

Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service System Planning Forum November 16, 2022

Date and time: November 16, 2022; 10:00am – 12:00pm

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86511313841>

1. SSHA Items and Updates

- Update on the City's 2022/2023 Winter Services Plan by Gord Tanner, General Manager, SSHA
- On November 7, the City announced details of its 2022-2023 Winter Services Plan to ensure safe and welcoming places for people experiencing homelessness during the coming winter weather: [Winter Services Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness – City of Toronto](#)
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
 - This is a general update on where we find ourselves in the shelter system currently, and the actions being taken by the City to create more than 1,000 additional spaces for people in need this winter
 - We will have warming centres open this winter during periods of extreme cold weather. Currently Metro Hall and Scarborough Civic Centre are designated sites.
 - Throughout the coming months, we will continue to monitor who we are seeing and take action. The plan is designed to be adaptable and responsive.
 - The City is currently in the process of closing down the program at 45 The Esplanade: [45 The Esplanade – City of Toronto](#). We will try to get as many people into housing.
 - Homelessness needs to be an all government approach. The City continues to work closely with both levels of government to secure needed investments.
- **Q:** Can you give us an idea of the capacity at the new warming centres?
- **A:** Yes, Metro Hall at 55 John Street will provide warm respite to approximately 40 people, Scarborough Civic Centre at 150 Borough Drive will provide warm respite for approximately 20 people and once determined and activated, the two other sites are anticipated to provide warm respite for approximately 60 people.
- **Q:** We're increasingly seeing customers being told that no shelter beds are available. What are the options available?
- **A:** Our shelters at capacity continues to be a struggle and new resources will be a relief. The challenges that we are facing are resource-based. Our shelters had a hard time weathering COVID-19 but we will continue to secure additional spaces and try to stabilize our shelter system.
- As new beds come online, people should access Central Intake: [Central Intake – City of Toronto](#).
- **Q:** Can we look at the armoury?

- **A:** We are already talking to the federal government and asking for logistical support too. We will continue to look at all options that are available to us. Again, it is about the resources, including the availability of trained staff and other required supports.
- **Q:** How are we going to move individuals from the closed hotel/shelters if there are no availability at the shelters?
- **A:** We will report back to City Council in early 2023 to talk about the Shelter Hotel Transition Plan and seek Council direction. We will extend the hotel/motel programs until April 2023 and am hopeful that the federal government will provide us with the supports that we need. We are currently waiting on the Council dates to be confirmed and this will be an opportunity for the public to give feedback.
- **Q:** What do you suggest that we do as community organizations to advocate and secure more shelter space to address the crisis now? We need immediate interventions.
- **A:** We need support from the federal and provincial governments. If we have additional funding from all levels of government, we will be able to look for additional shelter space. There are also challenges in terms of community and public support. We currently have a modular housing project on hold and this shouldn't happen.

2. Housing Secretariat Items and Updates (Don Nichols, Manager, Housing Stability Services)

- Outcomes from the joint SSHA and Housing Secretariat 2022 Open Funding Call for Housing Support & Homelessness Grants.
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
- Take a look at our website: [Housing Support & Homelessness Grants – City of Toronto](#) to see who we are funding and how many projects are being funded.
- We are working towards updating our website to be very clear on which funding is through SSHA and through the Housing Secretariat.
- For next steps, we are focused on additional collaboration from the Housing Secretariat, SSHA and our sector partners: linking services, consultations and engagement.
 - **Q:** It is interesting that the largest gap between asks and what was funded is in the category of Homeless Prevention. Are there lessons from that?
 - **A:** Through the HousingTO plan and Homelessness Solutions Service Plan, we were able to increase our grant funding significantly. Homeless Prevention was a critical area that we needed to focus on and to keep pace with the demand (i.e., doubling the number of people accessing the Rent Bank). This demand created the grant model. We knew that additional investments are required to keep up with this demand.

3. Confronting Anti-Black Racism (Roger Thompson - CABR Lead and Karima Kinlock-Quamina, SSHA)

- Presentation on the City of Toronto's work on Confronting Anti-Black Racism.
- [Confronting Anti-Black Racism – City of Toronto](#)
- [Creation of the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan](#)
- We are proud of our ongoing conversations, consultations and work from our CABR Steering Committee (approx. 15 individuals).
- We want to ensure that Black staff are supported and heard.
 - **Q:** Are there any medium-term plans to roll out the training/supports to drop-in centres? Learning from and sharing these tools?
 - **A:** Yes, this is part of our work plan – to have the resources shared internally and externally. Now that we have a dedicated staff, the goal is to provide opportunities and resources to our POS sites. We are creating an ambassador program with CABR liaisons.
 - **Q:** For organizations that want to implement similar structures, such as a CABR committee, how is the impact of your work measured internally? How do we know if we are doing better?
 - **A:** This depends on what you are measuring. You need to understand the variables, what are we looking to improve. What has worked and hasn't worked.
 - **Q:** When CABR team comes back to do another presentation for us, can you give us some best practices advice? Some interventions and suggestions on how organizations can respond? We would love to know what questions we need to ask ourselves. Are we doing a good job supporting Black staff? For partners who are working on an Anti-Black racism training model, we would like to connect with CABR team.
 - **A:** We will definitely follow-up with that.

4. Working for Change (Anita Prasad, Executive Director)

- Centring Anti-Oppression and Lived Experience presentation
- Working for Change is a grassroots Social Justice organization, built by community members to create solutions to poverty, stigma and various forms of marginalization: [Working For Change | A home, a job, a friend & social change](#)
- Amplifying the value and skills of People with Lived Experience (PWLE) and rooted in the psychiatric survivor and mad pride movement.
- Working for Change serves as the umbrella organization for several social enterprises such as providing meals to other non-profits addressing hunger, employment and training programs.
- Peer work is anti-oppression work! Peer work is one of the most powerful ways to re-work dominate culture. We need to move beyond the role of storyteller, our stories to be consumed!
- Anti-oppression work is about living in inclusive communities.
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*

- **Q:** I am a graduate of the Voices on the Street program and it is great to hear about the stories around opiate poisoning, and the people who are experiencing this.
- **A:** Yes, having those harm reduction conversations are important, and this supports the addictions work. These conversations play a central role in shaping policy in harm reduction. For a lot of non-profit leaders, it is hard to have long-term impact because of precarious funding. Working with PWLE is a good investment with high rates of return.

5. **TAEH Updates** (Savhanna Wilson, Associate Director TAEH)

- Update on the TAEH Municipal Election Plan Report: The Mayor along with 10 City Council members have pledged to end homelessness. This is great news and we have made really good progress with this campaign.
- Issues with Bill 23: How the New Homes, Built Faster Bill poses a risk to affordability, how it is negatively impacting affordability. This has an impact on people who are most marginalized and most vulnerable. We need a definition of affordability that is tied to income (we need income based policies).
 - The Bill will not create any new affordable housing in Ontario. We need to demand revisions of Bill 23.
 - We would like to encourage partners to add a voice to the letter demanding revisions to the Bill: <https://bit.ly/SignBill23Letter>
 - Please write the Premier, Minister of Housing, MPP: if you don't have an advocacy committee, encourage your board to write.
- *Refer to slide deck presentation*
 - **Q:** Could TAEH send regular updates?
 - **A:** Will follow-up.

6. **Other Business**

- On another topic of interest: Rooming Houses, an FYI to TAEH members, the new Who's Hungry report has a section dedicated to those living in multi-tenant housing, a snapshot of what resources they have. <https://www.dailybread.ca/research-and-advocacy/whos-hungry-report-2022/>