



# Homeless Outreach Plan

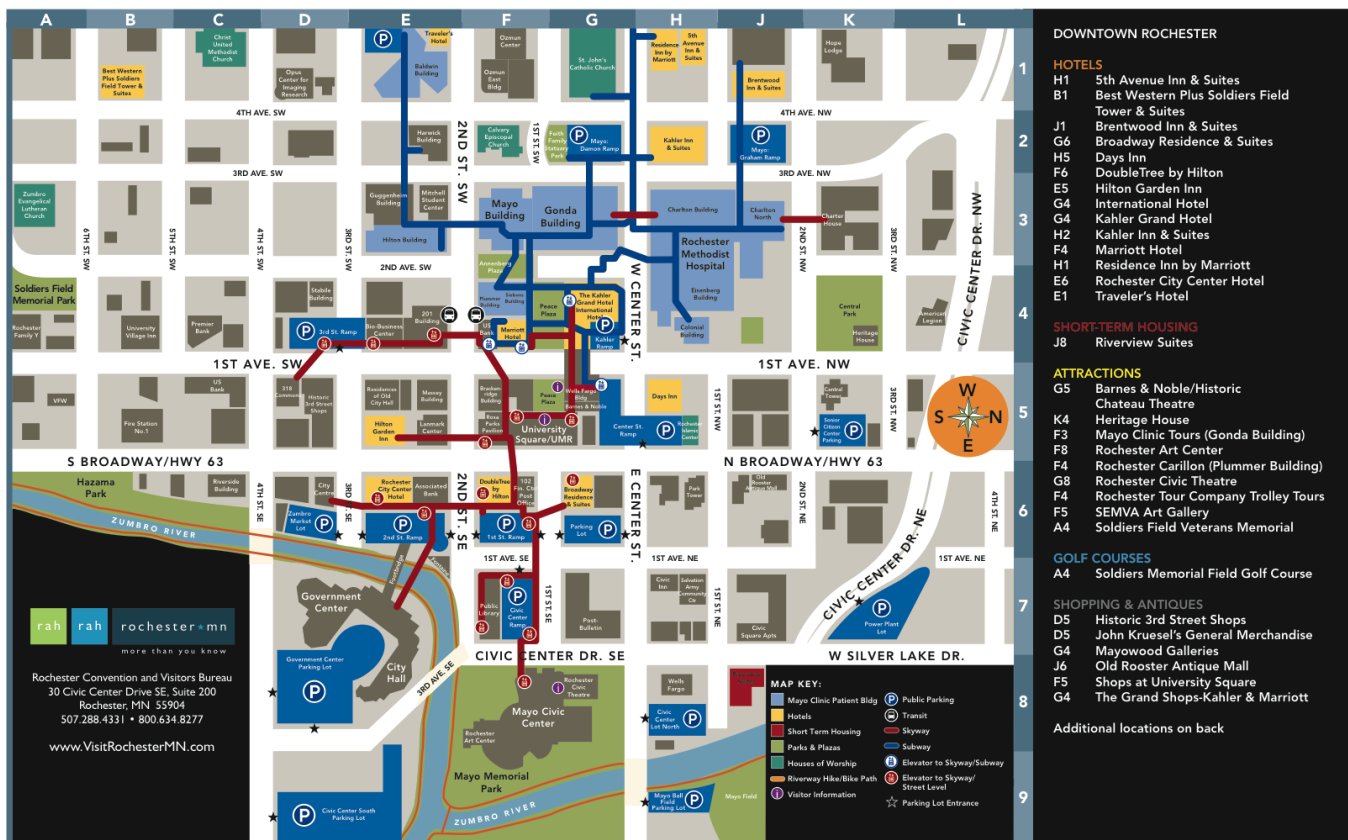
*Working together to protect the safety, health and welfare of individuals experiencing homelessness as well as employees, residents and visitors in the downtown area.*





# Homeless Outreach Plan Objectives

- Work with stake holders in both the public and private sector to adopt problem solving approaches to the issue of homelessness.
- Patrol public spaces where homeless individuals frequent to ensure public safety and conduct outreach to connect homeless persons with services.
- Collect, analyze and share data to better understand the current state of the homeless population and track progress.



# Core Values

The Rochester Police Department is committed to dealing with all members of our community with Compassion and Respect. We will operationalize national best practices in dealing with individuals who are experiencing homelessness through outreach, diversion opportunities and collaborative engagement with stakeholders. Our Core Values will guide our efforts.

## Integrity

We will conduct ourselves with the highest level of integrity which merits the trust of the people we serve. We will strive for honesty and transparency. Our actions will be consistent with our core values, code of ethics, and the Constitution. We will maintain our commitment by having respect for the law in both our personal and professional lives.

## Service

We are dedicated to delivering the highest quality of service to safeguard lives and property, reduce crime, and enhance public safety. We value proactive problem solving and enforcement in order to reduce crime and the fear of crime. We will engage with the community to build relationships and work together to resolve problems. We will be responsive to the needs of those we serve as we provide exceptional safety and security to our diverse community.

## Compassion

Compassionate service is essential to human relationships and indispensable to the foundation of a just and peaceful community. We will show concern and empathy for the victims of crime and treat violators of the law with fairness and dignity. We will exercise our law enforcement authority with diligence, empathy, and compassion as entrusted to us by the community we serve.

## Respect

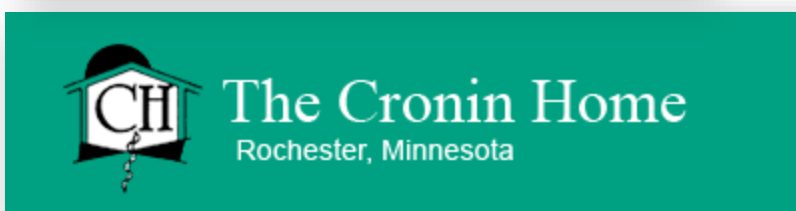
We will treat everyone with fairness and impartiality. We are committed to respecting individual rights, human dignity, and the value of all members both in the community and within our department. We will cherish, defend, and protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. By demonstrating respect for others we will earn respect.

## Innovation

We recognize that improvement is a continuous process. We support creativity and proactively seek opportunities to improve our level of service. We encourage new and more effective ideas that support the fulfillment of our mission. We will seek out and apply innovative approaches in providing the best service to our customers. Through continuous improvement, teamwork, and innovation we will strive for personal, professional, and organizational excellence.

# Outreach and Engagement

Many of those who experience homelessness might use services if they were offered as an alternative to living in public spaces. Past efforts have shown outreach was an effective strategy. Issues individuals faced were better-addressed through outreach than through police-enforcement action. The same is true for other livability issues such as public intoxication, harassing behavior and other troubling conduct.



# Steps for enhanced focus on outreach and engagement:

The Rochester Police Department is committed to dealing with all members of our community with compassion and respect. We will operationalize national best practices in dealing with individuals experiencing homelessness through outreach, diversion opportunities and collaborative engagement with stakeholders.

- The Rochester Police Department Community Action Team (CAT) will be redeployed as a temporary Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). This redeployment includes a change of schedule and work hours beginning November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and stay in effect through the end of 2019.
- CAT will play a key role in the outreach team model, working in close collaboration with partners comprised of local homeless service providers, health care professionals and treatment providers. These teams, by engaging homeless people on their terms, build trust between the parties and help to eliminate barriers to homeless services.
- CAT will provide a bridge to services and not be a social services provider.
- CAT will walk the public spaces in the downtown area with our public and private partners educating those experiencing homelessness on the resources available in the community and try to eliminate barriers preventing them from obtaining housing.
- CAT will document individual outreach with services offered, referrals made, transports to shelter, Crisis Receiving Unit or Emergency Room.
- CAT will provide roll call training to Patrol Division Staff on both this plan and to ensure that all RPD Staff that deal with individuals experiencing homelessness are sensitive to the unique struggle and circumstances of those individuals.
- Patrol Officers will be provided resource information and encouraged to do additional outreach and document those contacts.
- Patrol Officers and CAT will also educate individuals experiencing homelessness of the City Ordinance on Skyway hours and arrange transportation if necessary, to services.
- Patrol Officers and CAT will operationalize best practices through the Three E's of this integrated mission. This includes; Education about resources for homeless, Encouragement through referral to those services utilizing outreach and diversion, and Enforcement of the Criminal Code.
- CAT will engage other stakeholders in the downtown area to educate them on this plan, as well as partner with them to insure a safe and clean downtown.

# Educate, Encourage and Enforce

Understanding enforcement alone will not end or solve all unwelcoming behaviors downtown, the Rochester Police Department will operationalize this strategy that emphasizes education and encouragement prior to enforcement of code violations. This strategy enables Officers to interact with residents, visitors and those working in the downtown area with greater frequency and in more positive ways. We will accomplish this utilizing the following procedures:

**Educate-** Officers should, when possible, educate interested individuals experiencing homelessness about resources available from our public and private partners. Officers shall provide individuals the Homeless Resource Guide and the 2-1-1 information card if there is not a documented encounter where these items haven't been offered. Officers should also, when possible, educate individuals about the Rochester City Code and hours of skyway closure.

**Encourage-** Officers should, when possible, encourage interested homeless persons to utilize available local social services and offer assistance with referrals to social service organizations. Officers should notify CAT if they need assistance in removing barriers to services and to conduct follow-up with these individuals. These efforts should be documented.

**Enforce-** When Education and Encouragement have previously or presently failed or are not appropriate for the circumstances, and Officers have probable cause to believe criminal activity has occurred, Officers should proceed with criminal enforcement. If the criminal activity is a life-sustaining conduct misdemeanor and there is not available shelter available, Officers shall not enforce the ordinance.

**Life-Sustaining Misdemeanor Definition:** Misdemeanors which a homeless individual commit by the mere fact that he or she is without shelter, and must conduct life sustaining activities, such as eating, sleeping, sitting, congregating or walking in public. This would include being in skyway during hours of closure.

All RPD Staff will have access to the attached flow chart to direct their decision making when dealing with individual's committing life sustaining misdemeanors in accordance with this strategy. They will also receive roll call training on the strategy and any changes to our practice or procedures.

Nothing in these procedures precludes an arrest for any felony, or misdemeanor that is not life sustaining conduct, regardless of whether there is shelter available.

Whenever an Officer has probable cause to believe that a violation of a life sustaining misdemeanor has occurred, they shall advise the person of the violation and afford the person an opportunity to be transported to an available shelter.

CAT and Patrol will continue to rigorously enforce all laws that aren't life sustaining in an effort to protect all individuals that frequent the Downtown area. We will continue to trespass individuals that have committed criminal acts in the downtown area and skyway system.

CAT will work with our partners to ensure that Skyways and Parking Ramps have the appropriate signage to alert all citizens of any restrictions to hours or other rules prior to taking any enforcement action in public spaces.



# Rochester Police Department Homeless Outreach Strategy

