

# Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service System Planning Forum

## April 13, 2022

**Date and time:** April 13, 2022; 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87187078031>

### 1. Shelter Hotel Transition Planning and Engagement (Dana Granofsky and Liz McGuire, BGM Strategy Group; Amy Buitenhuis, SSHA)

- City Council unanimously approved the [COVID-19 Shelter Transition and Relocation Plan Update](#) on April 6 recommending a phased 24-month work plan for the COVID-19 temporary shelter sites.
- The plan recommended extension of temporary spaces and close up to 5 sites this year, including 2 that are being decommissioned currently.
- Refer to slide deck presentation
- **Q:** 40% of shelter beds \*or\* shelter sites are in temporary spaces?
- **A:** It is 40% of shelter beds. There are 27 temporary sites, out of 101 locations total. More info and graphs area available in the staff report <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-222833.pdf> and attachments <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-222834.pdf>
- **Q:** Can there be elaboration on what are the issues with women in shelter hotels?
- **A:** (from forum members) Issues are related to security and space. Also, clients who have experienced gender-based violence are more vulnerable and may lead to re-victimization. It would be helpful to create rooms where communities of women can speak in a safe space. We also need to acknowledge the number of refugees in our system. Women who are victims of gender violence, have been re-victimized so safety is key.
- **Action:** Dana invites all to share more comments or insights on any of the findings.  
Amy invites input to how to engage with service users. Please email [amy.buitenhuis@toronto.ca](mailto:amy.buitenhuis@toronto.ca) for further discussion.

### 2. SSHA updates

- Accessing MyAccesstoHousingTO (Yolisa de Jager)
  - Refer to slide deck presentation
  - Applicant portal: [Toronto.ca/accesstohousing](https://toronto.ca/accesstohousing)
  - Current overall adoption rate for application registration: 42%
  - 53K applicants in portal (formal and net new)
  - Suggestion (from chat): Perhaps the Translate button could / should be at the top as is the EN/FR button on many webpages/Google, etc. That is a lot of text for a non-English speaker to get through to find the button at the bottom of the page.
  - Suggestion (from chat): the acronyms might make this hard to understand for some of us

- Choice based module implemented in January 2022
- Single Offer Rule: implemented as of January 1, 2022
- 176 Elm: Front counter service soft launch on April 19, formal opening on April 25, 2022
- A working group of sector stakeholders and SSHA would be helpful for ongoing discussion and problem solve operational issues on the front line
  
- **Q:** How many/percentage of DA applicants invited to participate in a choice-based cycle are actually participating?
- **A:** Latest cycle shows that 73% of those invited and registered online participated (received invitation, opened the invitation and took a look around the website).
  
- **Q:** Does the front counter offer hands-on support? Would it include follow up supports?
- **A:** Yes, there will be a front counter/wicket and we're hoping to set up computer stations to allow applicants to browse.
  
- **Q:** COHB will be replacing transitional housing allowance program. For eligibility, you must be 3 months homeless and manage online registration. Is there training on COHB subsidy?
- **A:** Yolisa will follow-up. We can also send out entire lists of the entire shelter who are eligible on the centralized waitlist, distinguish who needs to start a brand-new application or those who started and we can help them activate the online portal.
  
- **Q:** Can you apply through COHB at the front counter?
- **A:** Yolisa will follow-up.
  
- **Q:** How can we support DA applicants? What about better resourcing onsite supports?
- **A:** Yolisa will follow-up. We would be interested in how to incorporate supports and have been taking feedback.
  
- **Q:** Would there be training available for supporting housing workers with special priority client applications?
- **A:** We can support applications including what is required and priority status. There may be opportunities in the VA sector and how to support. Email us and we can answer your questions individually.
  
- **Q:** What about people who don't have access to internet? How do Housing and help centres help clients without technology?
- **A:** 50% is a key milestone but we will assess who has come into the portal and focus on who is missing. Access to computers can be onsite and through public libraries. We have also made enhanced funding to housing and help centres, but we still need to explore opportunities to help those who can't access. Feedback will help us how to target those clients and we will continue to monitor to tailor our marketing and approaches.

- **Q:** How does planned days help people in the choice-based process?
- **A:** Over the past year, we've been training staff on backend access, looking up status. We would like to do ongoing training and support so shelters are equipped with user access.

**3. Open Funding Call Updates:** see slide for more information

**4. Housing Secretariat updates (Mercedeh Madani)**

- See slide deck presentation
- HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan – progress update and priorities for 2022
- Action plan progress update:
  - Opened 220 homes in 2021
  - Rapid housing initiative will create 1000 permanent supportive homes by end of 2022
  - 450 homes newly available through TCHC
  - 500 new affordable homes made available through partnership United Property Resource Corporation
- Total estimated 10-year investment required by all levels of government: \$27.7 billion
- 40,000 new homes approval target can be achieved by 20227 provided that the federal and provincial governments provide their share of funding to deliver the HousingTO plan
- RFP works with Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and Miziwe Biik development corporation
  
- (Comment from forum member): More seniors are becoming homeless. Please advocate to better support seniors.

**5. TAEH updates**

- Federal Budget (Greg Sutter)
  - See slide deck presentation
  - Strong political positioning on housing issue
  - Affordable rental programs
    - More for National Housing Co-Investment Fund
    - Third round of Rapid Housing Initiative
    - Reform of Rental Housing Financing Initiative (RCFI)
    - New Housing Accelerator Fund
  - Homebuyers and housing investors
  - What's not in the budget
  
- Recent Ontario housing announcements (Simone Swail)
  - Co-operative housing federation of Canada will be launching a housing vote campaign soon. TBA.
  - Provincial changes to the community housing system impact the relationship to co-ops, non-profits at the end of mortgage; the access system; municipal service level requirements; and local eligibility rules.

- These changes are aimed for a province-wide implementation (some policies Toronto may already be doing)
- For the most part, we'll need to hear more specifics from CMHC before we know what it all looks like in practice for the City and non-profits. But the lunch n learn is a chance to explore and discuss.
- **Q:** Do asset limits include Henson trusts?
- **A:** Not sure.
  
- **Action:** Kira to organize a future lunch and learn on federal budget information, Ontario housing and homelessness initiatives and impacts.

**Next meeting:** May 11, 2022, 10:00am-12:00pm

**Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85974045398>