



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

New Transitional Housing for Young Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Date:	April 30, 2014
To:	Affordable Housing Committee Executive Committee
From:	Director, Affordable Housing Office
Wards:	All Wards
Reference Number:	Affordable Housing Committee - AFS #19405 Executive Committee - AFS #19431

SUMMARY

On October 29, 2013, the Affordable Housing Committee requested staff investigate and report on creating a housing pilot project for young women who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. This report responds to that request and recommends a course of action.

Over the past six months staff have worked with Toronto Community Housing and identified a vacant TCH building suitable for housing five to six young women who are transitioning from homelessness and are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

Toronto Community Housing has also identified an established charitable service agency in the area to manage and operate the building upon completion of necessary repairs and renovations. Due to fire damage, the building's interior requires complete refurbishment, including electrical, plumbing and heating systems.

Toronto Community Housing has estimated capital costs of up to \$0.850 million to undertake and complete the building repairs and renovations. TCH has requested the City's support in providing the necessary capital funds. Upon completion the building will be leased to the service agency that will be responsible for managing and operating the home. There will be no operating subsidy required from the City.

Recognizing the need to protect the safety and security of future residents, the location of the home and name of the service agency are treated as a confidential matter in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Affordable Housing Office recommends that:

1. Council approve up to \$0.850 million in financial assistance for the capital repairs of a Toronto Community Housing property to provide transitional housing for young women who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking from the Homeless Initiative Reserve Fund (XR1104);
2. Council grant authority for the City to enter into a funding agreement with Toronto Community Housing or such other associated parties as the City deems appropriate, for the delivery and administration of the capital repair funding being provided from the City's Homeless Initiative Reserve Fund (XR1104), on terms and conditions determined by the Director, Affordable Housing Office, and in a form approved by the City Solicitor;
3. Council grant authority for the Director, Affordable Housing Office, to execute the funding agreement and any other agreements or documents required to give effect to the foregoing;
4. Council grant authority to the City Solicitor to execute any documents required to register security for the capital repair funding and to postpone, confirm the status of, and discharge the security when and if necessary; and
5. Council approve a one-time increase in the 2014 Approved Operating Budget for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) of \$0.850 million gross \$0 net to provide funding for this initiative.

Financial Impact

This report recommends approval of up to \$0.850 million to support Toronto Community Housing with the capital repairs for this initiative from the Homeless Initiative Reserve Fund (XR1104). The uncommitted balance of XR1104 after this allocation will be \$0.058 million.

Funding for this initiative is within the mandate of the Homeless Initiative Reserve Fund, as the purpose of this fund is to help stabilize the housing of homeless people or those in identified high-risk groups by providing one-time capital support to suitable projects that have short timeframes to completion.

The transfer of \$0.850 million for the capital improvement to the TCH facility will result in the need to amend the 2014 Approved Operating Budget for Shelter Support and Housing Administration to \$645,498.3 million gross \$197,515.8 million net.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT

The transitional housing recommended in this report is intended to provide safe, secure, and affordable housing for lower-income young women and youth who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. These are vulnerable individuals with housing and social service needs that are not being met adequately in the City.

Lack of access to affordable housing is a barrier to lower-income people living in Toronto. This initiative addresses this barrier by providing City funding in partnership with the non-profit sector to create new transitional homes for five or six women.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of August 5 and 6, 2009, Council adopted *Housing Opportunities Toronto: An Affordable Housing Action Plan 2010 - 2020* as the plan to address Toronto's affordable housing challenges over 10 years.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.EX33.47>

At its meeting of October 29, 2013, the Affordable Housing Committee requested staff investigate creating a pilot housing initiative for young women who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.AH7.4>

This request was initiated by a letter from Councillor Ana Bailão, Chair, Affordable Housing Committee, on the subject, which included a report titled *Creating Housing For Youth Victims of Human Trafficking*.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/ah/bgrd/backgroundfile-62614.pdf>

At its meeting on December 16, 2013, Council adopted EX36.13 *Initiatives to Address Human Trafficking* including recommendation eleven that staff continue to work with all stakeholders to raise public awareness of this crime, increase services and supports for trafficked persons, and increase efforts to prevent human trafficking.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX36.13>

At its meeting on December 16, 2013, Council adopted *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework* as the plan to guide Shelter Support and Housing Administration in their work over the next five years. The framework aims to improve housing stability for vulnerable Toronto residents, including supporting the transition from homelessness and shelter use to permanent, stable housing.

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

On October 29, 2013 the Affordable Housing Committee received the report, *Creating Housing for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking* (AH7.4) that found Toronto has been identified as one of the principle destinations or transit points for individuals, both foreign nationals and domestic residents, who have been trafficked.

Vulnerable youth have a higher risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. The profiles of these youth include: runaway and missing children, children victimized by predators on the internet, minors living independently and socially marginalized children, particularly Aboriginals and homeless youth.

People who are victims of human trafficking are most often subjected to various forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse including being forced into sex work. They also face significant barriers in accessing services and supports required to gain independence following the traumas they have experienced.

Human trafficking victims' supports are among the most complex to provide. Research of best practices indicates that adequate housing is the first step in delivering the necessary supports and services and is a major factor in the process of recovery.

COMMENTS

This initiative supports the City's 10-year affordable housing action plan, Housing Opportunities Toronto, and efforts to address human trafficking and assist vulnerable Toronto residents to transition to permanent, stable housing.

There is a compelling need to provide transitional housing opportunities for vulnerable young women who have been sexually exploited and trafficked.

In recognition of this need, on October 29, 2013 the Affordable Housing Committee requested staff investigate the potential for a pilot project, and report on potential community partners, location, possible sources of City capital funding, and consultations with stakeholders.

In follow-up to this direction, it was determined that Toronto Community Housing has a vacant building in a suitable location that is appropriate to renovate into transitional housing. At the request of the Affordable Housing Committee and in the interests of protecting the safety and security of future residents, the address of the building is being kept confidential.

Toronto Community Housing has also identified an appropriate charitable service agency that has done considerable work researching and preparing to provide housing for this client group. The group has a strong track record as a service provider to young homeless

and vulnerable women, and will provide the supervision, counselling, and guidance the residents need.

The service agency has developed a program model for this initiative. Housing would be provided for up to two years for young women who have been trafficked and sexually exploited. The home would provide 24-hour, on-site support with a live-in female caregiver and two child and youth workers. Referral sources could include emergency shelters, Victims Services, sexual assault centres, settlement and refugee centres, human trafficking networks, other organizations providing victim supports and self referral.

Young women would be provided with wrap-around support services delivered through the service agency and other community agencies, including counselling, health care, life skills, peer mentoring and legal counsel, job training and education opportunities.

Each resident would participate in an individualized recovery program where expectations are based on a collaborative assessment of their readiness to move forward. If necessary, treatment plans for substance abuse and mental health issues will also be developed to aide in recovery. The over-arching goals for the women are recovery from the trauma of trafficking and sexual exploitation, developing confidence, self esteem and independence, and skills for employment. Ongoing aftercare support would also be provided following transition to more independent housing, such as one of service agency's various apartments.

In consultation with the service agency, Toronto Community Housing has prepared plans to fully refurbish and renovate the property to house five to six women. The repairs required are extensive as the 5,600 square foot building (three floors plus basement) suffered a fire and its interior has been removed down to the structural essentials. Toronto Community Housing will ensure the construction work is tendered through a competitive process to its roster of pre-qualified contractors. TCH correspondence requesting funding from the City is attached as Appendix A.

The City's contribution will be up to a maximum of the estimated \$850,000 for capital repairs to the building. The Affordable Housing Office will ensure the use of the City's funds is documented by Toronto Community Housing. The costs to manage and operate the home will be the responsibility of the agency. There will be no operating subsidy required from the City for the transitional home.

Upon approval of the recommended funding, Toronto Community Housing will arrange to complete the repairs and make lease arrangements with the agency as a transitional housing landlord. It is anticipated that the home will open in late 2015 or early 2016.

This report was prepared in consultation with Social Development, Finance and Administration and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.

CONCLUSION

The transitional housing pilot project recommended in this report provides the City with a unique opportunity to address the need for safe, transitional housing for young women who are victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. The new transitional home also addresses Toronto Community Housing's mandate to house low-income Torontonians through a partnership with a strong charitable service agency from the local community while repairing much needed affordable housing.

CONTACTS

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SIGNATURE

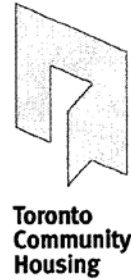
Sean Gadon, Director, Affordable Housing Office

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Correspondence from Toronto Community Housing

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Toronto Community
Housing Corporation
931 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON
M4W 2H2



April 9, 2014

Mr. Sean Gadon, Director
Affordable Housing Office
Metro Hall, 55 John St., 7th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5V 3C

Dear Sean,

Re: Funding Request for New Transitional Housing

As you are aware, Toronto Community Housing has been working with a community agency and the City to explore the feasibility of transitional housing for young victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Our community partner is a reputable, well-established agency serving young homeless people. It has dedicated significant resources to developing a high-quality transitional housing program for this vulnerable group of women.

I am pleased to report that together we have identified a vacant property in Toronto Community Housing's portfolio that is suitable and appropriate in size and location for the agency and for use as transitional housing. Toronto Community Housing has also prepared preliminary architectural designs in consultation with our partner agency. The building can be renovated to accommodate five to six young women transitioning from homelessness, as well as meet the agency's programming needs.

Due to fire damage, the building's interior requires complete refurbishment, including electrical, plumbing and heating systems. Staff have estimated capital costs of up to \$850,000. I will be reporting to Toronto Community Housing's Building and Investment Committee in May on this opportunity and seeking approval to proceed. Please consider this letter our formal request for funding assistance to undertake the renovations.

Toronto Community Housing would supervise the renovation work and ensure it is competitively tendered through our roster of pre-qualified contractors. The service agency would manage and operate the building under a lease with Toronto Community Housing.

Thank you for this significant opportunity to help address this important City priority.

Sincerely,



Greg Spearn
Vice President & Chief Development Officer