

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Greg Frailey and I am the Harm Reduction Lead at Good Trouble Church. For the past 5+ years we have been running the Red Shed Village in the Station North neighborhood, alongside operating a weekly drop in-center while providing mutual aid, grocery distribution, harm reduction supplies, and more. From our first conversations, everything we do has been based in Harm Reduction.

After reviewing the preliminary Overdose Response Strategic Plan for 2025-2027 we have concerns that we would like to share.

First, we noticed there was nothing regarding Overdose Prevention Centers, which is extremely disappointing. Overdose Prevention Centers are evidence-based public health interventions that have been established across the world in 14 countries, including two in the United States. Trained personnel monitor participants for signs of overdose and intervene to prevent or reverse overdoses. In addition to overdose prevention services, Overdose Prevention Centers provide a welcoming space that helps bring drug use indoors and connect people to long-term, life-sustaining resources, like addiction services and social supports, including voluntary treatment. Overdose Prevention Centers proven to significantly reduce preventable overdose deaths, and we strongly support Overdose Prevention Centers in Baltimore City.

We also have significant concerns about housing support services. We are excited to see a strong focus on housing services in the Strategic Plan, but simply providing more funding won't fix the rapid re-housing program in Baltimore City. Co-ordinated entry has been a nightmare for many of our unhoused community members who use drugs. Our folks often wait months to over a year just to receive an offer. The offer they receive is often for housing programs that don't fit their needs or have strict requirements. Case workers constantly re-schedule appointments at the last minute for coordinated access interviews.

The interview process itself sets many of our community members up for failure. Many of our unhoused community members who use drugs have been told that their "risk score" wasn't high enough and they would have a long wait to receive an offer. To quote directly, one of our community members was told, "No one is going to rush you into housing just because you're a drug addict." This is ridiculous considering that the most recent annual report from The Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness showed that substance related deaths accounted for the highest mortality rate among unhoused in Maryland.

We, at Good Trouble Church and Red Shed Village, hope to see not only a focus on funding Coordinated Access Services, but significant changes to the navigation process that respects people who use drugs that are unhoused, treats them as human beings, and understands that

housing (not just another program) is one of the most important factors in overdose prevention. We also strongly support the implementation of Overdose Prevention Centers in Baltimore City.

Thanks,

Greg Frailey

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