

An aerial photograph of Newark, New Jersey, showing a mix of urban architecture, including brick buildings and modern glass-fronted structures. A central park area with green grass and trees with yellow autumn foliage is visible. A blue rectangular overlay box is positioned on the left side of the image, containing white text. The title 'The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community' is written in large, bold, white letters across the top right of the image.

The Path Home: Collaborating Across Our Community

It will take all of us, as a community,
to end Chronic Homelessness in Newark.
We hope you'll join in our efforts! If you
would like to partner, collaborate, or share
ideas and strategies, please email us at:
endhomelessness@ci.newark.nj.us

**A STRATEGIC PLAN
TO END CHRONIC
HOMELESSNESS IN
NEWARK**



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A Message from Mayor Ras J. Baraka

“I believe wholeheartedly that homelessness is a moral issue that demands our greatest efforts to achieve a solution. We need to provide our most vulnerable residents with decent homes and the tools they need to regain control of their lives.”

— Mayor Ras J. Baraka



Thank you for your efforts to move Newark forward! Since taking office in 2014, it has been my goal to ensure our community is a vibrant, prosperous, and thriving city that embodies our Newark Forward values. That means ensuring those who need help receive it.

When COVID-19 hit the country, it devastated many people and communities. We were able to look to the federal government for support to help those who needed it most. Newark used historic investments provided through the American Rescue Plan to address the crisis of homelessness. We are committed to a Housing First approach and started by investing in housing for people experiencing homelessness. I was excited to partner with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia L. Fudge on House America because as I said then, everyone should have a safe, stable home. I'm grateful for President Biden's American Rescue Plan resources to help house people experiencing homelessness here in our city, state, and across the country.

My administration has continued to invest in solutions, including opening the historic Newark Hope Village, the innovative program using converted containers to shelter residents who are at-risk or without addresses. We also renovated the former Miller Street Elementary School building to now provide shelter and support services to homeless individuals seeking a more stable life. I am thrilled that our new Homelessness Czar Luis Ulerio has taken these efforts and combined them with extensive community input to create a strategic plan. I believe wholeheartedly that homelessness is a moral issue that demands our greatest efforts to achieve a solution. We need to provide our most vulnerable residents with decent homes and the tools they need to regain control of their lives. This plan does just that. I want to thank Mr. Ulerio, Jim Pelliccio, Chair of the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness, the Commission, and the countless number of people in Newark who have contributed to this plan. Together, by lifting up those most in need—our residents without addresses—we can lift up our entire community.

Sincerely,
Mayor Ras J. Baraka

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, representing Mayor Ras J. Baraka.



Introduction

In recognition that homelessness is a crisis, the City of Newark's Strategic Plan on Homelessness provides achievable recommendations to end chronic homelessness. Importantly, the outcomes are measurable, in order to monitor progress. During the pandemic, the crisis of homelessness became more apparent. The income gap widened, and more households experienced housing instability. The city and its providers rose to the challenges presented to serve those most in need. New opportunities became available along with new funding streams. The homeless services delivery system was faced with unprecedented challenges, and they responded. Successful approaches were tried, and lessons were shared on what worked. However, gaps in the system were more starkly evident and chronic homelessness seemed to increase. This plan builds off the momentum built during the pandemic that cut through barriers to deliver services under difficult circumstances and seeks to address the most pressing challenges going forward.

Through a comprehensive planning process, the city developed a vision: Newark will strive to end chronic homelessness for all individuals over the next three years through collaboration, prevention, and housing and when it cannot be prevented it will be a rare, brief and a nonrecurring experience.

The homelessness landscape is constantly shifting, and Newark needs a plan that can adapt. The Homelessness Strategic plan lays the foundation to address chronic homelessness by developing a more proactive service system that prevents housing loss when possible, quickly shelters and stabilizes those in need, and promptly facilitates connection back to permanent housing with any necessary supportive services."

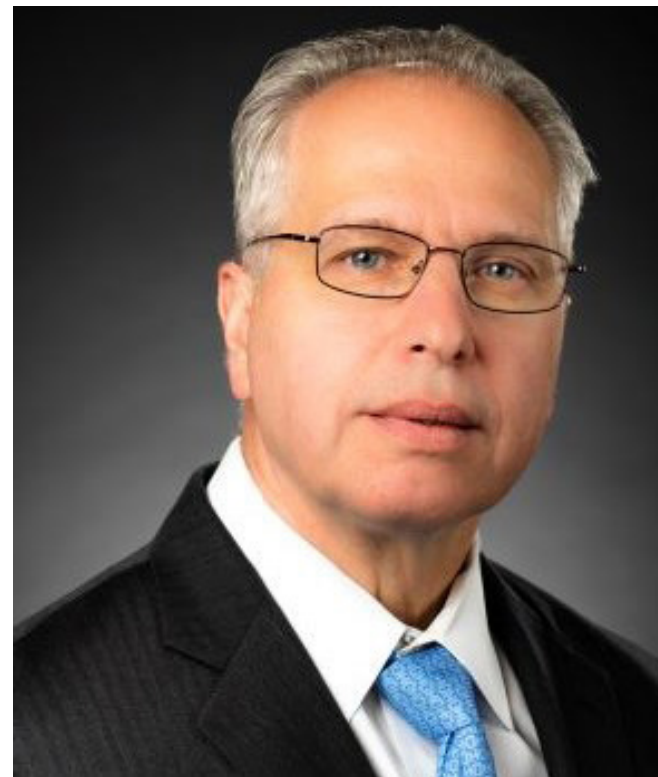
A key part of the plan's implementation will be the consistent review of data and outcomes. Newark will leverage new data resources and community partnerships to see what is working and make adjustments as needed. We are committed to taking action to address homelessness over the next three years and community feedback will continue to be a critical component of the plan's implementation.



Newark Forward: A Message from the Chair, City of Newark Commission on Homelessness

“This plan will marshal the considerable resources of this commission, our community partners, the private sector, elected officials, and state and government agencies.”

— Jim Pelliccio,
Chair of the City of Newark
Commission on Homelessness



As the new chair, I am grateful to the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness for its members' work to assist city residents experiencing homelessness since its reestablishment by Mayor Ras Baraka and the Municipal Council more than four years ago. Thanks to your dedication and leadership, and that of our many community partners, the city continues to move closer to its goal of ending chronic homelessness in Newark.

As we are all aware, this is just the beginning. Our next step is to leverage our collective efforts and implement the strategic plan to chart a course for the future. This plan will marshal the considerable resources of this commission, our community partners, the private sector, elected officials, and state and government agencies. We will focus this effort on more effectively addressing chronic homelessness, improving access and services throughout the shelter system, collectively investing in prevention and housing. Our efforts will be deeply rooted in comprehensive data collection to support a roadmap that establishes measurable strategies, to guide our path forward.

Above all, this strategic plan will be centered on humanity: those in our community who are homeless and the dedicated individuals who are committed to assisting them. I look forward to collaborating with you, as well as Mayor Baraka and his administration, to connecting those in need with the resources they deserve to live independently and with dignity.

Jim Pelliccio,
Chair of the City
of Newark Commission
on Homelessness



City of Newark Commission on Homelessness

“Together, by lifting up those most in need—our residents without addresses—we can lift up our entire community.”

— Mayor Ras J. Baraka



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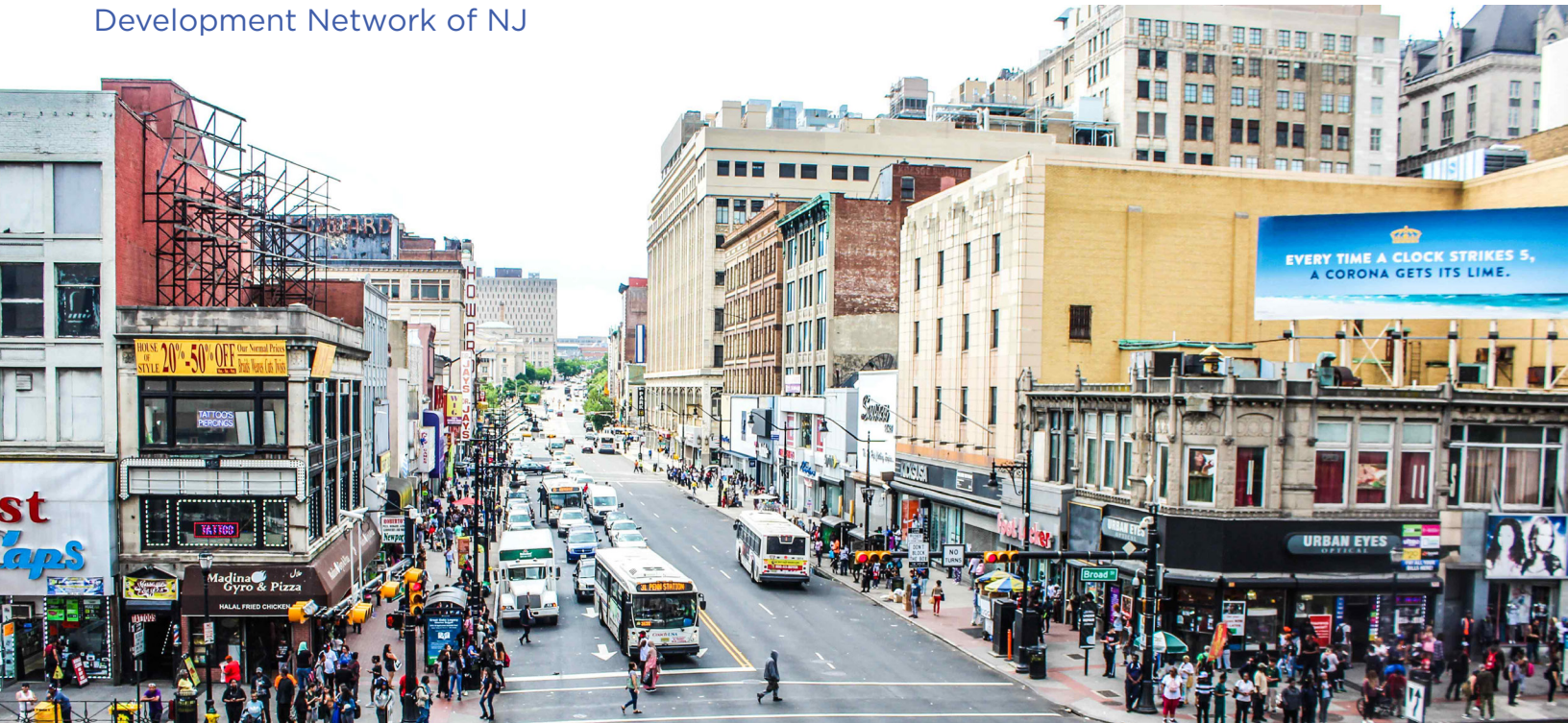
Yglesias Properties

Acknowledgments

This plan is the result of meetings, conversations, and input from more than 100 individuals and partners. Their willingness to share their ideas and time has made this plan a truly collaborative effort. A full list of participants can be found at the end of the report. A special thanks to:

- Newark Alliance
- Newark/Essex County Continuum of Care
- Residents of Miller Street Pathways to Housing, Apostle House, St. Rocco's Family Residence, Hope Village I, and Help Center/224
- Unsheltered Newark Residents
- City of Newark Department of Economic and Housing Development
- Newark Community Development Network
- Housing and Community Development Network of NJ

- Mayor's Office of Homeless Services
- Bloomberg Associates
- Community Solutions/Built for Zero
- Monarch Housing Associates
- City of Newark Department of Health and Community Wellness
- Edison Properties
- Newark People's Assembly
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Homelessness Prevention
- City of Newark Office of Tenant Legal Services
- Project Connect Drop-In Center
- Crossroads Drop-In Center
- Miller Street Drop-In Center



“Newark refuses to be a city that accepts that some residents will inevitably experience prolonged homelessness. We know that there are best practices that work to bring people off the streets and into long-term housing, but the City cannot implement solutions in isolation. Lasting progress requires our community to act collaboratively to make system wide reform and we are doing that.”

— Luis Ulerio,
Newark Homelessness Czar

Summary of Key Strategies

“I appreciate being a part of the Newark homelessness strategic planning process, as the work we do cannot be done in a silo anymore. Having a more collaborative and systematic approach allows us to rapidly exit members of our community that are experiencing homelessness and ensure that they are able to thrive with the support that is needed.”

— Shahilda Boynes, Bridges Outreach, Inc.



STRATEGY 1: BETTER ADDRESS STREET HOMELESSNESS

- Create a real-time Data Dashboard for the street homeless population
- Enhance street outreach efforts
- Create multiple entry points to connect to shelter and services
- Coordinate with mobile behavior health services to reach street homeless
- Expand diversion efforts
- Improve targeted support and engagement efforts around Penn Station
- Create a citywide crisis response hotline
- Strengthen healthcare partnerships

STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE ACCESS AND SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE SHELTER SYSTEM

- Develop city-wide shelter standards of practice
- Improve training for homeless services employees and emergency shelter providers
- Better integrate employment programs for shelter residents
- Expand Housing Navigators across emergency shelters
- Integrate coordinated entry into emergency shelters
- Improve access to behavioral health services in shelters
- Develop more flexible space options in shelters
- Collaborate with the Newark Reentry Council Partnership

STRATEGY 3: EXPAND PREVENTION AND HOUSING SERVICES

- Develop a public and private funding plan to expand housing and services
- Increase awareness of Homeless Prevention Services
- Create a Landlord Task Force
- Secure additional Rental Subsidy Vouchers
- Increase Low Barrier Housing
- Support Creative Housing Solutions
- Expand the number of Permanent Supportive Housing units
- Deploy an Housing Stability Pilot Program
- Develop an Advocacy Agenda with local and state partners

Planning Process

Mayor Baraka launched the strategic planning process during a town hall meeting on May 9, 2022. The public shared their thoughts and ideas on how to best address homelessness. In addition, the City appointed a new Chair of the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness, Jim Pelliccio, who along with the Commission, provided valuable guidance and support to develop this plan.

Over this past summer, four working groups were assembled to focus on:

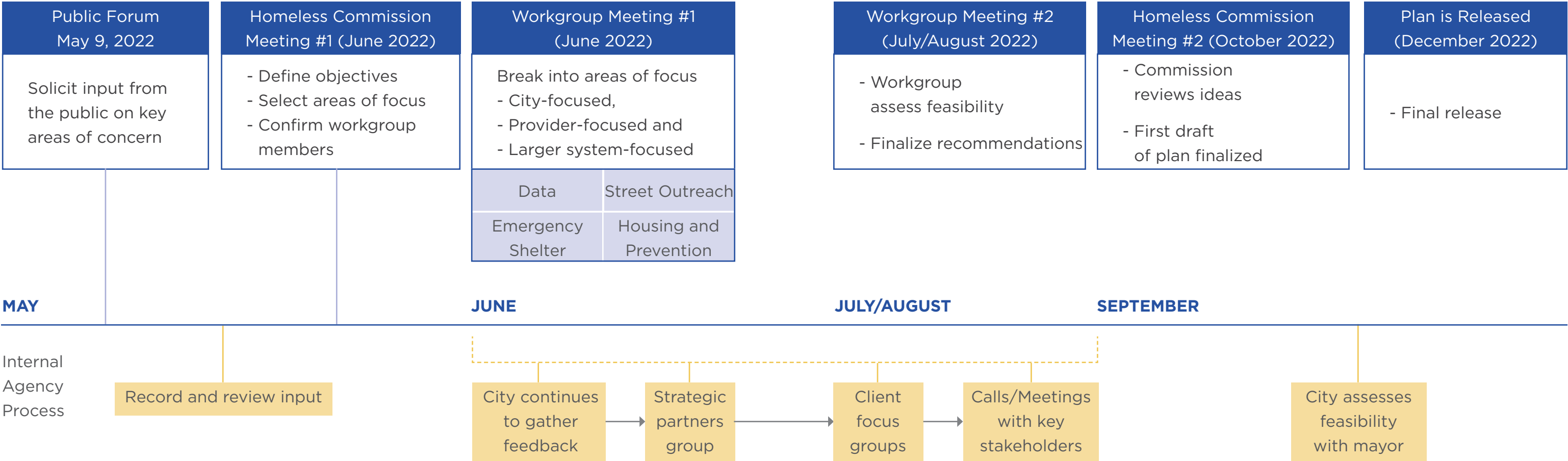
- 1. Better addressing street homelessness,
- 2. Improving access and services throughout the shelter system,
- 3. Expand prevention and housing services, and
- 4. Improving data.

As part of this process, there was an extensive review of existing and potential resources to diversify and increase public and private investments to aid in the city’s efforts to achieve a functional end to chronic homelessness. Additionally, a careful examination was made of the City’s current contracted or directly operated shelter programs, physical conditions, programming, and more broadly, shelter policies and administrative requirements

by the State, Continuum of Care (CoC), and the City were reviewed as well.

More than one hundred people who represent residents, including those with lived experience, business leaders, philanthropic organizations, and institution leaders from our medical and educational community, were involved in developing recommendations that shaped the Newark Homelessness Strategic Plan Process.

THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE PLAN INCLUDED SEVERAL SEPARATE BUT INTERRELATED ACTIVITIES



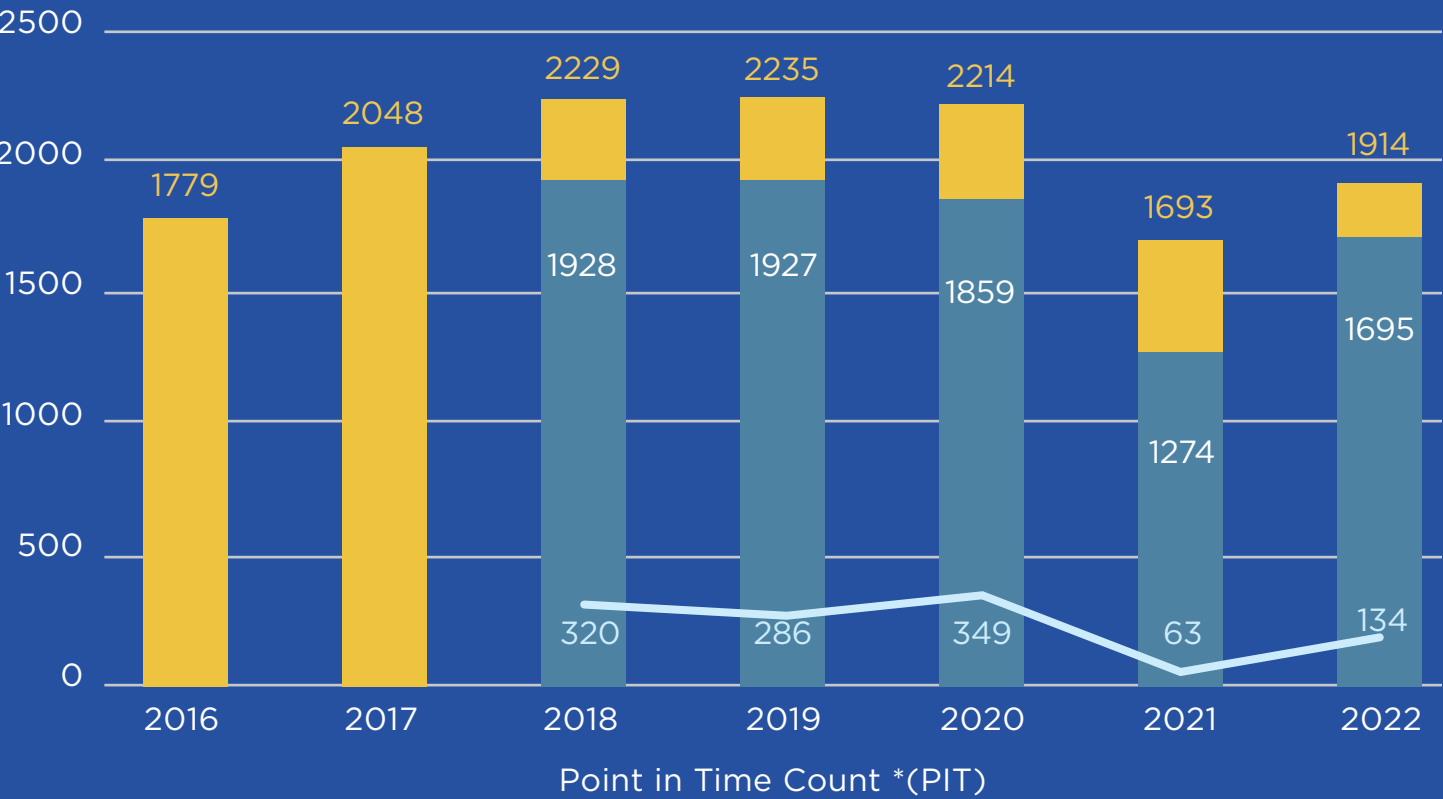
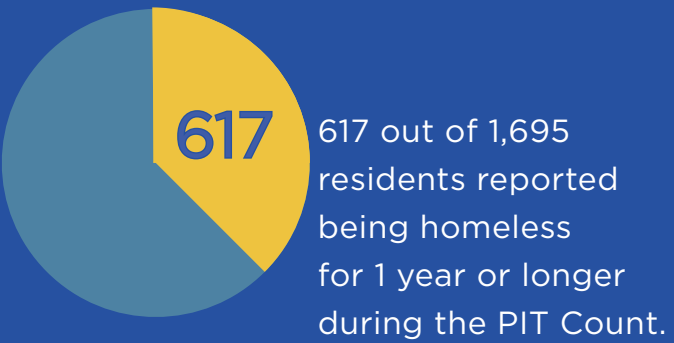
Data

Real time updated data is essential in understanding who is homeless and how best to serve them. Accurate and reliable data is the cornerstone of a successful plan. Newark is committed to bringing all the partners together who hold a piece of the data puzzle to create an integrated command center we can all use to tackle and overcome homelessness. Embedded in each strategy and initiative is a data-driven understanding of the people who are unhoused, their names, and their stories. The plan is a strategic and tailored solution to solving their unique challenges. Together we can end chronic homelessness in Newark and it starts with sharing our data.

Key Data on Newark Homelessness

The Essex County Point in Time (PIT) Count in January 2022 was 1,914. Of that, 1,695 homeless people were counted in Newark and 134 were unsheltered.

Number of Newark Residents Homeless for 1 Year or Longer, 2022



OF RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN ESSEX COUNTY
OF RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN NEWARK
RESIDENTS LIVING UNSHELTERED IN NEWARK

The Important Role of Data

Newark strives to implement a data-informed plan, but this cannot be accomplished without consistency in data collection metrics, practices, and management that cuts across institutions, services, and sectors. A collaborative, strategic, data-driven approach must be undertaken by all partners to make chronic homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurrent. Data comprised a fourth working group as part of the planning process. Data is a necessary tool to achieve our goals, and therefore, it is embedded among the three key strategies of the plan.

Newark Residents who are chronically homeless are among the most vulnerable in our community. They experience prolonged homelessness and often have a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability.



City Accomplishments

Mayor Baraka, with the collaboration of several community partners, has already implemented many recent innovative projects, programs and strategies to address homelessness. For planning purposes it is important to understand what has already been done, some of it currently in progress. This plan builds upon that progress, and in some cases enhances these existing efforts.

Newark Commission on Homelessness

Mayor Baraka and the Newark Municipal Council reestablished the City of Newark Commission on Homelessness in September 2018, tasked with helping people experiencing homelessness transition to independent living and self-sufficiency, making related recommendations on city policies, plans and funding, and advocating for state and federal policies that affect the homeless in Newark.

Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services

Mayor Baraka and the Newark Municipal Council created through legislation the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, on March 16, 2022, to provide viable options for persons at risk of homelessness, those who are homeless, minimize the negative effects and stigmas associated with homelessness, and to end homelessness in the City of Newark.

Making Housing Homes Challenge

The city launched an expansive program to develop 100 units of permanent supportive housing in Newark.

Newark Hope Village

A 20-bed emergency shelter was developed using shipping containers, offering private rooms, and successfully piloting an innovative low-threshold model to better meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents without addresses.

Miller Street Shelter

A “state-of-the-art” 166-bed shelter was developed and expands the use of a low threshold model, serving 84 men, 44 women, 21 cold weather shelter beds, 17 beds for families or usable for isolation of single adults.

A Drop In Center

A Drop-in area was carved out of the Miller Street facility that offers individuals from the area community access to bathrooms with showers, washers and dryers, meals, a recreational area, and an opportunity for staff to engage and connect individuals to support.

Newark’s Housing goals

The City’s housing goals were announced in August 2021 and include commitment to support 10,000 vulnerable or unsheltered households annually by 2026, through actions such as promoting rent control compliance, connecting renters to legal assistance and eviction prevention services, disbursing federal emergency rental assistance funds, providing temporary and transitional housing, and developing supportive services to special populations.



Newark360 Master Plan

The City’s 10-year blueprint for equitable physical development was released in September 2022 and recommended that the city should develop Newark’s Homelessness Strategic Plan via broad citywide participation and partnership with service providers.

Equitable Growth Commission

Mayor Ras Baraka created the Equitable Growth Advisory Commission in 2018 to prevent gentrification and assure equitable growth. The 15-member commission consist of experts drawn from the city’s community, academic, business, and non-profit sectors to ensure that development policies and projects in Newark incorporate the principal of equitable growth.

Key Strategies

STRATEGY 1: BETTER ADDRESS STREET HOMELESSNESS

Reduce the number of people living on the street through new approaches to engagement, better coordination among stakeholders, and alignment on outcomes.

1.0 DATA DASHBOARD:

Coordinate and leverage data to develop a real time dashboard for the street homeless population and implement a collaborative management structure that reviews, tests, and prioritizes solutions. Critical to the success of ending chronic homelessness is understanding the ever-changing population of the street homeless and using accurate and real time data through tools like a “By Name List”, a “Hot Spot” heat map and case conferencing models.

1.1 ENHANCE STREET OUTREACH EFFORTS:

Enhance the effectiveness of street outreach teams through technology, training, and coordination. Better technology like handheld devices will allow outreach workers to capture and analyze data on the street population. Additionally, culturally competent training, peer outreach workers and the addition of staff with clinical skills will help to improve the success of engagement efforts.

1.2 MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS:

Create clear and accessible entry points throughout the community to make it easier for residents to connect to shelters and services. Allow housing navigators to make direct referrals to shelter and add additional locations with staff to support people experiencing street homelessness to enter shelters.

1.3 MOBILE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Partner with behavioral health service providers to bring services to the highest needs persons experiencing street homelessness. Coordinate with mobile medical, behavioral, and social service providers to reach unsheltered individuals living on the street in hotspot areas.

1.4 EXPAND DIVERSION EFFORTS:

Leverage existing and new diversion programs to strengthen and expand diversion efforts that connect individuals and families to homeless response systems statewide.



1.5 IMPROVE EFFORTS AROUND PENN STATION:

Tackle the complexity of homelessness at Newark Penn Station by increasing support and engagement. Open a new drop-in center nearby, study the causes and motivation, and pilot incentives for the hardest to house.

1.6 CRISIS RESPONSE HOTLINE:

Develop a city-wide Homeless Hotline for street outreach and other homeless

services so residents can report concerns and street homeless can get help when in crisis.

1.7 HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIPS:

Develop partnerships with Hospitals and Health Centers to increase service coordination for individuals experiencing homelessness with health needs. Improve coverage, training and access to link frequent users of crisis and inpatient care to community support services.

STRATEGY 2:
IMPROVE ACCESS AND
SERVICES THROUGHOUT
THE SHELTER SYSTEM

Improve access for the unsheltered and transform the culture in shelters to better support residents in their transition to housing stability.

2.0 CITY-WIDE SHELTER
STANDARDS AND PRACTICE:

Develop city-wide standards of services for Emergency Shelter providers. Improve shelter conditions and experience with clear expectations and policies that include regular site assessments, consistent and accessible grievance policies and protocols, and expectations for length of stay.

2.1 HOMELESS SERVICES TRAINING:

Improve training for homeless services employees and emergency shelter providers to increase effectiveness and create a baseline for performance. Re-think engagement to follow best practices and include training for staff beyond just case managers.

2.2 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
FOR SHELTER RESIDENTS:

Integrate employment and income resources at emergency shelters. Develop an employment program and provide professional development services for the clients while in shelter to support their transition to housing.

2.3 HOUSING NAVIGATORS:

Implement a housing-focused model across all emergency shelters. Create a cohort of trained housing navigators to help clients find housing and move out of shelter. Create performance outcomes tied to the city’s efforts to reduce homelessness, in areas like reducing the average length of stay, improving exits to permanent housing, decreasing recidivism, and increasing income.

2.4 COORDINATED ENTRY:

Integrate Coordinated Entry into the emergency shelters to improve access to housing options for shelter clients. Partner with the Essex County Continuum of Care to train shelter providers to use Coordinated Entry to access CoC funded programs, services, and housing.

2.5 ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH SERVICES IN SHELTER:

Facilitate behavior health services onsite or via telehealth at emergency shelters through partnerships.

2.6 MORE FLEXIBLE SPACE
OPTIONS AT SHELTERS:

Expand private room options at emergency shelters through existing or new programs for the hard to house street homeless.

2.7 REENTRY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP:

Collaborate with Newark’s Reentry Council to understand and enhance efforts to provide emergency housing for returning residents experiencing homelessness.

STRATEGY 3:
EXPAND PREVENTION
AND HOUSING
SERVICES

Align existing resources to support residents in maintaining current housing and support the creation and access to new housing models and services.

City of Newark Housing Goals:

Add **3,000 new homes** across all five wards by 2026 and 8,000 homes by 2032

Fund the creation or **preservation of 6,600 affordable homes** by 2026, prioritizing affordability at or below 30% AMI

Convey all city-controlled properties by 2026, with **at least 30% affordable units**

Support **1,500 new and 200 existing low- and moderate-income homeowners** by 2026

Support **10,000 vulnerable or unsheltered households** annually by 2026

3.0 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS:

Develop a public and private funding plan to expand housing and services to serve more vulnerable or unsheltered Newark residents.

3.1 INCREASE EVICTION PREVENTION EFFORTS:

Partner with the Mayor’s Office of Tenant Legal Services and other community and legal service providers to increase awareness of tenant rights, emergency rental assistance, and available legal assistance.

3.2 LANDLORD TASK FORCE:

Create a Landlord Task Force to better incentivize participation in government programs and increase available apartments to the homeless.

3.3 SECURE ADDITIONAL RENTAL SUBSIDY VOUCHERS:

Partner with local and state agencies to designate rental vouchers for people experiencing homelessness.

3.4 INCREASE LOW BARRIER HOUSING:

Add an additional 50 units of the Hope Village low-barrier housing model for a total of 70 units and explore other models such as safe havens and tiny homes to serve the most vulnerable unsheltered Newark residents.

3.5 CREATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS:

Support creative housing solutions that could help close the housing gap for homeless residents like, Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, and Master Leasing models.

3.6 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

Develop a pipeline of Supportive Housing units, starting with 100 units through the Making Housing Homes initiative. This important housing model combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity.

3.7 SUPPORT HOUSING STABILITY:

Develop an aftercare pilot that will provide supportive services to chronically homeless residents moving into permanent housing using evidence informed programming.

3.8 ADVOCACY AGENDA:

Collaborate with the Newark Community Development Network and Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey to create a policy and advocacy agenda focused on ending homelessness in Newark.

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SUPPORT PROVIDED BY KRISTIN MISNER-GUTIERREZ
AND TAMIRU MAMMO ON BEHALF OF BLOOMBERG ASSOCIATES.