



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Update on the Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER)

Date:	November 9, 2015
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	AFS # 20377

SUMMARY

This report summarizes proof-of-concept results for the City's new initiative to address vulnerability, the Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER). The report recommends that the City continue to implement SPIDER on an ongoing basis and to review future funding needs starting in 2017.

In its first year of operation, SPIDER has strengthened the effectiveness of coordinated City services and improved safety and well-being for vulnerable individuals and the communities they live in.

Complex situations that could not be resolved by individual City divisions have been brought to resolution through SPIDER. Timely risk resolutions have been achieved and in most situations, vulnerable residents have been helped to remain living at home safely, with appropriate supports. Coordination across City services and with third party service providers has been enhanced. City policies and procedures for responding to vulnerability have been aligned, new interdivisional information-sharing protocols have been introduced and staff training in vulnerability and risk reduction has been expanded. Finally, system-level policy changes to improve responsiveness to vulnerable residents have been identified and recommended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration, the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and the Medical Officer of Health recommend that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to implement the Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER) on an ongoing basis;
2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to identify additional funding requirements to operate SPIDER as part of the 2017 Operating Budget;
3. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report back to Community Development and Recreation Committee by the third quarter of 2016 with a further progress report on the outcomes of SPIDER, including recommendations for policy innovations to improve safety and well-being for vulnerable Torontonians;
4. City Council request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network to increase access to evidence-based mental health supports for vulnerable residents, including supports to address hoarding disorders; and
5. City Council forward this report, for consideration, to the Toronto Board of Health; Board of Directors of Toronto Community Housing Corporation; the Toronto Police Services Board; the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care; the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee; the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services; the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network; United Way Toronto and York Region and the Toronto Hoarding Support Network.

Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendations included in this report, as funding for the existing SPIDER Program is included in the 2015 Approved Operating Budget and the 2016 Operating Budget Submission for Social Development, Finance and Administration **with zero net impact**. Funding for 2017 and beyond will be considered as part of future year budget processes. The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact

The City of Toronto serves all residents, including those who may be subject to increased vulnerability related to aging, chronic health challenges, diminished capacity, mental health issues, social isolation, and other factors. To ensure equitable outcomes for all Torontonians, City Council and the Toronto Public Service have committed to the removal of systemic barriers to City services. This commitment requires innovating to deliver different or even higher levels of service to residents experiencing vulnerability.

SPIDER is an innovative mechanism for delivering enhanced levels of service in accordance with this commitment. SPIDER delivers customized responses to elevated risks involving vulnerable residents to ensure that safety and well-being is available equally to everyone.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 16, 17 and 18, 2013, City Council authorized the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to establish the Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER) on a 'proof of concept' basis and authorized a transfer of funds in the amount of \$199,000 from the Social Assistance Stabilization Reserve (XQ1054) to fund two temporary staff positions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX36.10>

SPIDER was established to respond to several 2013 City Council directions related to the need for improved coordination between service systems (e.g. municipal, provincial, community-based) in extreme cases involving chronic hoarding, multiple property standards and fire code violations, bed bug and other pest infestations as well as the need to train staff more broadly on their role in serving all residents, including those facing heightened vulnerability. The links to these motions are provided below.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.MM30.6>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL19.13>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.LS18.6>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD18.5> (part c)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Responding to Vulnerability

Various City divisions and agencies are first responders to complex property and community standards issues, some of which arise as a result of a person experiencing vulnerability. City staff have encountered extreme cases of chronic hoarding of animals, possessions and refuse, multiple property standards and fire code violations, bed bug and other pest infestations. While staff take the immediate appropriate actions to remedy the circumstance at the time, it is often the case that additional, chronic issues go unresolved.

To respond to these challenges and improve the coordination and effectiveness of City services and enforcement responses, in December 2013 City Council allocated funding for two temporary staff positions and authorized the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance, and Administration to establish the Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER) on a "proof of concept" basis.

The City of Toronto Working Group on Vulnerability has defined vulnerability as a gap between the challenges a person faces and the resources they can access when facing those challenges. Vulnerability must be assessed in context – a person's vulnerability or resilience will depend on their circumstances, environment and resources in the broadest sense.

This definition of vulnerability emphasizes service and resource gaps, not characteristics of the person, as the core driver of vulnerability and affirms the role of the service provider to make extra efforts to reduce vulnerability by closing these gaps.

In the first year of operation, responding to 45 acutely elevated risk situations, SPIDER has achieved ten major accomplishments:

1. Timely risk resolutions.
2. Safer housing outcomes for vulnerable residents.
3. Stronger alignment of City policies and procedures for responding to vulnerability.
4. New linkages and partnerships with community services and health care providers.
5. Vulnerable residents have been connected or re-connected to appropriate services and service coordination has been enhanced.
6. Positive community impacts and better quality of life for neighbours.
7. Exploration of information-sharing and privacy protection legislation, policies, and procedures.
8. Staff training in vulnerability and risk reduction.
9. Positive impacts for staff workplace health and safety.
10. System-level policy reforms have been prioritized and recommended.

The SPIDER program model and details on Year 1 impacts are described below.

COMMENTS

Program Model

The SPIDER program design and implementation was rolled out in four phases between January 2014 and October 2015 under the direction of a Steering Committee comprised of the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS), and the Medical Officer of Health. The Deputy City Clerk, Corporate Information Services has also joined the Steering Committee to oversee SPIDER's information-sharing and privacy protection protocols.

The SPIDER program design has been modelled on international and Canadian best practices in Collaborative Risk Driven Community Safety. These approaches have been adapted for use in Toronto on the basis of extensive interdivisional consultations and consultation with City of Toronto Ombudsman (See Appendix 1) and the Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity for Toronto Community Housing. Both have endorsed SPIDER as a valuable City of Toronto innovation.

External stakeholders have also been closely consulted throughout the proof of concept phase, including Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network, Toronto Community Care Access Centre, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Ontario. Many of these agencies are now participating in SPIDER.

Program Scope

Vision and Mandate: The vision guiding SPIDER is the safe inclusion of vulnerable Torontonians in their communities. The program mandate is to reduce acutely elevated health and safety risks involving vulnerable residents, their homes or property and their neighbours by:

- (a) coordinating front-line responses across City of Toronto divisions and agencies;
- (b) building effective linkages to relevant health care and social services; and
- (c) driving policy reforms related to vulnerability.

Focus on Elevated Risk Situations Involving Vulnerability: SPIDER is not designed to supersede normal City services. Strict case selection methods and threshold criteria are applied to ensure that the resource intensity delivered through SPIDER is reserved for the most complex and intractable situations of vulnerability encountered by City staff, and to ensure that SPIDER interventions are implemented only when an enhanced interdivisional response is required to reduce vulnerability and risk. Results from similar intensive service programs have shown that effectiveness can diminish when intensive interventions are directed to cases of lesser severity. For this reason, there are no plans to expand SPIDER to address non-acute risks situations.

Program Functions

SPIDER fulfills five functions related to vulnerability and risk reduction; these include:

1. Service Coordination;
 2. System Reform and Innovation;
 3. Case Management;
 4. Data Collection; and
 5. Staff Education and Training.
1. **Service Coordination and Innovation:** The SPIDER Situation Table coordinates innovative front-line responses to immediate situations of risk and documents systemic barriers that prevent coordination or long-term solutions. The term "situation" is used rather than "case" to distinguish the work of the table from conventional case management that may be delivered by any of the participating services, which include City divisions and agencies from across the Toronto Public Service and external service providers. The Situation Table is chaired by SPIDER staff. The division and agencies participating at the SPIDER Situation Table are:
- | | |
|--|---|
| City of Toronto Services: | External Services: |
| Children's Services | Cota (Serving adults with mental health and cognitive challenges) |
| Fire Services | Mid-East Toronto Health Link |
| Long-Term Care Homes and Services | Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee |
| Municipal Licensing and Standards | Toronto Community Care Access Centre |
| Paramedic Services | Woodgreen Community Services |
| Revenue Services | |
| Toronto Public Health | |
| Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration | |
| Social Development, Finance and Administration | |
| Toronto Community Housing Corporation | |
2. **System Reform:** The System Reform and Innovation Table on Vulnerability in Toronto assesses the barriers identified by front-line providers from SPIDER and other City programs, and recommends policy change to improve the capacity of the City and partners to respond effectively to vulnerability and risk. The Table is chaired by the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A and receives guidance from the City Solicitor. Membership includes executive leadership from Toronto Public Health and MLS, Toronto Police Service, United Way Toronto and York Region, and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network.
3. **Case Management:** SPIDER staff have professional backgrounds in public health nursing and human services. They facilitate interdivisional service coordination and provide specialized case management services where a lead service agency cannot be designated due to the complexity of the situation, or where the situation does not meet threshold criteria for consideration by the Situation Table but still requires City support.

4. **Data Collection:** Prior to the launch of SPIDER, the City did not maintain data on its cross-corporate service to the same vulnerable individuals and high risk situations. This lack of data limited the City's capacity to assess costs and to develop coordinated policies and services. SPIDER has now put in place an infrastructure for data collection adhering to privacy legislation to enable staff to proactively identify trends and address them accordingly.
5. **Staff Education and Training:** SPIDER offers formal and informal interdisciplinary education for City of Toronto staff and professionals across Toronto to better understand best practices for responding to vulnerability and assessing acutely elevated risks.

Risks, Vulnerabilities and Service Gaps Identified in Year 1

SPIDER has coordinated responses to 45 acutely elevated risk situations. Data collected about these situations shed light on the vulnerabilities, risks and risk drivers that have been historically most challenging for the City to address through normal mechanisms.

- **Imminent Eviction/Homelessness, Fire, and Sanitation were the Highest Risks:** Most situations involved acutely elevated risk of eviction (67%), risk of fire (39%), and/or sanitation issues associated with odor and waste (43%).
- **Problematic Hoarding was a Core Risk Driver:** Problematic Hoarding behaviours and related property maintenance issues were core drivers of these risks. For example, among the fire risks, 88% involved problematic hoarding, 71% involved excessive storage of combustible materials, and 65% had blocked exits. Among the eviction risk situations, 50% had safety risks due to excessive clutter.
- **Social Isolation and Low Income were the Major Vulnerabilities:** In the majority of situations, vulnerabilities were associated with social isolation (73%), and low income (56%). Individuals were not at elevated risk due to distance from services (4%). Although ageing is not a vulnerability, it may exacerbate or trigger a vulnerability. Seniors aged 60+ represented 45% of situations. In most situations (69%), the individual had refused services that were offered to them, prior to the SPIDER intervention.
- **Half of all situations were introduced by Toronto Community Housing (TCHC):** Many vulnerable Torontonians live in TCHC buildings, and TCHC is frequently the first point of contact with municipally-funded services for many residents facing complex or acutely elevated risks. The City will continue to work with TCHC to respond to vulnerable tenants. Going forward, SPIDER will explore options for expanding risk identification related to private residences.

- **Vulnerable Residents were Lacking Appropriate Mental Health Services and Help with Functional Activities of Daily Living:** Service needs were reported for mental health (82%), assistance with activities of daily living (53%), hoarding relapse prevention (47%), and financial assistance for housing repairs and maintenance (31%).

These early results aligns with the Toronto Public Health report, *Unequal City* (2015), which documented health inequities in Toronto and with the City's new poverty reduction strategy, *TO Prosperity*. Low income and unmet health and social service needs lead to poor quality of life for vulnerable Torontonians. They can also produce unsustainable pressures on City services, including enforcement and safety services that do not have a primarily therapeutic or social service mandate. SPIDER is generating administrative data that over time will help to quantify the extent of this pressure. Through its system reform function, SPIDER will support the City to build effective linkages with other sectors and orders of government that are responsible for health and social supports and to drive municipal and intergovernmental policy changes to respond to residents' unmet needs.

Program Impacts in Year 1

Proof-of-concept results show that SPIDER has strengthened the effectiveness of City services and has brought resolution to complex situations that could not be resolved by City divisions working alone or in limited coordination. SPIDER has improved safety and quality of life for vulnerable individuals, their neighbours and the surrounding community. Major accomplishments in Year 1 include:

- **Timely Risk Resolutions:** Within the first twelve months of operations, 33 of 45 (73%) of risk situations introduced to the SPIDER Situation Table were "closed/resolved" (i.e. elevated health and safety risks were reduced to levels manageable by normal services and the appropriate services are in place). Prior to coming to SPIDER, many of these situations had gone unresolved for months or even several years, despite the repeated efforts of City enforcement services. The average length of time to achieve resolution through SPIDER service coordination was less than four months. Twelve situations remain open as work progresses. New situations are introduced to the SPIDER Table on a continuous basis.
- **Vulnerable Residents Connected or Re-Connected to Services and Enhanced Service Coordination:** Early assessment during the program design phase showed that in many cases, City services have been very well coordinated across divisions to respond to vulnerable residents. However, SPIDER has enhanced the effectiveness of City services and reduced repeat or "revolving door" encounters for some divisions by expanding the scope of appropriate service to address unmet needs. For example, in every risk situation that was closed through a coordinated SPIDER response, an average of 4 agencies or services was involved in the solution, reflecting the high level of complexity of the situations, and at least one additional City service or external agency was introduced as part of the solution. Table 1 shows how frequently additional services were introduced to help resolve SPIDER Situations. In one third of the situations that

have been resolved by the SPIDER Table, vulnerable individuals were provided with home care and supports to assist with activities of daily living through the Toronto Community Care Access Centre.

Table 1: Additional Services Introduced by SPIDER to Resolve Situations, September 2014-15

Services	%	# (of 33)
Toronto Community Care Access Centre	33%	11
Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration	27%	9
Toronto Public Health	27%	9
Toronto Paramedic Services	24%	8
Cota (Services for Adults with Mental Health and Cognitive Challenges)	21%	7
Toronto Employment and Social Services	18%	6
Revenue Services	15%	5
Toronto Fire Services	15%	5
Office of Public Guardian and Trustee	15%	5
Woodgreen Community Services	12%	4

- **Safer Housing Outcomes for Vulnerable Residents:** In 85% of the resolved situations, SPIDER made it possible for most vulnerable individuals to remain living in their own homes safely (67%) or to be relocated to more appropriate housing (18%), such as long-term care. Table 2 shows housing outcomes for 33 resolved situations.

Table 2: Housing Outcomes for SPIDER Resolved Situations, September 2014-15

Housing Outcome	%	# (of 33)
Averted Eviction/Homelessness	85%	28
Resident Remains at Home Safely	67%	22
Relocated to Supportive Housing, Long-Term Care or Private Dwelling	18%	6
Evicted to or Remains at Shelter or No Fixed Address	15%	5
Resident Remains at Home Safely - TCHC	58%	19
Resident Remains at Home Safely - Private Dwelling	9%	3

- **Positive Community Impacts and Improved Quality of Life for Neighbours:** Most SPIDER Situations were first brought to the attention of City services by distressed neighbours and community members. The nature of many of these situations, including problem hoarding, excess animals, environmental odours, or housing in a poor state of repair has impinged on quality of life for the surrounding community for long periods of time, and has prevented neighbours from the full enjoyment of their own homes and property. Moreover, in most cases the community has felt seriously concerned about the

welfare of their vulnerable neighbours and has sought City support to ensure the safety of the individual and the community. The risk resolutions that have been achieved over the past year through the SPIDER initiative have brought relief to a number of communities and improved overall quality of life in the neighbourhood.

- **Alignment of Policies and Procedures to Respond to Vulnerability:** SPIDER is leading the harmonization of policies and procedures related to vulnerability across the Toronto Public Services. This is advancing service coordination that will improve outcomes for vulnerable residents and their communities. The Heads of all divisions and agencies participating in SPIDER have signed Memoranda of Commitment to expedite resource delivery to risk situations at the request of the Situation Table. For example:
 - **Toronto Community Housing:** Participation in the SPIDER initiative and the vulnerability definition have been adopted into new eviction prevention policies and procedures of Toronto Community Housing. The interagency relationships that TCHC has developed through SPIDER is enabling TCHC to provide better and more coordinated responses to vulnerable tenants and their neighbours.
 - **Municipal Licensing and Standards:** Participation in SPIDER and the approach to vulnerability has also been written into standard operating procedure documents guiding Municipal Licensing and Standards Division (MLS) and has led to operational and staffing restructuring within the Division. MLS has created a dedicated team from existing staff resources and has identified two management-level staff positions (Investigation Services and Toronto Animal Services) to oversee vulnerability responses and to work regularly with SPIDER.
 - **Long-Term Care Homes and Services (LTCHS):** LTCHS is working with SPIDER to develop a protocol in response to vulnerable residents who are dealing with infestations in the home, and who require assistance with homemaking services.
- **New Linkages and Partnerships with Community Services and Health Care Providers:** Health and human service providers and funders external to the City are essential partners in improving outcomes for Toronto residents. Although many City divisions and agencies have well-established referral relationships with community-based service organizations, access to these referral opportunities and knowledge of organizational roles and governing regulations is uneven across City staff. A significant achievement of the SPIDER initiative has been the formal inclusion of third-party organizations that provide diverse support services, including mental health care, addictions services, case management and housing supports on an expedited basis to SPIDER situations of risk.
- **Advances in Information-Sharing and Privacy Protection:** SPIDER Staff and Legal Services worked together to build a step-by-step protocol for sharing any personal information as part of SPIDER. This protocol outlines the steps that must be followed when Situations are discussed at the Situation Tables and further, when interventions are developed by participating divisions and agencies. Each step in the protocol aims to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation. Further, the SPIDER information sharing protocol serves to both (i) reduce the number of parties receiving personal

information (i.e. only those persons that require the information as part of their divisional mandate) and (ii) reduce the amount of information that will be shared (i.e. only that information that is necessary). (See Appendix 2).

- **Expanded Staff Education and Training:** The array of perspectives present at the Situation Table builds interdisciplinary knowledge and relationships and helps first responders to leverage diverse services, policies, and regulations to achieve positive outcomes for residents and the surrounding community. In addition to educational opportunities through the Situation Table, SPIDER has also launched a monthly series of free half-day training workshops for front-line and policy professionals in Toronto, focused on best practices, innovations, and operational and regulatory issues in responding to vulnerability. The workshop series, called "Open Dialogue on Vulnerability" has attracted an average of 120 participants each month, including City staff, City Councillors, and service providers in the health and community service sectors from within Toronto and beyond. (See Appendix 3).
- **Positive Impacts for Staff Workplace Health and Safety:** Staff who have worked repeatedly without resolution to address risk situations involving vulnerable residents often experience distress and even vicarious trauma. The introduction of SPIDER has equipped staff in the Toronto Public Service with a network of resources and colleagues to bring about effective resolution of acutely elevated risks involving vulnerable residents. As the SPIDER model develops, workplace well-being can improve. Going forward, a system reform goal for SPIDER is to increase staff access to workplace psychological safety supports to ensure the well-being of employees working with vulnerable residents (see below).
- **System Reform and Innovation Priorities Identified:** The System Reform and Transformation Table has been established to assess barriers to reducing vulnerability, health risk, and safety risks identified by the SPIDER Situation Table and other front line City programs. Based on preliminary information collected from the Situation Table, the following five system changes have been identified as priorities for 2016:
 - Expansion of evidence-based community treatment for hoarding disorders with a focus on prevention of acutely elevated safety risks and linked to SPIDER program for expedited referrals;
 - Further development of hospital-to-community communication protocols and resources to ensure that appropriate supports are in place for vulnerable residents following discharge from hospital to home, building on work completed to date by the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and the five Local Health Integration Networks operating in Toronto;
 - Preparation of a SPIDER Partnership Protocol for reviewing conditions for mandating extreme clean/decluttering interventions related to Toronto residences and for ensuring adequate supports are made available to residents and neighbours in the event of an intervention;

- Further development of City of Toronto staff education and guidelines concerning privacy protection legislation and grounds for lawful disclosure of personal information and personal health information to address health or safety risks;
- Further development of Psychological Safety at Work policies and vicarious trauma supports for employees of the City and partner organizations that work with vulnerable Torontonians, to ensure the health and well-being of our staff.

The City-5 LHINs Leadership Table, co-chaired by the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Chief Executive Officer of Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network was established in 2013 to address issues of mutual concern for the City and the five local health integration networks operating in Toronto. This will be a valuable forum for moving forward with several of these system change priorities, aimed to increase the effectiveness of the municipality and the health care system in working together to reduce health and safety risks.

This report recommends that City Council communicate with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and other relevant stakeholders on the value of a coordinated service model such as SPIDER and the need for specialized mental health services, including services for hoarding disorders, to respond to risks involving vulnerable Torontonians, their homes and property and their neighbours.

Conclusion

Within its first year of operation, SPIDER has demonstrably strengthened the City's capacity to reduce acutely elevated health and safety risks involving vulnerable Torontonians, their homes or property, and their neighbours. It has introduced new information-sharing protocols that aim to protect personal privacy while allowing City Agencies, Divisions and partners to communicate and coordinate more effectively to reduce harms. SPIDER has also launched a vulnerability-focused staff and stakeholder education program attracting more than 120 participants each month from within Toronto and beyond and has created new relationships for the City with local health care systems stewards and the Province of Ontario to promote the safety of vulnerable Torontonians. Going forward, expansion options for SPIDER will be explored, to ensure that services are available in all communities across Toronto.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: July 16, 2014 Letter: Office of the Ombudsman
Appendix 2: SPIDER Information-Sharing Protocol
Appendix 3: Open Dialogue on Vulnerability Series