



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

A New Home for Salvation Army HOPE Shelter

Date:	January 18, 2016
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Wards:	Ward 32
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks City Council approval to open an 80 bed men's emergency shelter operated by the Salvation Army at 29 Leslie St. in Ward 32. The shelter will replace capacity in the shelter system lost when the Salvation Army closed the HOPE shelter in April 2015.

The property meets the requirements of the Municipal Shelter By-law 138-2003. It is more than 250 metres from another shelter, it is located on a major arterial road and a community information sharing process is currently underway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), recommends that:

1. City Council approve the location of a new 80 bed men's emergency shelter to be operated by the Salvation Army at 29 Leslie St. in Ward 32 in accordance with the requirement of the Municipal Shelter By-law 138-2003; and
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to establish a Community Liaison Committee that includes interested residents, city staff, local service providers, and representatives from the local Councillors' offices in Wards 30 and 32.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with this report beyond the funding for shelter services provided in the 2016 Recommended Operating Budget for SSHA. For Salvation Army HOPE, the City budget is \$1.77 million gross and \$0.35 million net.

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

Equity Impact

The emergency shelter system in Toronto serves equity-seeking groups such as seniors, people with disabilities, individuals with mental health issues, the working poor, Aboriginal peoples, people who identify as LGBTQ2S and other vulnerable groups. Effective operation of the shelter system is important in ensuring that temporary accommodation is available to a variety of equity seeking groups and contributes to the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of April 20, 2015, the Community Development and Recreation Committee received for information, CD3.10, "*Strategies to Improve Location and Relocating Emergency Shelters*" which set out the challenges of locating properties for use as emergency shelter and community engagement best practices when opening emergency shelters.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD3.10>

At its meeting on March 31, April 1 and 2, 2015, City Council adopted CD2.2 "*Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan for the Emergency Shelter System*" which sets out an infrastructure and service improvement plan to guide the transformation of the emergency shelter system and requested staff to identify sites for 15 emergency shelters over the next few years.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD2.2>

The City of Toronto is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for housing and homelessness services as designated by the provincial *Housing Services Act, 2011*. In this capacity, the City provides program funding to community agencies and for shelters. Reports have been prepared on an annual basis by the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to make funding allocations for shelter and related services. A copy of the 2015 Funding Allocations Report for Shelter and Related Services can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD5.8>

At its meeting of December 16, 17, and 18, 2013 City Council unanimously adopted CD25.10, *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework (HSSPF)*. The

HSSPF includes a Strategic Directions to continue to maintain a strong emergency shelter system and to create housing opportunities for vulnerable households in Toronto.

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

At a Special Meeting on February 7, 10, and 11, 2003, City Council adopted the Municipal Shelter By-law (By-law No. 138-2003) recognizing the continued need for emergency shelter accommodation across the City. The by-law allows municipal shelters as a permitted use in all zones and districts of the City provided among other things that the lot for the proposed shelter is located on a major or minor arterial road and that the shelter location is approved by City Council.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2003/law0138.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Salvation Army HOPE Shelter, located at 167 College St. in Ward 20 was a 124 bed shelter program serving single men. The building was leased until the owner sold the property for redevelopment. City staff made several attempts to request that the new owner extend HOPE's lease until a new location for the shelter could be found. This proved unsuccessful and on April 1, 2015, Salvation Army HOPE Shelter closed its doors. On that same day, Salvation Army Maxwell Meighan Centre opened 55 new temporary beds (45 transitional and 10 emergency) to address some of the reduced capacity in the men's sector using funds originally earmarked for HOPE.

The loss of the HOPE beds in the men's emergency sector has had an ongoing negative impact on the availability of shelter services for single men. Occupancy rates have been in the range of 93% to 95% during this time, above City Council's service standard of achieving a 90% occupancy rate in all sectors. Since the HOPE shelter's closure, the Salvation Army continued its search to find a new home for the program. Their search included two failed attempts to purchase properties for conversion to emergency shelter.

The search for a new home ended when the Salvation Army's conditional offer on the property at 29 Leslie Street in Ward 32 was accepted in mid-December 2015.

COMMENTS

The site currently consists of a three level commercial warehouse. With some minor renovations, it could house 80 beds for men experiencing homelessness. The site meets the requirements of the Municipal Shelter By-law No. 183-2003 as it is on a minor arterial road and is located more than 250 meters from another shelter facility. Pending City Council approval, the new HOPE shelter will open later in 2016.

The south Leslieville community also provides an excellent home for the new HOPE shelter and includes a variety of social services which can support the integration of the shelter into the community. These include a Toronto Employment and Social Services Office as well as two Community Health Centres. The location is also well served by the TTC.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Municipal Shelter By-law, a community information meeting was held with local residents on January 16, 2016. In advance of the meeting, a community facilitator was hired by the Salvation Army to contact key stakeholders identified in the surrounding neighbourhood including residents, business representatives and services providers. 29 Leslie Street is located in Ward 32 but is immediately adjacent to Ward 30. Accordingly, key contacts were gathered from City Councillors in both wards. Invitations were hand delivered to local residents within 250 metres of the proposed shelter consistent with best practices outlined in the April 2015 staff report, *Strategies to Improve Locating and Relocating Emergency Shelters*.

The community meeting on January 16 was in the form of an open house/drop-in at the Fire Academy, which is close to the shelter location. It was designed to provide local neighbours an opportunity to meet in person with representatives from the Salvation Army and the City to have their questions answered. The Councillors for Wards 32 and 30 were present, together with the community facilitator, staff from the City and representatives from the Salvation Army, South Riverdale Community Health Centre and Toronto Police Service 55 Division. The open house format enabled attendees to speak one-on-one with a variety of experts and to provide their concerns and thoughts about the shelter before leaving. Attendees were also able to sign in with an email address so that they can receive email updates including a summary of the comments provided at the meeting.

The majority of attendees expressed concerns about the presence of a shelter in the community. They raised issues including concerns about increased crime, safety of community members, impact on residential property values and more loitering around the local Beer Store and in the parkette to the rear of the property.

A community liaison committee will be established by the Salvation Army and will include local stakeholders in the community. The committee will meet on an as needed basis to support the integration of the shelter into the local community as well as address any issues which may arise as the service operates. Information about the community liaison committee was shared at the meeting, including the plan to establish it before the shelter opens.

Should City Council approve the recommendations in this report, the Salvation Army will close on the offer to purchase 29 Leslie St. and proceed with plans to open the facility as soon as possible. Some minor renovations to the property will be completed including the installation of a full commercial kitchen and an elevator to make the facility more accessible. It is estimated the shelter will open by the fall of 2016.

SSHA has been working to meet City Council's direction of achieving a 90% occupancy rate in all sectors in the emergency shelter system. The addition of these 80 beds to the men's emergency sector would bring the occupancy rate in the men's sector from 94% to 89% if they were available today.

CONTACT

Gord Tanner
Project Director, Transition and Change Management
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Phone: 416-397-4210
E-mail: gtanner@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Phillip Abrahams
General Manager
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration