

2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework (CD25.10)

Update on Shelter Occupancy & Quality Assurance Review of Shelter Access (CD25.11)

Community Development and Recreation  
Committee

# Update on Shelter Occupancy & Quality Assurance Review of Shelter Access

# Issue Background

- Several decisions in 2013 reflecting community concern about shelter capacity & occupancy:
  - activate flex beds & open new sites & beds to get to 90% occupancy
  - consult with SOSC & Ombudsman on design and results of Quality Assurance reviews of client access and satisfaction
  - develop recommendations for occupancy rate policy that ensures everyone seeking a bed is accommodated
  - reaffirm 90% benchmark for actual bed nights as percentage of capacity
  - report on current standards for anti-oppression and trauma-informed training for front line staff

# Overview of Shelter System

- Capacity:
  - base capacity of 3,800 beds at 57 shelter locations
  - another 727 beds to supplement the base number
- Use of Beds:
  - over past two years the number of unique shelter users has gone down but the average length of stay has gone up
  - chronic shelter users (who stay one year or longer) are 8% of shelter clients but take up 36% of the beds
  - these findings are consistent with experience in other large cities (e.g. New York, Chicago & Los Angeles)

# Quality Assurance in the Shelter System

- Shelter Standards
  - comprehensive set of standards and guiding principles in place since 2002
  - will be reviewed & updated in 2014 in consultation with community agencies and Ombudsman
- Training
  - mandatory for all shelter staff
- Monitoring Compliance
  - ongoing site visits, reviews of providers' policies and procedures, complaint tracking and follow-up

# 2013 Quality Assurance Review

- Review of shelter access systems
  - “mystery shopper” calls to shelters, Central Intake, SHARC and 311
  - found much room for improvement
  - reviewing findings with service providers
- Client satisfaction survey
  - 502 current shelter residents surveyed
  - 80% satisfied with shelter experience overall
  - valuable feedback on areas for improvement

# Update on Short-Term Actions

- All flex beds available every night since April
- Added 30 permanent beds in existing shelters
- Additional shelter sites
  - 30 bed temporary location for women
  - REOI for permanent location(s)
- Expanded use of motels
- Administrative improvements

# Longer-Term System Improvements

- Eviction prevention strategies to prevent homelessness
- More housing allowances
- Targeted case management
- Centralized intake
- Occupancy rate policy



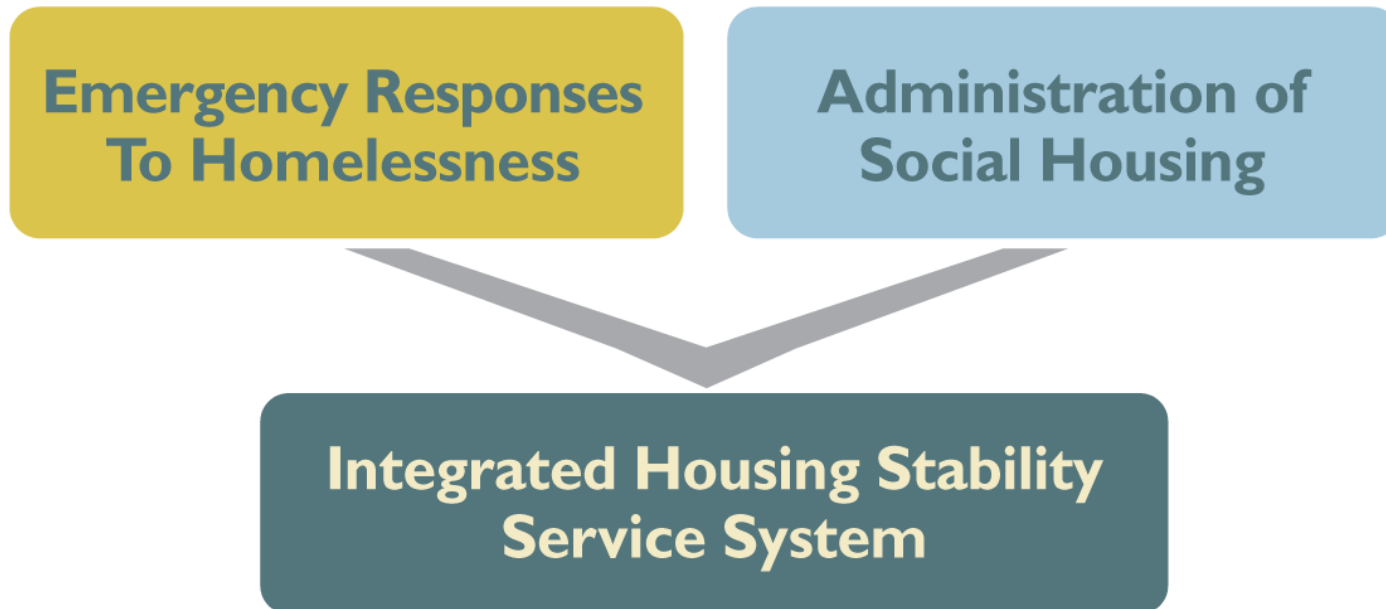
# 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework

# Context

- Catalyst for the framework's development was the intersection of:
  - a tightening funding environment
  - increasing demand pressures on existing services
  - changes to provincial and federal funding programs
  - the approval by City Council of the HOT Plan in 2009



# Where are we going?



# Purpose of the framework

- To guide SSHA and partners in the planning, management, and delivery of SSHA's services over the next 5 years.
- Aid to direct us toward an integrated service system that improves housing stability for residents.
- Sets the course for gradual system change.



# Toronto Housing Services Consultations

- Over 2000 voices provided input—clients, community agencies and City staff and the public
  - in-person discussion sessions
  - a public opinion poll
  - online workbook and surveys
  - focus groups
  - key informant interviews



# What we heard

- Housing affordability is key
- Definition of housing stability is consistent across many groups
- A range of housing opportunities is needed
- Housing follow-up supports can be as important as the housing itself
- Importance of eviction prevention and other ways to stop homelessness before it begins
- Need for improved partnerships and better collaboration



# Housing stability as the starting place

- Being able to live in places that are affordable, safe, secure, in locations of choice, and without discrimination
- Builds on a Housing First service approach
- Recognizes the importance social integration, economic well-being and community connection
- Anchors a new approach for the delivery of housing and homelessness services

# Strategic directions, 2014-2019

- These seven strategic directions form the infrastructure for the service system transformation:
  1. Preventing homelessness
  2. Supporting the transition to housing
  3. Creating housing opportunities
  4. Fostering system stewardship and innovation
  5. Improving access and equity
  6. Delivering high quality service
  7. Strengthening partnerships and coordination
- Each direction is linked to a set of key actions that support and strengthen the service delivery system



# Next steps

- Develop a community engagement framework: ongoing conversations with stakeholders is essential to achieving service planning goals
- Other next steps for 2014:
  - Developing detailed performance indicators
  - Continuing to support City advocacy for social housing
  - Completing the review of the social housing waiting list
  - Reviewing and updating the Shelter Standards

