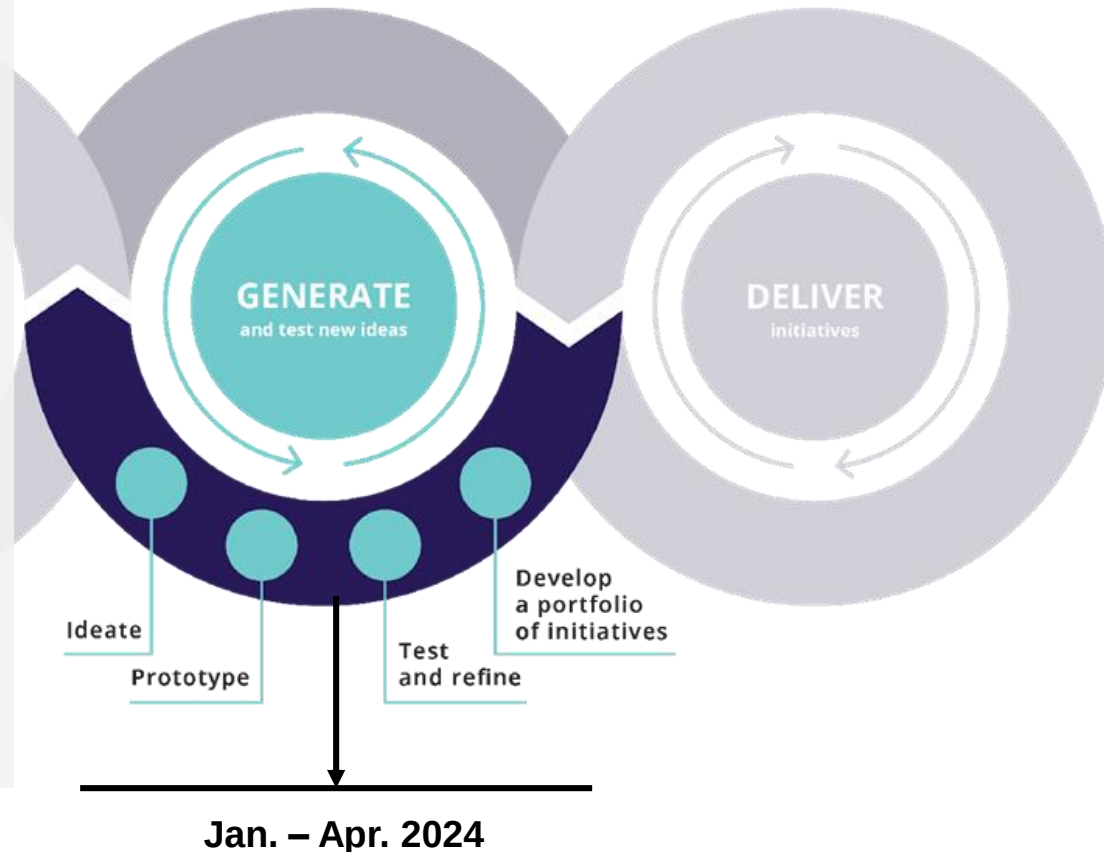
UNDERSTAND: Fall in love with the problem



- **Over 1,000 hours were spent understanding the problem.**
- **30 experts engaged in 1 – 2 hour conversations.** Experts ranged from people who are or have experienced homelessness to agencies supporting people who are experiencing homelessness to public health and safety personnel of Topeka.
- **20 literature reviews completed.** Literature reviews involved dissecting state and national studies on homelessness, processing data from the Topeka community on homelessness and looking into what neighboring cities have done to address the issue and what has worked vs. not in those different contexts.

GENERATE: Shape ideas for maximum impact

- **Four ideation sessions** were conducted, with over 80 people participating.
- **More than 140 ideas were generated.**
- After methodically reviewing those ideas for fit and impact in the Topeka community, **nine ideas represent this committee's proposal for where the community's efforts should be directed in support of reducing homelessness in Shawnee County.**



There are nine recommended next step actions

**Two ideas were advanced for prototyping and testing. These represent ideas that we feel are necessary for the community to gain traction in the goal towards reducing homelessness.

60 community members were engaged in helping to shape these ideas for maximum impact.

RECOMMENDED FOR NEXT STEP ACTION IN 2024 - 2025

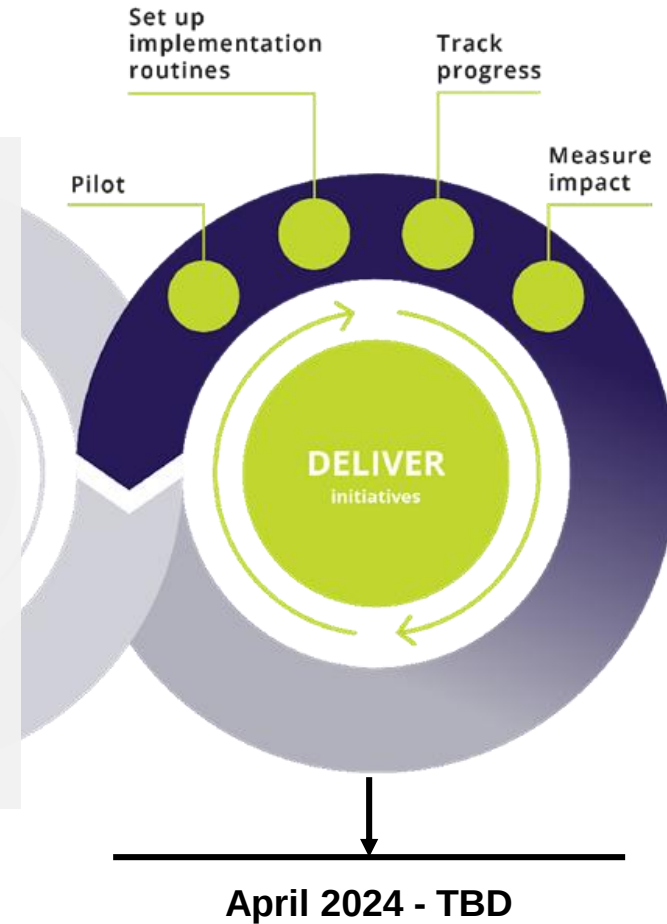
- 1 **One Stop Homeless Resource Center****
- 2 **Investment in a Continuum of Housing Solution**** — specifically a low-barrier shelter and permanent tiny home villages
- 3 **Multi-Sector Community Coalition** — Development of a multi-sector community coalition, designed to support systemic and collaborative action towards solutions designed to reduce/end homelessness
- 4 **Transportation Service** to help people experiencing homelessness to access support services and employment, when available public transit is gapped
- 5 **Doubling Down on Programs and Services that are Working in the Community** — conducting an audit, guided by a rubric of various programs in the city and investing in grant writers to support channeling more money to those programs
- 6 **Housing and Employment Second Chance Offering** — designed to reconcile housing and employment problems that might lead to a person becoming homeless
- 7 **Creation of a Centralized Data Hub** — aggregate data from across agencies is collected and analyzed to support data-driven decisions community-wide on where and how funding for services should be invested in the community

RECOMMENDED FOR ACTION 2026 AND BEYOND

- 8 **Workplace Connections** — designed to create job matches between people experiencing homelessness and the employers in the Topeka region needing skilled labor
- 9 **Landlord Incentives for Second Chances** — creating intentional partnerships with landlords, where they are willing to “take a chance” on someone who might have poor credit or other red flags in their background, in return for attractive incentives

DELIVER: Implement solutions into Topeka

- “Deliver” plans have taken shape for two initiatives of the portfolio:
 - One Stop Homeless Resource Center
 - Investment in a Continuum of Housing Solution:
 - Low Barrier Shelter
 - Permanent Tiny Home Village



DEEP DIVE INTO THE...

One Stop Homeless Resource Center



Topeka's One Stop Homeless Resource Center centralizes all essential services to support individuals experiencing homelessness within a single, designated location within the city.

WHY IT IS A VALUABLE IDEA?

The One Stop Homeless Resource Center **accelerates the pathway to stability for people experiencing homelessness, as it both streamlines and simplifies the process of accessing services**, by consolidating services into one location. It also fosters greater community collaboration between agencies seeking to serve this population, through proximity.

THE ONE STOP HOMELESS RESOURCE CENTER OFFERS A COMPREHENSIVE ARRAY OF ON-SITE SERVICES:

- Basic necessities
- PO boxes
- Digital connectivity
- Physical health services
- Behavioral health service
- Dental health services
- Shelter and housing services
- Employment services
- Financial services
- Resource navigation
- Legal guidance
- Life coaching and mentorship
- Child day care services
- Multilingual support

How it works...the vision vs. what we propose as the start

	THE LONG-TERM VISION	THE SHORT-TERM PROPOSAL
HOURS OF OPERATION	Mon – Sat; 7am – 6pm	Three days a week; 9 – 3pm
APPOINTMENTS	No appointments are needed, walk-ins are welcomed and encouraged	
SUPPORT OFFERED	Every individual served is assigned a dedicated Navigator. Navigators remain involved as case managers, ensuring continuity of care and support	
ENGAGEMENT FOSTERED	Frequent engagement with the One Stop Homeless Resource Center is encouraged, incentivized, and celebrated to support achievement of stabilization goals of those experiencing homelessness	
PARTNER AGENCIES	Partner agencies occupy dedicated spaces within the facility and/or have the ability to engage virtually with individuals Center when not physically there. Partner agencies choose the frequency with which they would like to participate	Partner agencies are available for support only when physically located in the Center. Each partner agency may not receive a dedicated space
WHO WILL BE SERVED	Designed to cater to individuals who meet the federal definition of homelessness, either using the HUD definition or the McKinney-Vento definition (defined as people who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence). It's expected that the space of the Homeless Resource Center will serve a wide variety of individuals experiencing homelessness in Topeka, inclusive of families with children, seniors, victims of exploitation, individuals transitioning from incarceration, individuals exiting the foster care system, veterans, single adults with sex crimes and more	
LOCATION	A "campus vision" is recommended	A free-standing community space that can accommodate the operational needs of IMPACT Avenues and MAP

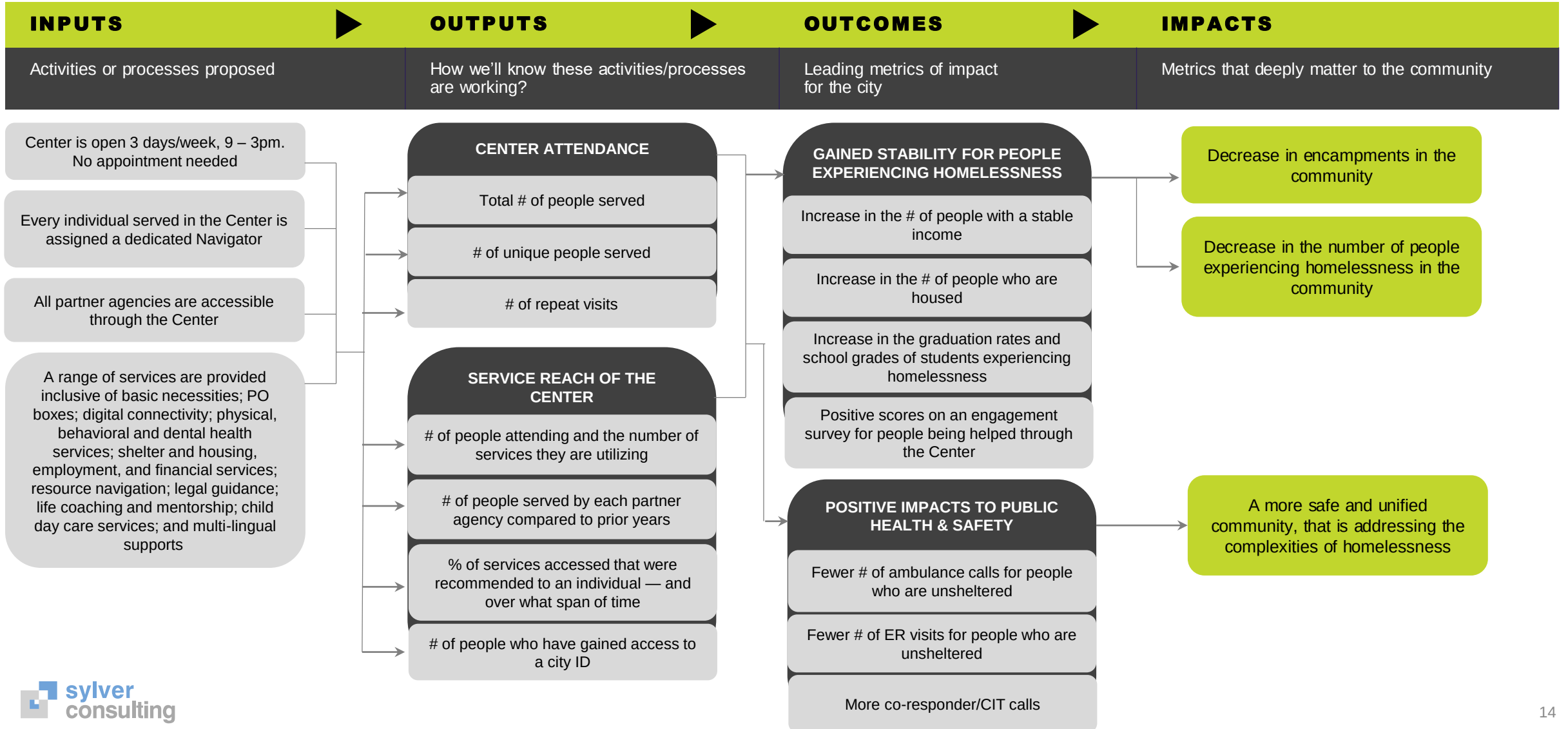
Quarter 2 & 3: May – Sept. 2024

CORE GOALS FOR MAY – SEPT. 2024	TASK	TIME FRAME
Define the ideal location for the short-term proposal of the One Stop Homeless Resource Center	Need to define which community spaces could support the power and water draws of MAP and the partner capacity and privacy needs of IMPACT (Need to make sure the space has access to showers in the winter)	May - June 2024
	Secure the space	July 2024
Define the staffing and logistics	Determine which partner agencies of the community would like to be part of the Center and when	June – mid-Aug. 2024
	Define which group(s) will be providing the navigation services for the Center	June – mid-Aug. 2024
	Run a simulation, with a small group of people, of the One Stop Homeless Resource Center in action	End of Aug. 2024
Open the Center for 3 days/week, no appointment required	Center is opened for operation	Mid-Sept. 2024

Quarter 4 2024 – Quarter 3 2025

CORE GOALS FOR OCT. 2024 – SEPT. 2025	TASK	TIME FRAME
Center is operated for 3 days/week, no appointment required	Center is operated for 3 days/week, across three seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring	Sept. 2024 – June 2025
	Monthly, the team assesses what about the Center is working and where there is opportunity for improvements	At the end of each month; Oct. 2024 – June 2025
The Operations Team of the Center assesses if the current infrastructure of the Center is sufficient or if there is merit in preparing for the "bigger vision"	Assess if the current infrastructure is enough or if more investment (more days, better facilities, more services, etc.) would likely create better outcomes	Sept. 2025

The impact of the Homeless Resource Center will be monitored and tracked



DEEP DIVE INTO THE...

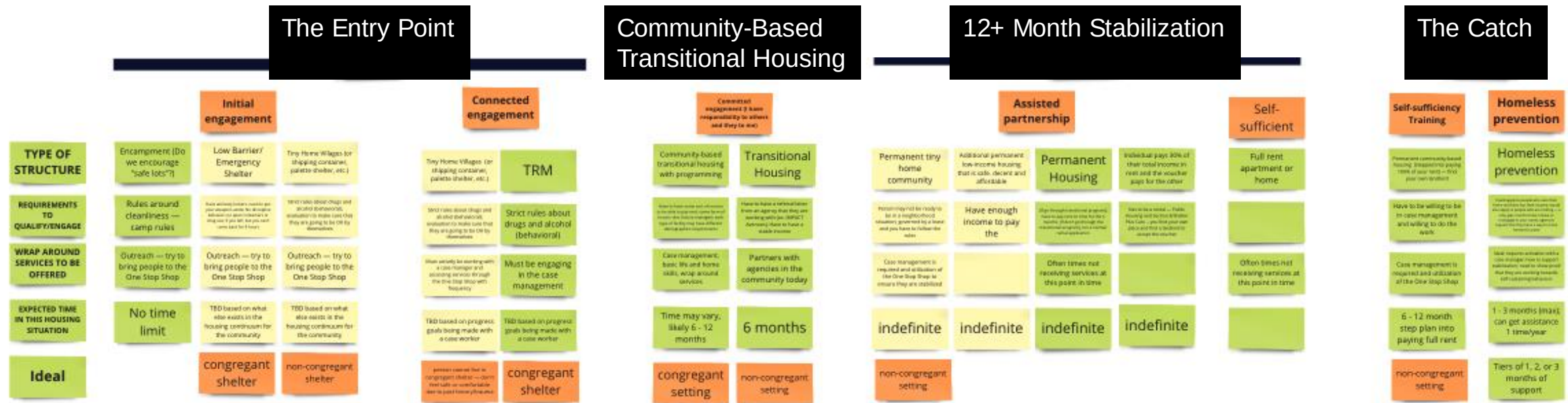
Investment in a Continuum of Housing Solution



LOW BARRIER SHELTER & PERMANENT TINY HOME VILLAGE

An ideal housing continuum for Topeka was reviewed with community members

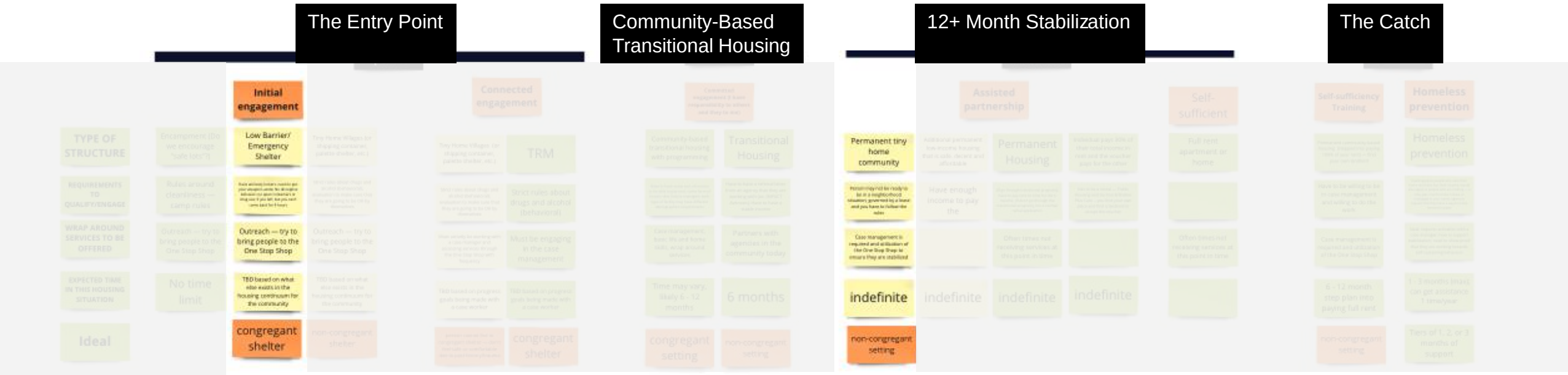
Goal of those conversations were to understand where in this housing continuum efforts of the community should be directed first.



Example of the prototype shared with community members

A low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village are the recommendation—NOT to be owned and operated by the City of Topeka

This recommendation was informed by many different types of community members—from people experiencing homelessness to agencies who support them to city employees to developers working in the community.



Example of the prototype shared with community members

Key requirements for each shelter...

FOR THE LOW-BARRIER SHELTER...

- Includes both congregant and non-congregant shelter
- Is built to include different level of incentive for accepting and committing to support
- Is built to accommodate pets, to eliminate that as a barrier to accessing support
- Is secured and is weapon free
- Includes lots of community education about what is a low-barrier shelter and what it is not

FOR THE PERMANENT TINY HOME VILLAGE...

- Is a village of eight tiny homes constructed within a neighborhood of Topeka, near a transit line of the community
- Each tiny home includes a small kitchen and a bathroom
- Case management is offered in the village (using a peer mentor model)
- People living in the community are hired to take care of the community
- Housing of the village is zoned to be affordable (rent based on a % of an individual's income)
- Supports development models that promote safe, affordable, and decent permanent housing up to and including ownership
- New residents of the village are provided a financial safety net of 12 - 18 months

The **implementation timeline is similar** for both housing solutions

(the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village).

Q2 and Q3 2024

CORE GOALS FOR Q2 AND Q3 2024 (MAY – SEPT 2024)	TASK	TIME FRAME
Gain public support for the projects	Introduce the community to what a low barrier shelter is and what it is not; expand perspective on the different expressions of low barrier shelters throughout the country	May - Sept. 2024
	Introduce the community to what a permanent tiny home village is and what it is not; expand perspective on the different expressions of tiny home villages throughout the country	May - Sept. 2024
Define who the interested parties are in the community; the orgs who are interested in participating in the build out and operation of a low barrier shelter and/or permanent tiny home village	Create a system for collecting info on who the interested parties are for the low barrier shelter and/or the permanent tiny home village	May - June 2024
	Bring together the interested parties for the low barrier shelter. Create the education campaign related to this initiative for the community	June 2024
	Bring together the interested parties for the permanent tiny home village. Create the education campaign related to this initiative for the community	June 2024

Q2 and Q3 2024 cont.

CORE GOALS FOR Q2 AND Q3 2024 (MAY – SEPT 2024) (CONT.)	TASK	TIME FRAME
Research best practices for low barrier shelters and permanent tiny home villages through the country	Explore best practices associated with structures and models of operation, funding, and location placement (for both the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village)	May – July 2024
Define what the ideal low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village is for the Topeka community	Interested parties for each structure come together to make that decision—or to define the options for consideration	August 2024
	Interested parties seek alignment with policymakers on the best structure for each housing solution (the low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village)	Sept. 2024

Q4 2024

CORE GOALS FOR Q4 2024 (OCT. DEC. 2024)	TASK	TIME FRAME
Define funding for each project	Assess the funds that all interested parties bring to each of the two projects—the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village	Oct. 2024
	Assess what grants might be available to support any funding gaps (for both startup and long-term operational costs) that might exist for both projects—the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village	Nov. – Dec. 2024
Define the location of each structure in the Topeka community	Identify the possible locations in the community for each structure. Consider zoning and policy changes that might be required when making those decisions	Oct. – Dec. 2024

2025

CORE GOALS FOR 2025 (JAN. - DEC. 2025)	TASK	TIME FRAME
Make a decision on who will operate the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village in the community	Create a RFP/RFQ to be disbursed to interested parties of each type of structure (low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village). Ask in the RFP/RFQ for the full 5-year costs of starting and sustaining each shelter type	Q1 2025
	Define who in the community/which entity will manage the RFP/RFQ process for the build out of each structure (low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village)	Q1 2025
	Make a decision on which entity will operate each structure (low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village) for the community	Q2 2025
Secure funds for each project	Secure funds from committed community partners interested in each project	Q3 2025
	Apply for grants to fill the gaps in funding that might exist for both projects	Q3 2025 and beyond
	Establish a capital campaign in the community to help with start up costs, if needed, for both projects	Q3 2025 - 2026
Secure the location for each structure	Purchase or lease the land for each structure	Q4 2025
Create the detailed building plans for each structure	Craft the development plan for each structure	Q4 2025 – Q1 2026

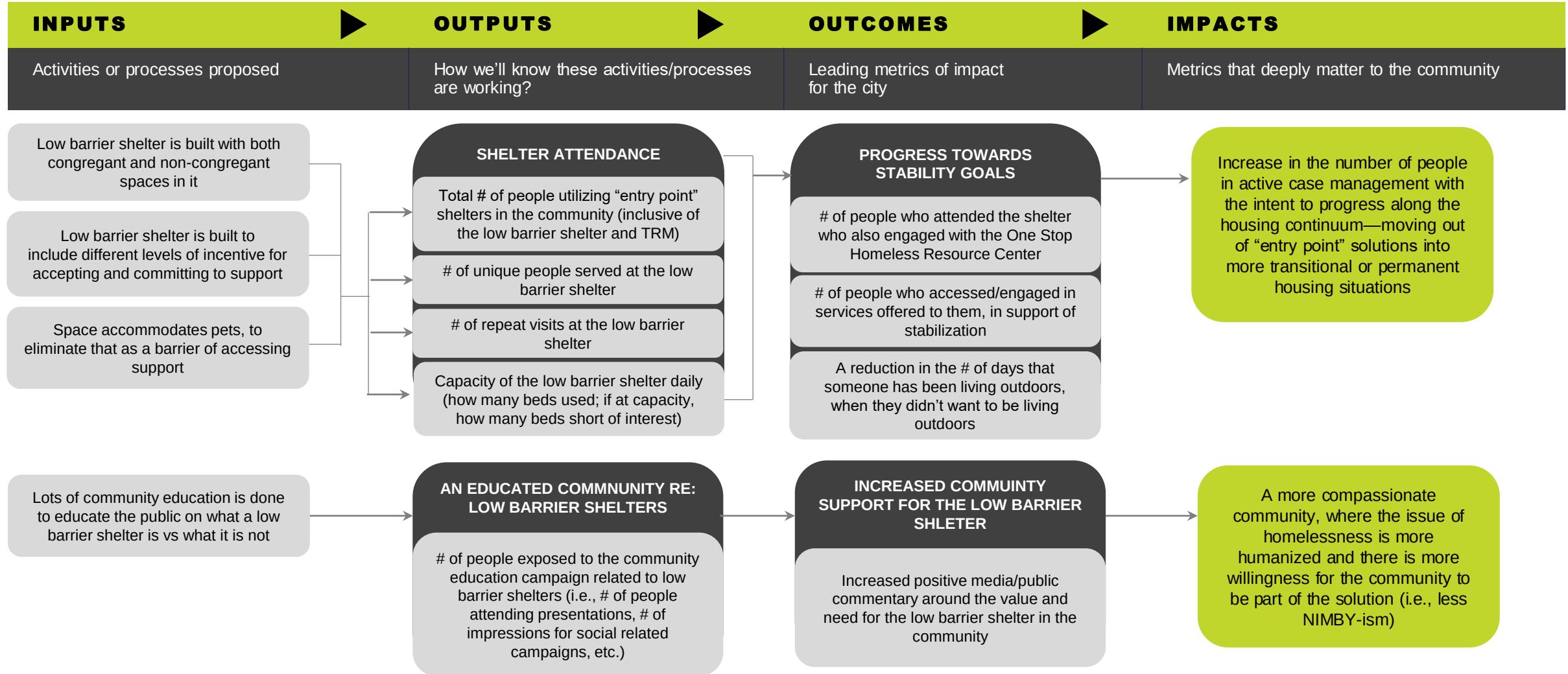
2026 and 2027

CORE GOALS FOR 2026 (JAN. - DEC. 2026)	TASK	TIME FRAME
Construction of each structure begins	Construct the low barrier shelter	Q2 – Q4 2026
	Ready the infrastructure for the permanent tiny home village (inclusive of zoning and policy)	Q1 – Q2 2026
	Install the first phase of the tiny homes (an 8 home village)	Q3 2026
First permanent tiny home village is opened in Topeka	Move residents into the first permanent tiny homes of the community	Q4 2026
Low barrier shelter is opened for operation in Topeka	Open the low barrier shelter for operation	Q1 2027
Permanent tiny home village is operated and next steps assessed	Operate the permanent tiny home village for a year to see how the village navigates and changes over the different seasons of the year	Q1 – Q4 2027
	Assess next steps in terms of expanding the permanent tiny home village concept to other areas of the city	Q4 2027

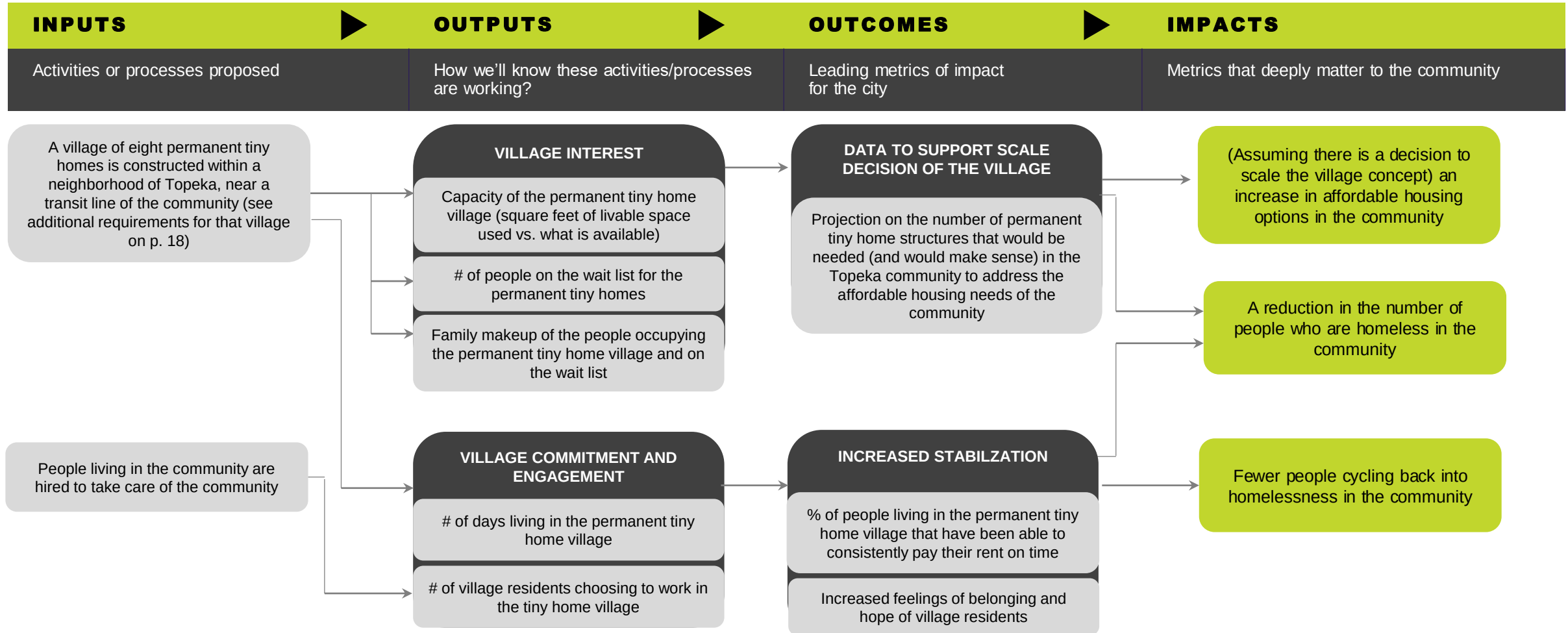
The **impact measurement plan** for each housing solution is different

(the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village).

The impact of the Low Barrier Shelter will be monitored and tracked



The impact of the Permanent Tiny Home Village will also be monitored and tracked



Two asks of the Governing Body:

1

Support for the concepts of the:

- One Stop Homeless Resource Center
- Low Barrier Shelter
- Permanent Tiny Homes

2

Official chartering of a multi-sector community coalition, like the All Hands on Deck initiative being suggested by Compassion Strategies in the community.

Q2 and Q3 2024 actions for the Homeless Resource Center

CORE GOALS FOR MAY – SEPT. 2024	TASK	TIME FRAME
Define the ideal location for the short-term proposal of the One Stop Homeless Resource Center	Need to define which community spaces could support the power and water draws of MAP and the partner capacity and privacy needs of IMPACT (Need to make sure the space has access to showers in the winter)	May - June 2024
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Q2 and Q3 2024 actions for the Low Barrier Shelter and the Permanent Tiny Home Village

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Gain public support for the projects	Introduce the community to what a low barrier shelter is and what it is not; expand perspective on the different expressions of low barrier shelters throughout the country	May - Sept. 2024
	Introduce the community to what a permanent tiny home village is and what it is not; expand perspective on the different expressions of tiny home villages throughout the country	May - Sept. 2024
Define who the interested parties are in the community; the orgs who are interested in participating in the build out and operation of a low barrier shelter and/or permanent tiny home village	Create a system for collecting info on who the interested parties are for the low barrier shelter and/or the permanent tiny home village	May - June 2024
	Bring together the interested parties for the low barrier shelter. Create the education campaign related to this initiative for the community	June 2024
	Bring together the interested parties for the permanent tiny home village. Create the education campaign related to this initiative for the community	June 2024

Q2 and Q3 2024 actions for the Low Barrier Shelter and the Permanent Tiny Home Village cont.

CORE GOALS FOR Q2 AND Q3 2024 (MAY – SEPT 2024) CONT.	TASK	TIME FRAME
Research best practices for low barrier shelters and permanent tiny home villages through the country	Explore best practices associated with structures and models of operation, funding, and location placement (for both the low barrier shelter and the permanent tiny home village)	May – July 2024
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	Interested parties seek alignment with policymakers on the best structure for each housing solution (the low barrier shelter and permanent tiny home village)	Sept. 2024

Thank You!

Do we have your support for the...

1

Concepts of the:

- One Stop Homeless Resource Center
- Low Barrier Shelter
- Permanent Tiny Homes

2

Official chartering of a multi-sector community coalition, like the All Hands on Deck initiative being suggested by Compassion Strategies in the community.