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2017 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Meeting the Shelter System's Occupancy Target in 2018

Issue/Background:

On December 16, 17 and 18, 2013, City Council unanimously adopted CD25.10 “2014 – 2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework.” At that time, City Council also endorsed a strategic direction to maintain a strong emergency shelter system including an occupancy rate of 90% or lower.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD25.10>

On December 20, 2016, as part of BU28.1, Budget Committee requested the following briefing note of the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA): A plan and associated costs to achieve the 90 percentage occupancy target in shelters for each demographic served in 2018, with options to make progress towards the target in 2017.

This briefing note addresses the request.

Key Points:

The shelter system is dynamic, serving over 16,000 different people in 2016. The shelter occupancy rate is based on both the overall capacity of the system as well as on the demand for shelter services.

In March 2015, City Council adopted SSHA's Shelter Infrastructure Strategy and Service Improvement Plan. The Plan outlined a four-pronged approach to address shelter occupancy and improve the shelter system:

- Opening up to 15 new and replacement shelter sites over five years to address shelter relocations, shelter occupancy and the George Street Revitalization (GSR).
- The Hostels to Homes Pilot aimed to house long term shelter stayers with housing allowances and follow-up supports to assist them in leaving the shelter system permanently
- Working to ensure existing shelters permanently stay where they are currently located,
- Implementing new policy and quality assurance initiatives within the shelter system which support better housing outcomes for service users.

The Shelter Infrastructure Strategy is currently being implemented. Key activities for 2017 tied to the Plan outlined below are budgeted within SSHA's 2017 Preliminary Operating Budget.

The occupancy rate is a measure in time given the dynamic nature of the shelter system. The chart shown on page 34 of SSHA's Budget Notes shows that there are two sectors that are expected to be over the 90% threshold in 2017 – the single women and single men sectors.

Hostel Description	2015	2016				2017		
	Actuals a	Budgeted Bednights b	Projected Bednights (1) c	Capacity (2) D	Projected Occupancy e=c/d	Budgeted Bednights f	Capacity g	Budgeted Occupancy h=f/g
Coed Shelters	126,273	145,739	128,889	154,760	83.3%	124,546	147,825	84%
Family Shelters	368,715	380,527	358,780	395,660	90.7%	365,219	429,970	85%
Men Shelters	572,941	589,164	566,013	575,605	98.3%	594,122	643,495	92%
Seasonal Shelters	55,200	55,740	59,169	71,570	82.7%	21,785	25,490	85%
Women Shelters	207,906	219,950	224,840	224,840	100.0%	232,615	236,155	99%
Youth Shelters	173,784	195,207	177,390	177,390	100.0%	178,235	210,970	84%
TOTAL	1,504,819	1,586,327	1,515,081	1,599,825	94.7%	1,516,522	1,693,905	90%

Single Women's Sector

As of the end of December, a 60-bed shelter for women opened at 702 Kennedy Road in Scarborough. This added capacity of 21,850 bednights¹ is anticipated to bring the budgeted occupancy to 90% in the women's sector.

Single Men's Sector

Funding for the following two shelters are included in the 2017 Preliminary Operating Budget, to address 2017 capacity, and are expected to open in 2017. Both shelters will assist in managing the occupancy pressures in the men's sectors and include:

- Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre - 30 beds for men at 850-854 Bloor St. West.
- Salvation Army Hope Shelter - 60 beds for men at 29 Leslie St.

The proposed shelter at 731 Runnymede Road is also included in SSHA's Preliminary 2017 Operating Budget. As indicated on page 11 of the Budget Notes, this site is one of the two temporary transitional shelter sites required for the Seaton House transition as part of the GSR. Funding for this site will be provided through the GSR's Capital Budget funding. Real Estate Services continue to work with the landlord to secure the site.

Youth Sector

¹ Bednights represent a measure of the amount of beds available in one year. For example, if a shelter provides 30 beds per night their annual bednight equivalent would be 10,950 (30 x 365).

At the time the Budget Notes were completed, the 2017 capacity for the youth sector included the 60-beds at the former Second Base site at 702 Kennedy Road. Those beds have been re-profiled to the women's sector which decreases the 2017 capacity of the youth sector and increases its budgeted occupancy.

However, in 2017, the second of two shelters for LGTBQ2S youth is anticipated to open. These additional 25 youth beds were not include in the youth sector capacity. Their addition is expected to bring the current youth shelter occupancy rate to 90%.

There will be no budget impacts resulting from the opening of the shelters listed above as their base budgets are already included in SSHA's 2017 Preliminary Operating Budget.

Search for New Shelter Sites

The primary challenge in adding beds to the shelter system is finding suitable sites for emergency shelters. Toronto's competitive real estate market makes it difficult to secure property. SSHA is actively working with its partners and Real Estate Services to identify sites as needed and to bring new programs online. This includes developing a new youth shelter program in Scarborough to replace the service lost by the closure of Second Base in 2015.

Coordinated Access to Housing Supports and the Hostels to Homes Pilot

SSHA is working to better coordinate access to housing supports within the shelter system to improve housing outcomes. This includes the implementation of the Hostels to Homes Pilot (H2HP), first introduced in the Shelter Infrastructure Strategy and Service Improvement Plan. The H2HP is a strategy to reduce shelter bed utilization with a focus on providing housing access and follow up supports to clients who have been in shelter for long periods, with the objective of freeing up beds in emergency shelters for use by people in crisis.

Given the objectives of the H2HP and the associated challenges with securing new sites, SSHA will continue the Hostels to Homes Pilot through 2017 with some key adjustments to increase housing outcomes as well as continue evaluating its progress. The results will help determine whether or not additional beds should be opened and will be used for the preparation of the 2018 Operating Budget.

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