

# SSHA COVID-19 Temporary Site Transition Plan Consultation



April 13, 2022

# Our Task

Offer insight and perspectives to help the City plan long-term sustainable futures for the temporary COVID sites

# Process

- Three meetings of Advisory of temporary site operators
- Peer-led survey/interviews with 200 shelter residents in partnership with TSN
- Survey of front-line staff
- Focus groups with:
  - TNG Peer Champions
  - Harm reduction workers
  - Health system partners
  - Housing and Human Rights
  - Front line staff
  - TICAB
  - MOVID
  - CABR & Black community orgs
  - The Shift

# Strengths and weaknesses of the temporary sites

## **Hotels have been successful at:**

- Transitioning people from institutions
- Supporting target populations
- As a form of transitional housing
- Providing greater dignity and privacy

## **Hotels have fallen short for:**

- The substance using community
- Women outside of female specific sites
- Engaging community

# What we've learned through COVID

Rapid rehousing can work for some youth, especially newcomer youth

Diversion works, and we aren't doing nearly enough in Toronto

To transition to housing, people need continued access to: harm reduction, food security, case management support

***“These are people who have been ‘decommissioned’ at multiple times in their lives. And here we are again. So it’s important we get this right.”***

# Imperative not to revert to pre-pandemic model

- Choices are subject to “principle of non-regression” - commitment of human rights based approach to housing
- Dorm-style shelters should be reserved only for short-term crises like environmental disasters
- Concern we will see a rise in encampment living as perceived safer alternative
- Opportunity to reimagine the built form and layout in the base system

# What the next iteration of the system should look to do

- As we shift to something new, need to retain:
  - Community for residents
  - Harm reduction supports
  - Wrap around supports as a transitional model
- Next iteration should hinge around: housing, supportive housing, base system

# Continue to progress in harm reduction approaches

- Shelter operators have improved harm reduction approaches, but still room for progress
- Harm reduction improvements that have been achieved could be transferred to other locations/models
- On-going resourcing will be a major factor in whether the same level of supports can be continued
- Next evolution: how to maintain privacy and dignity with greater safety for substance users



# Take the opportunity to turn select sites into supportive housing (traditional and permanent)

- Consideration should take into account population and built form
- Possible to create new supportive housing while still retaining shelter capacity
- Permanent supportive housing approach appropriate for high needs people who are chronically homeless to leverage shelter resources
- Potential hotel acquisition could serve as transitional supportive housing

Thank you

