

Toronto Housing and Homelessness Services Planning Forum Meeting

Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88389710506>

Introduction of Forum Co-Chairs:

- Mark Aston, TAEH Chair and ED, Covenant House
- Ashleigh Dalton, Manager, Strategic Policy and Service Planning, SSHA
- Everyone is invited to attend these forums, including TAEH partners as well as community members. The forum is a space where we can share sector information and everyone can provide input that feeds into policies, programs, and service planning on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Welcome and Land Recognition

- Land recognition: Kira shared a video titled [Land Acknowledgement: an oral history of Tkaronto](#)

Agenda review and solicitation of other business

- Ashleigh provided an overview of agenda items.

Hotel Programs for People Experiencing Homelessness: Presentation and Discussion -

Sonja Nerad, Toronto Shelter Network, and David Reycraft, Dixon Hall (both part of the Hotel Operators Community of Practice).

David provided a verbal overview of hotel programs for people experiencing homelessness, developed in response to the pandemic. He shared that:

- 10 new programs were created, and that approximately 3500 people are now living in emergency response spaces (e.g., to create physical distancing).
- To date, there have been two pillars to transition clients into hotels. The first was space, which allowed clients to move directly into emergency shelter programs across the city (e.g., to create physical distancing). The second was moving people from encampment sites into hotels.
- The City of Toronto continues to work with the real estate team to look for additional suitable sites, and continues to work toward a housing system rather than only an emergency shelter system.

Sonja provided an overview of the "Meeting Crisis with Opportunity" research study:

- "Meeting Crisis with Opportunity" is a 5-month exploratory study funded by the City of Toronto and Dixon Hall. The purpose of the study is to understand the impact that the pandemic has had on diverse homeless populations, shelter service providers, and the shelter system as a whole.
- The study aims to understand the impact of Covid-19 on diverse people experiencing homelessness in Toronto's shelter system, including among people that moved to a hotel and those that remained in shelter and respite. It also aims to identify recommendations for future waves of Covid-19 and other emergencies, and identify

recommendations that will inform the permanent transition of the system into one that is people centered and housing focused.

- Study methods include a literature review, surveys with 200 clients, interviews with 80 shelter staff, and interviews with outreach staff working in encampments.

Housing Secretariat Updates - Valesa Faria, Director, Housing Secretariat

- Valesa provided an updated on current housing programs and initiatives, including the Toronto Modular Supportive Housing Initiative, the Housing Now Initiative, the Open Door Affordable Housing Program, and the Federal Rapid Housing Initiative.
- Toronto Modular Supportive Housing Initiative: Construction and preparation at 11 Macey Avenue (56 bachelor units and support services) will be completed by December 2020. The anticipated move-in is within a few days. Construction and preparation and 150 Harrison Street (44 bachelor units and support services) will be completed in January 2021.
 - Valesa will be sharing a time-lapse video that documents how the site was created, as well as photos and videos of people moving into these sites.
- Housing Now Initiative will activate City-owned land to create mixed-income, mixed-use and complete communities near transit. It will provide affordable rental, market rental, and market ownership housing options including: 12,460 total units, including 4,520 affordable rental units, to people earning between \$21,000 - \$56,000 per year. By layering housing benefits, some of these homes could become affordable for OW/ODSP recipients, including those experiencing homelessness.
- Open Door Affordable Housing Program will activate non-City owned land to scale up and expedite delivery of affordable rental housing. It will be administered through an annual Request for Proposals process. It will provide incentives and exemptions from various charges for developers with qualifying affordable rental housing projects. This program will also require that maximum rent levels be 100% of Toronto's Average Market Rent, that there be a minimum 40 year affordability period for projects, and that there be a minimum of 50% residential gross floor area that is affordable rental housing.
- Federal Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI): City staff have submitted an application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the \$200M in the cities stream. They have exceeded the number of units expected with that dollar amount (417), and anticipate that they should be able to create 500 units with the available funding. The City also supported over 20 non-profit projects for the \$500M in the project stream. The RHI project timeline is fairly tight, with completion of projects and occupancy of new units completed by the end of Q4 2021.
- Valesa also shared that there are a few open and upcoming Requests for Proposal. One of these is for a property at 218 Carlton. Housing Secretariat will be selecting a non-profit partner as a developer to deal with the planning applications, doing renovations, and bringing the house online.
- In 2021, Housing Secretariat looks forward to continuing community and stakeholder engagement, including TAEH, Indigenous communities, and black organizations and community leaders.

SSHA Updates - Laural Raine, Director, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

Laural provided a verbal update on the Interim Shelter Recovery and Infrastructure Implementation Plan.

- The [Interim Shelter Recovery and Infrastructure Implementation Plan](#), based on advice from the Interim Shelter Recovery Task Force was approved by City Council in October 2020. The plan includes 5 key themes, and approximately 55 action items. SSHA is currently working on developing a tracking mechanism to report back on the status of the action items in a comprehensive way. Laural offered to bring a complete list of actions and status updates to a future meeting.
- Many action items listed in the implementation plan are ongoing or already underway. These include:
 - Deepening collaboration with health partners to link the health system and health providers with the shelter system. This includes mental health case management, primary care, and harm reduction supports. New hotel programs will be linked to these three services, and there will be ongoing mapping across the homelessness service system to determine which programs have linkages to these services, and how we might fill gaps.
 - Providing more in-person Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) supports to providers particularly where outbreak or suspect outbreaks have occurred. SSHA continues to work with the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TCLHIN) and Inner City Health Associates (ICHA) to accomplish this. The TCLHIN has a dedicated intake line where providers can request IPAC supports, and ICHA has a program where they can link providers with appropriate resources to reduce the transmission of Covid-19.
 - Working with interdivisional colleagues on encampments, to determine which approach should be taken, what protocols need to be established, and what engagement with people living in encampments might look like. This also includes applying a human rights lens to the work SSHA is doing.
 - Leveraging opportunities for housing: this includes working with Housing Secretariat on federal funding initiatives, pivoting existing infrastructure funding for shelters to supporting housing for up to three sites, and reviewing existing shelter system portfolios to determine where SSHA can convert existing shelter programs into permanent supportive housing.
 - Working with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to expand the Rapid Housing Initiative, which aims to move people from the shelter system into vacant TCHC units. This program saw great success through the first phase of the pandemic, with over 300 people moved into 250 units.
 - Minimizing the flow of people into homelessness: this includes enhancing existing eviction prevention programs (e.g., Toronto Rent Bank, Eviction Prevention in the Community), and engaging regional partners in the Greater Toronto Area on collaborative work around transitioning people from health and correctional systems into the shelter system, with support from the United Way.

Laural also provided a verbal update on SSHA reports and initiatives that will be shared at the upcoming Economic and Community Development Committee meeting (agenda and reports [here](#)). She highlighted two agenda items:

- Central Intake Shelter Access Data Indicators and Trends - Update
 - This report provides an overview of indicators about people seeking access to shelter through Central Intake (24/7 phone line for access to shelters). The report contains preliminary analysis on the wrap code, which helps categorize the types of calls received throughout the day, and tracking in SMIS, which describes the service queue of clients at the end of the night.
- Toronto Rent Bank and Eviction Prevention in the Community Programs - Update
 - This report provides an overview of financial and program enhancements to the Rent Bank and EPIC programs, as well as initiatives and actions underway for both. Uptake in both programs has been lower than anticipated, likely due to the eviction moratorium and the Landlord and Tenant Board not operating for several months. SSHA will continue to monitor uptake for both programs.

Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) Updates – Kira Heineck

Kira provided a verbal update on TAEH initiatives. She shared that TAEH:

- Weighed in on the Rooming House report in the last Council cycle.
- TAEH will continue monitoring City Council decisions, and monitoring committee decisions, and will be providing deputations at the next committee and council meetings
- Will be updating their website, communications, and newsletters with the help and support of student volunteer. In the meantime, they welcome input, feedback, and questions from attendees on the work that they are doing.
- Is planning on convening a community planning meeting in January 2021, to begin Phase 2 of community input to outcomes and priorities for funding for the Reaching Home Program, and SSHA's next 5-year service plan.
- Is aiming to release a plan to end homelessness by June 2021, with specifics on provincial and federal roles as well as what the City and community can do.
- Will be sending out a survey in shortly, seeking initial feedback on how attendees would prefer to be engaged virtually.
- Will be working with the TAEH Steering Committee to review the strategic work plan for 2021. Once the plan is released, they will be reaching out to the group to determine how to engage those who want to be involved
- Will be continuing to enhance engagement with people with lived experience.

Kira also asked the group for feedback on **topics to consider for upcoming agendas.**

Suggestions included:

- The tower and neighbourhood revitalization unit presentation
- A focus on pregnant and post-natal women and families experiencing homelessness
- TCHC units in disrepair - explore role and strategy in ending homelessness
- Exploring what people in health care spaces can do from an advocacy or influencing perspective, to complement the City's efforts