

Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service System Planning Forum October 11, 2023

Date and time: October 11, 2023; 10:00am – 12:00pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87159395431>

United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: [UNDRIP E web.pdf](#)

1. SSHA Items and Updates

Shelter system flow data – refer to slide deck

- Shelter System Flow Data for the month of August 2023 can be accessed through the City's website: [Shelter System Flow Data – City of Toronto](#)
- 9,988 people actively experiencing homelessness (slight decrease from last month but higher than last year).
- Less turnover in the system and flow.
- 72% of outflow became inactive (youth and adults mostly).
- Refugees are 2/3 of people coming into shelter system for first time.
- Only 9.3% of people who enter leave within first week.
- Increase in people moving to permanent housing from 2022, but one of lowest outcomes since 2018, mostly because of COHB decrease (will start again).

Q: Of the individuals that are aged 55+, is there understanding of those that are first-time homeless? Has relevance for people aging in place. Ages lumped from 50+ would be helpful. Break data down by age, gender.

A: Great questions. We don't currently break down the data that way, but can look at it if useful for community partners. Will take it back.

Q: Do we disaggregate the people experiencing chronic homelessness?

A: Very happy to take back to team. Helpful to drill down to data and connections to youth.

Winter Services Plan

- Staff report going forward to Economic and Community Development Committee on October 24, 2023. Staff report will share information about our winter response.
- Preparing for winter 2023-2024 (November 15-April 15) since last winter. Corporate Real Estate Management Division (CREM) and our Infrastructure team looked at 130 sites to date to identify warming centres and 24-hour winter respite locations. Many properties are not feasible based on number of anticipated activations.
- Council direction in May 2023 based on a review of procedures for warming centres led to change to activation criteria from -15 to -5 degrees Celsius. Warming centres will also activate if extreme weather such as freezing rain or snowstorm.
- Winter response has four pillars:
 - Maintaining and adding capacity

- Warming centres
- Enhanced street outreach response
- Supportive housing.
- We have confirmed four warming centre locations and identified 24-hour respite location. Will be ~210 spaces.
- Alternative space program (ASP) spaces will also provide space during a surge, at -15 degree Celsius.
- REOs have been sent for operators.
- Street outreach we will be using -15 degree to activate enhanced street outreach (one extra outreach team days, two extra outreach teams in the evening) for head-to-toe assessment and provide sleeping bags etc.
- 275 housing units includes 200 Rapid Rehousing Program and 75 units through PATHS will create flow.

Q: Is it possible to inform operators of warming centres earlier (i.e. bump up by two weeks) so that there is more time for hiring and to get things up and running?

A: We are aware of the challenges of operationalizing is a tight timeline, and doing everything we can to expedite it.

Q: Could you speak a little bit about housing components and flow and if invitations have been sent to agencies to increase housing? As an agency we are trying to expand additional units quickly, especially in winter, but we haven't seen any callouts. Looking for opportunity to connect to get support around that.

A: Housing Secretariat is leading that work. A lot of it is connecting with TCHC and TSHC for RGI housing versus some of the new builds that are slowing down. We will take whatever housing units we can get. SSHA works with Housing Secretariat, and we need to be creative to bring on additional and array of stock to make space available together as a sector. As of last week, we've added just under 400 spaces, and we have another 170 spaces that will be added with respite and warming centres and 150 more shelter spaces. We are going to have a tough winter with space, and we are striving to get as many spaces as possible but anticipate it will not be enough to meet demand. Warming centres will be activated longer (at -5 degrees). That will support people who need to be indoors while waiting for more space.

Q: Do you have a number for the alternative space program (ASPs). And will supportive housing only be taking place at confirmed warming centres and not ASPs?

A: Directly operated shelter sites have 68 spaces. Will be working with community partner shelter sites as well.

Q: What is ASP?

A: Creating space to bring people indoors, such as a chair, cot. Last resort in any room (dining room etc.)

Comment: Good Shepherd has several landlords who are willing to provide units and has approached City for rent supplements and do have Ministry of Health supports. Needs an agreement before signing leases and currently system works in the reverse. Right now, we need to make this happen better than a year ago. Structures are rigid.

A: Trish to facilitate connection to staff in the Housing Secretariat to continue this conversation.

Q: Is there funding for ASP (for food, housing support staff)?

A: We will have this conversation with the provider through the SSHA Operations and Support Services team.

Comment: George Street Revitalization (GSR) project funds transitional housing program and is waiting for referrals from Seaton House and it can take awhile. Should open to other shelters. One provider has eligible people on wait list to fill spots.

Q: Who should we connect with in SSHA when buildings that are not currently leased become available for housing through GSR funding.

A: Will take it back to facilitate and coordinate access to housing that is available.

2. Housing Secretariat Items and Updates

- COHB update – refer to slide deck
 - Scheduled to end March 31, 2029.
 - 4000 households in TO receive COHB.
 - \$13.4 million and \$13.8 million more approved in July and Sep13, 2023 will sustain 300 new applications per month to March 2024.
 - COHB Renewal strategy to help people maintain benefits was 97% successful (need to fill out form and file taxes) so that people don't lose benefit and return to shelter system. Worked with TESS, ODSP, Shelter Partners and TICAB Agencies and MOF and MMAH (Province).
 - Tips for preparing for renewal period and process (refer to slide deck).

Comment: Lots of effort for renewal strategy with no new funding is a downloading to front line. Is there a possibility of getting rid of notice of assessment requirement for people on OW and ODSP – City should pick up that piece of advocacy (Province has said no in past).

A: Agree. Have had monthly meetings with the province and the notice of assessment is something they won't blanket approve but can do one-off exemptions. Reach out (Dawn Hubbard) if need assistance.

Q: There is a delay in allocation of funds to be able to pay landlord.

A: The program pays in arrears. The solution is a bridging grant for first and last months' rent. We can use COHB funding to provide first and last months' rent but we usually use alternative sources of funding for bridging grants to extend COHB funding.

Q: Funding ending in 2029. Is there an assumption that people receiving the funding won't need it? People with mental health or physical disabilities may not be employable.

A: Long history of housing benefit funding having end date and then something coming up at end because people know people will still need it. Pressing province and feds for answer on this.

3. Community Update – Social Service Team and Community Partnerships – Toronto Public Library

- Refer to slide deck on Services to Vulnerable Persons
 - People cannot have assessment with social worker at library and more of community partnerships to bring expertise into library space (embedded system) was needed. Particularly in Toronto Reference to Lakeshore
 - Youth particularly coming into libraries.
 - Raise awareness on library support (literacy, digital etc.)
 - 2-year pilot (low-barrier) for psychosocial support (primary care, shelters, employment services, local foodbank etc.) in library done by Gerstein community intervention staff (assessment and referral).
 - See: [Social Services at the Library : Toronto Public Library](#)

4. Community Update – Homeless Connect (refer to slide deck)

- One Stop Shop Event annual event on October 29th 11am-4pm Mattamy Athletic Centre (former Maple Leaf Gardens), 50 Carlton Street. Free services for people experiencing homelessness (clothing, dental care, haircuts etc.). Contact Melody Li if want to put a booth up (there is limited space).
- National Housing Day Film Screening “Someone Lives Here” (tiny housing) at Toronto Reference Library, Beaton Hall, Wednesday Nov. 22, 2023, 6-8:30pm. There will be a panel. All are welcome.
- Everyday Connect portal is live at everydayconnect.ca to find services. If you want to be added as a direct service provider to the site, contact portal@hctoronto.org.
- Note: day of action on November 22, 2023, at Queen’s Park (contact Street Haven).

5. TAEA Items and Updates (Refer to slide deck)

- Supportive Housing Growth Plan Integration Update (refer to slide deck)
 - Part of strategic workplan uses various tactics
 - Goals to grow stock, improve access and flow, commit to anti-racist strategies and action, harm reduction
 - Equity and anti-oppression framework being developed via working group will send out a survey for community to submit resources and frameworks that have been developed.
 - Continuous improvement of Toronto’s Coordinated Access and integration of Built for Zero model.
 - Facilitate harmonization and standardization of assessment and access.
 - Coordinate rent supplement to speed up connecting supports to new housing.
 - Implement the SHGPlan’s Grow the Stock stream.
 - More permanent housing options for people experiencing homelessness.
 - Project around unit count and identification: Housing Development Working Group, Province’s definition of affordable housing (shift from market rent to % of income), harm reduction, buildings and land, support services and supplements coordination, get inventory of planned developments (aspirational to almost complete).
 - Get it touch: savhanna@taeh.ca or peter@taeh.ca

Next meeting: November 8, 2023, 10:00 am -12:00 pm
Zoom Meeting