



## Selection Process to Open a Temporary Shelter for Physical Distancing at 30 Norfinch Drive

**Date:** November 18, 2020

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services

**Wards:** Ward 7 - Humber River-Black Creek

### SUMMARY

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The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the process that was used to establish the temporary shelter at 30 Norfinch Drive as requested by City Council through *MM25.29 Process to Select and Open Temporary Sites for Physical Distancing in Shelters*.

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration conducted a comprehensive search for physical distancing spaces for shelter residents as part of the City's COVID-19 response. As part of these ongoing efforts, the City identified the Holiday Inn Express North York located at 30 Norfinch Drive for use as a temporary shelter for physical distancing. Properties were assessed by an interdivisional team against by-law and program requirements. The site met all requirements of the selection process and the City signed a lease for the property commencing May 17, 2020.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There are no current or known future year financial impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

## DECISION HISTORY

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At its meeting of October 27, 2020, City Council authorized the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to enter into new or amend existing agreements, as required, to maintain or add required respite spaces and shelter beds and respond to urgent or unanticipated needs to relocate shelters or 24-hour respite sites and 24-hour drop-ins.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC16.1>

At its meeting of May 28, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, to conduct a review of measures needed to protect clients and to continue to provide shelter services safely while COVID-19 is a concern, including reviewing the existing Toronto Shelter Standards related to the separation of beds and the use of bunk beds, and to report on the implementation considerations for medium- and longer-term response strategies.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL16.2>

At its meeting of April 30, 2020, City Council authorized an extension of the Mayor's delegated authority under Chapter 59, Emergency Management until the COVID-19 municipal emergency has been declared as terminated.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC20.3>

At its meeting of December 5, 6, 7 and 8, 2017, City Council adopted CD24.7 "2018 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and Progress Report." Council approved the 2018 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and a new property development approach to siting shelters. Council authorized the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, to approve specific sites for shelters, provided certain criteria are met. The report also provided an update on the development of the new shelter service model and its implementation in pilot projects.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD24.7>

At its meeting on October 2, 3 and 4, 2017, City Council adopted Item EX27.12, which provided delegated authority pertaining to certain real estate matters. This delegated authority was amended by Item GM27.12, adopted by City Council on May 22, 23 and 24, 2018 or, where applicable, by Item EX28.8, adopted by City Council on November 7, 8 and 9, 2017

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX27.12>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.GM27.12>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX28.8>

At its meeting of April 26, 27 and 28, 2017, City Council adopted CD19.6 "Proposed New Engagement and Planning Process for Emergency Shelters," which provided recommendations to improve the community engagement process for opening new emergency shelters. It also described the further steps needed to change the model for emergency shelters and change the conversation about homelessness in Toronto.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD19.6>

## COMMENTS

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This report responds to City Council's motion to report back through the Economic and Community Development Committee to City Council on the shelter selection process that was used to establish the temporary shelter at 30 Norfinch Drive. The report includes the following sections:

1. Strategies to Identify and Secure Physical Distancing Sites
2. Selection Process for 30 Norfinch Drive
3. Community Engagement for 30 Norfinch Drive

### **Strategies to Identify and Secure Physical Distancing Sites**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City completed a comprehensive search for shelter and housing opportunities to provide required physical distancing spaces for shelter residents. Shelter, Support and Housing Administration worked closely with the Transaction Services, Facilities Management and Fire and Life Safety Program Office units within the Corporate Real Estate Management division, as well as CreateTO to identify and secure appropriate locations for the shelter services. Staff also worked closely with City Planning and Toronto Buildings. The City also received inquiries and referrals from hotel operators, property managers, community members, developers and landlords.

All potential properties identified for shelter use were assessed by this interdivisional team against program needs. Due to the urgency of the pandemic and need to provide rapid physical distancing to mitigate risks to vulnerable individuals and save lives, staff focused on spaces that were turn-key ready for operations with minimal retrofits required. Hotels were considered optimal solutions as they provided the furniture, provided clients with their own rooms and bathrooms and many of the hotel were able to provide needed cleaning services as well as catering if required.

After receiving delegated authority under the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management, the City was able to enter into negotiations to open more than 40 facilities, to increase physical distancing in the shelter system. We currently continue to operate 25 facilities for physical distancing and a facility for isolation/recovery for the homeless population. This process has created approximately 2300 spaces in hotels and interim housing sites for physical distancing.

### **Selection Process for 30 Norfinch Drive**

The Holiday Inn at 30 Norfinch Drive was identified through the City's search process for emergency shelter sites in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Corporate Real Estate Management negotiated and executed the lease for the property. The property was appropriate for our emergency use as it met all required criteria for shelter use, as outlined below, and was available at a fair market value. The location allowed shelters as an as-of-right use as the proposed use met zoning by-law. The location was available immediately and required minimal retrofits. Toronto Fire Services and Fire and

Life Safety Program Office assessed the site and confirmed it complied with the Ontario Fire Code. The service assessment of the property demonstrated the site was fairly accessible, close to public transit, and the size was appropriate for the shelter program. The site could be leased for a minimum of three months, with the option of extended the lease if needed, which supported stable and ongoing service delivery. It also supported the City's goal of providing temporary shelter sites in a range of neighbourhoods throughout the city.

The City authorized the execution of the lease through the Delegated Approval Form (DAF) 2020-126 on May 15, 2020 and the service commenced on May 17, 2020.

The City is leasing 163 rooms at the property for a term of eleven (11) months which commenced on May 17, 2020. The facility is operated by Salvation Army and supports shelter clients relocated from Florence Booth House and New Hope Leslieville shelters. For the duration of the lease, the site will be used to provide accommodations for clients to meet the needs of physical distancing obligations. In addition to shelter services, there is space on the site for staff offices, case management, housing support, meals, and other programming.

## **Community Engagement for 30 Norfinch Drive**

Prior to the execution of the DAF, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration reached out to the local Councillor on May 14, 2020 to provide notification of the use of this site to create required physical distancing in the base shelter system. Information was further disseminated via the Councillor's portal that was established by the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as part of the City's pandemic response. Communication was also shared after the service commenced via Councillor Updates. From a community engagement perspective, due to the rapid nature of the COVID-19 response and critical need to protect people experiencing homelessness, advance community engagement was not possible before opening 30 Norfinch Drive. The City remains committed to support the shelter operator, Salvation Army, in ongoing engagement with the local communities to mitigate any issues that arise and to ensure the hotel program successfully integrates into the community. The City will support the shelter operator to work with the local Councillor to identify and engage local stakeholders to support the success of the 30 Norfinch Drive shelter.

## **CONTACT**

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**SIGNATURE**

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