



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Update on Implementation of the 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Plan

<b>Date:</b>	March 30, 2016
<b>To:</b>	Community Development and Recreation Committee
<b>From:</b>	Acting General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### SUMMARY

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The objective of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration's *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Plan* (HSSP) is to identify actions needed to achieve a client-centred, outcome-driven service system that is focussed on preventative approaches aimed at improving the housing stability of Torontonians. This report provides an update on the work undertaken in 2015 to achieve the goals of the HSSP.

After the first two years of activity under the direction of the HSSP, a number of strategic policy initiatives are underway, innovative service approaches are in development and several new services have been implemented to respond to client needs. The next two years of the HSSP's phased implementation plan will focus on engaging with community partners to confirm strategic policy directions, implementation and evaluation of pilot initiatives and furthering work to develop coordinated system planning processes.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), recommends that Community Development and Recreation Committee receive this report for information.

## **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts associated with this report as the costs of the 2016 activities are included in the 2016 Approved Operating Budget for SSHA.

The costs associated with activities that impact service delivery in 2017 and beyond will be considered as part of the budget processes for 2017 and subsequent years.

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

## **Equity Impact**

The *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Plan* guides the planning, management and delivery of housing and homelessness services that serve a range of equity seeking groups including people experiencing homelessness, the working poor, youth, seniors, Aboriginal people and other vulnerable groups.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of December 16, 17 and 18, 2013, City Council unanimously adopted the *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework*. The framework includes nine strategic directions and a number of key actions to transform Toronto's housing stability service system.

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

At its meeting of March 31, 2015, City Council approved the report Progress Report on Implementation of 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework, which included a phased implementation plan for the Housing Stability Service Plan. Council also directed the General Manager, SSHA, to report back on progress in expanding the centralized choice based system for the allocation of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD2.3>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

In December 2013, City Council unanimously approved SSHA's *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Plan*. The objective of the HSSP is to identify and guide the actions needed to achieve an integrated, client-centred, outcome-focused service system that shifts the focus to preventative approaches aimed at improving the housing stability of Torontonians.

Nine strategic directions with supporting key actions were identified in the HSSP to be carried out over five years:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Supporting the transition to housing;
- Creating housing opportunities;
- Fostering system stewardship and innovation;
- Improving access and equity;
- Delivering high quality service;
- Strengthening partnerships and coordination;
- Continuing to maintain a strong emergency shelter system; and
- Advocating to other orders of government.

In March 2015, Council approved the first progress report on the HSSP, which included a phased implementation plan with timelines for actions. The implementation plan identified three phases:

Phase 1 – Building the Foundation, 2014-15 (completed)

Phase 2 – Stabilizing Implementation, 2016-17 (underway)

Phase 3 – Sustainable System Transformation, 2018-19 (future phase)

Further detail on the phased implementation plan is available in the Attachment. The following report highlights some of the key accomplishments and work underway as part of that implementation plan in 2015.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Evidence Informed Policy and Service Planning**

Effective use of data and research is critical to achieving our goals of an evidence-informed and outcome driven service system.

On October 19, 2015, SSHA, in partnership with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, hosted a Research Symposium on solutions to homelessness, attended by more than 150 researchers and stakeholders. The symposium featured seven concurrent panels highlighting current research on solutions to homelessness in Toronto. The final workshop of the day brought together a diverse range of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to share learning from the day and identify future research questions needed to develop effective policy and program solutions to homelessness. The input from the Symposium will support development of SSHA's Research Agenda in 2016.

SSHA was awarded a grant from the provincial Local Poverty Reduction Fund to support evaluation of the Housing Support Assessment Tool (HSAT). The HSAT is a standardized housing needs assessment tool that will assess clients' acuity or level of support needed in order to find and maintain housing. The assessment tool and training

guide have been developed, with initial pilot testing and evaluation underway through Housing First pilot for long-term shelter users.

## **Innovative Service Approaches in Development**

The Hostels to Homes pilot program is now in operation, with a target to house 200 long-term shelter users in the next year. A new service model based on a Housing First approach has been developed, along with staff training and client eligibility and assessment processes. Clients housed through the program will receive up to one year of follow-up supports to stabilize in housing, provided by community agencies selected through an RFP process. Evaluation of outcomes from the pilot will help inform development of a new service delivery model to ensure that every person entering the emergency shelter system has an individualized service plan in place and supports to move out of the shelter and into housing within a defined timeframe.

As part of that new service model, a new Housing First Case Management Handbook has also been developed. The Handbook will provide housing caseworkers with the practical tools and guidance to implement a standardized Housing First approach that emphasizes client collaboration and the development of effective housing plans. Pilot testing of the Handbook is underway in 2016 through the Hostels to Homes pilot.

A new emergency shelter program model to respond to the needs of seniors and older adults who are homeless is also being developed, based on identified best practices and consultations with service users and community stakeholders. The focus of the program, to be implemented as part of the development of a new 120 bed shelter in Scarborough, will be on assisting homeless seniors to move into housing with appropriate supports as quickly as possible.

## **Focus on Community Engagement and Partnerships for Coordinated Systems Planning**

The vision of an integrated, client-focussed service system set out in the Housing Stability Service Plan is dependent on collaboration and support of the many organizations that make up the housing stability system and people who use the services. Ongoing, broad-based engagement is critical to success in achieving our goals of better outcomes for clients, and has been a focus of work in the first two years of the implementation plan.

SSHA worked with our community advisory group, the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) throughout 2015 on establishing service planning priorities and implementation directions. TAEH is an independent community body with representatives from a broad range of housing and homelessness service providers as well as service users, academics and researchers, which provides strategic advice to SSHA on an ongoing basis.

To further support development of a culture of engagement, a Community Engagement Framework for SSHA has been developed, based on extensive consultation and surveying of staff and community partners in 2015. The framework, which will be completed in early 2016, will support efforts to strengthen partnerships and collaborative approaches to service planning with clients, community agencies, and other orders of government.

To support the objective of increasing coordination with the health care sector, SSHA staff have established working groups with LHIN partners to identify coordinated service planning opportunities and pilot projects to match housing resources with health funded supports.

A collaborative working group of youth sector partners, co-chaired by SSHA, has been established to explore ways to advance efforts to solve youth homelessness in Toronto. Community partners have identified the need to develop a specific plan to prevent, reduce and end youth homelessness and have been working to develop a framework that will identify key components, propose a process for strategy development, and ensure alignment with existing local, provincial and national initiatives.

### **New Services Implemented to Respond to Client Needs**

Two new 24 Hour Women's Drop-ins have opened and are providing a safe and welcoming space to vulnerable women who may not otherwise be accessing services. The service approach is intended to build trust and ultimately connect women with the services they need to achieve positive outcomes, such as finding and maintaining safe housing, improved health and safety, and decreased social isolation. A program evaluation is underway in 2016 to measure program outcomes.

Funding was approved in 2015 for two new LGBTQ2S transition to housing shelters and one location is now in operation with the other planned to open in 2017. These new services were developed to respond to the specific needs of LGBTQ2S youth, who are over represented in the emergency shelter system and who report facing additional barriers in accessing the existing shelter system.

### **Housing Access Revitalization and Development of a Choice Based System**

Following a multi-year review of the Centralized Waiting List for social housing, Council provided a number of directions aimed at transforming the wait list into a more proactive and responsive part of a coordinated system for accessing a full range of housing benefits and support services. To support those objectives, Housing Connections, which administers the Centralized Waiting List, has been transferred into the City's governance and operative structure.

As part of this initiative, an online housing portal is under development, which will function as a coordinated online access point for social and affordable housing options

and housing help resources. Site structure design, content development and user testing for the portal was completed in 2015, with a planned launch in Spring 2016.

## **Key Strategic Policy Staff Reports Approved by Council**

A number of strategic staff reports were approved by Council in 2015, providing direction to move forward on key initiatives.

To support the strategic framework for end of social housing operating agreements, the report *Transforming Social Housing: Renewing the Partnership with the City's Social Housing Providers* was approved by Council July 7, 2015. The report sets out future directions for work, including development of quality standards for housing providers; new partnerships with providers whose operating agreements are expiring; and a capital repair financing strategy for non-profit and co-operative housing providers.

To guide transformation of the emergency shelter system, the report *Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan for the Emergency Shelter System* was approved by Council March 31, 2015. The actions identified to guide transformation of the emergency shelter system reflect the City's Housing First approach to ending homelessness, while recognizing the importance of maintaining a robust and responsive emergency shelter system to provide assistance to people in crisis. In 2016, work is ongoing to secure the 15 new shelter locations needed to add additional shelter capacity and to manage redevelopment and relocation processes. A progress update report on implementation of the infrastructure and service improvement plan will be brought to Council with further detail.

To support the next phase of implementation for redevelopment of the Seaton House shelter, the report *George Street Revitalization Recommended Scope and Approach* was approved by Council November 3, 2015, which endorsed the project scope and transition plan, and provided authority to retain procurement options consultants. In 2016, work will continue with analysis of project procurement options, further refinement of the transition plan and development of a proposed service model.

Updated *Toronto Shelter Standards* were approved by Council in September 2015. The Shelter Standards set clear guidelines and expectations for the provision of shelter services and reflects the City's commitment to delivering high quality service that is client-centred and outcome focused. In 2016, work will focus on providing support to ensure shelter providers can successfully implement the new Standards, along with development of Quality Assurance processes.

## **Strategic Policy Initiatives Currently Underway**

New strategies and innovative approaches to transform the services delivered and administered by SSHA are required to achieve the objectives of the HSSP. In 2015, a number of policy reviews were initiated to support the development of strategies in the next phase of implementation.

A comprehensive review of eviction prevention programs and policies was completed, including client journey mapping and a housing worker survey, to support further consultation and development of a comprehensive eviction prevention strategy and pilot initiatives in 2016.

Current approaches to working with private market landlords across the sector were reviewed to support development of a Landlord Advisory in 2016. The Advisory will help to develop strategies to work with private-sector landlords to create new points of entry to housing for people experiencing homelessness and to help resolve tenancy issues for those at risk of homelessness.

A Harm Reduction Advisory Group was established, and has been meeting regularly to support development of a Harm Reduction Framework in 2016. The framework is intended to better define harm reduction in a housing stability context, highlight principles to guide its application and understand system level gaps to successful implementation.

A draft Housing Allowance Policy Framework has been developed to support planned implementation of new housing allowance program allocations in 2016. The framework will ensure structures and resources are in place to implement housing allowance programs successfully and efficiently, based on leading practices in priority-setting and decision-making, and in consultation with stakeholders.

A range of activities are underway to support transformation of the social housing system, which will continue into 2016, including: implementation of Human Service Integration initiatives and identifying opportunities to simplify the process for rent-g geared-to-income calculations; supporting analysis and implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Toronto Community Housing; and work with the Province to implement the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy commitments for legislative and regulatory changes needed to modernize the social housing system.

## **Next Steps for Phase Two Implementation**

The attachment to this report outlines the activities planned for the next phase of implementation. The next phase of the implementation plan in 2016-2017 is called Stabilizing Implementation. Over the coming year, implementation activities will focus on working in partnership with our community stakeholders to further develop strategic policy solutions and implement the innovative approaches to service delivery required to advance our goals of system transformation.

Key priorities for 2016 include development of the Eviction Prevention Strategy, review of discharge planning from other systems to prevent homelessness, development of standards for social housing providers through the Raising the Bar initiative, launch of

the Online Housing Portal, and development of SSHA's Research Agenda with identified supports for research on promising innovative practices.

This implementation plan has been updated to reflect current timelines, emerging priorities and opportunities for alignment with other initiatives.

Staff will continue work to align the HSSP implementation plan to support other related City strategies including the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Youth Equity Strategy and TOCore. Opportunities to align with and leverage initiatives by the provincial and federal government will also be identified, including the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy and commitment to end chronic homelessness and the update of the provincial Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Rob Cressman  
Acting General Manager  
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

## **ATTACHMENT**

2015 Implementation Plan Update



## Housing Stability Service Plan 2015 Implementation Plan Update

Strategic Direction	Phase 1: 2014/15 <i>Building the Foundation</i> Completed Activities	Phase 2: 2016/17 <i>Stabilizing Implementation</i>	Phase 3: 2018/19 <i>Sustainable System Transformation</i>
<b>Program Transformation Directions</b>			
1. Preventing homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review Eviction Prevention programs and policies</li> <li>✓ Review of S2H follow-up program</li> <li>✓ Review of Supports to Daily Living Program</li> <li>✓ Issue coordinated RFP for grant funded programs under four strategic themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Develop Eviction Prevention Strategy and pilot new approaches</li> <li>→Review discharge planning issues in partnership with the Province and the health, corrections and child welfare sectors</li> <li>→Review of Housing Help and Drop-in services sectors</li> <li>→Develop SSHA Strategic Investment Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement Eviction Prevention Strategy initiatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement discharge protocols with health care, child welfare and corrections system partners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review of system-wide approaches to housing follow-up and stabilization supports</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic re-alignment of resources to support system transformation</li> </ul>
2. Supporting the Transition to Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Refocus the Streets to Homes program</li> <li>✓ Develop a new Housing First Case Management Handbook</li> <li>✓ Develop a pilot housing program specifically for long term shelter users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Pilot implementation of the new Housing First Case Management Handbook</li> <li>→Review outcomes of the Hostels to Homes pilot and make recommendations for ongoing services to address long-term shelter users</li> <li>→Support the 20,000 Homes Campaign targets</li> <li>→Develop new shelter funding model in consultation with community partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement new shelter funding model</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop new service model for emergency shelters with individualized service plans for all clients</li> </ul>
3. Creating Housing Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create a permanent housing allowance reserve fund</li> <li>✓ Develop a Housing Allowance Policy Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Implement new Housing Allowance programs</li> <li>→Begin implementation of new choice based waiting list system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete implementation of new choice based system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop strategy to leverage shelter and housing assets</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Phase 1: 2014/15 <i>Building the Foundation</i> Completed Activities</b>	<b>Phase 2: 2016/17 <i>Stabilizing Implementation</i></b>	<b>Phase 3: 2018/19 <i>Sustainable System Transformation</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Launch My Choice Rental Pilot</li> <li>✓ Transfer Housing Connections into the City's governance and operating structure</li> <li>✓ Review current approaches to working with private market landlords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Develop new online housing portal</li> <li>→ Review role and definition of transitional shelter programs</li> <li>→ Create a landlord advisory group</li> <li>→ Develop strategy to work with private sector landlords</li> <li>→ Support implementation of provincial LTAHS and work with province to identify changes to increase flexibility for municipal Service Level Standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete review of City's Service Level Standard for RGI housing</li> </ul>
<b>System Transformation Directions</b>			
<b>4. Fostering system stewardship and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop strategic framework for end of social housing operating agreements</li> <li>✓ Complete shelter infrastructure plan</li> <li>✓ George Street Revitalization (GSR) project scope and transition plan approved by Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Implement pilot partnerships with selected providers whose agreements are expiring</li> <li>→ Develop financial strategy for non-profit and cooperative housing capital repair needs</li> <li>→ Develop standards for non-profit housing providers through Raising the Bar initiative</li> <li>→ Develop GSR procurement and delivery plan, including rezoning and planning applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement Raising the Bar Standards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement George Street Revitalization</li> </ul>
<b>5. Improving Access and Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete Post-incarceration service directory</li> <li>✓ Develop housing support assessment tool for shelter clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Complete Guide to Housing Access</li> <li>→ Pilot and evaluate the housing support assessment tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement the housing support assessment tool system wide</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Phase 1: 2014/15 <i>Building the Foundation</i> Completed Activities</b>	<b>Phase 2: 2016/17 <i>Stabilizing Implementation</i></b>	<b>Phase 3: 2018/19 <i>Sustainable System Transformation</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Implement new services for specific client groups – 24 Hour Women's Drop-ins, LGBTQ2S shelters</li> <li>✓ Establish Harm Reduction Framework Advisory Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Review service needs of equity seeking groups, including women, seniors and Aboriginal people</li> <li>→Establish a working group with youth sector partners to develop a youth homelessness strategy</li> <li>→Implement service model and evaluate outcomes for the LGBTQ2S youth shelters</li> <li>→Evaluate service model for the 24 hour women's drop-ins and make recommendations based on outcomes</li> <li>→Develop service model for new seniors shelter program</li> <li>→Develop Harm Reduction Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement strategies to improve access to services for equity seeking groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a strategy to prevent, reduce and end youth homelessness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop enhanced centralized access system for emergency shelters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement harm reduction strategies and programs</li> </ul>
6. Delivering High Quality Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Update the Shelter Standards</li> <li>✓ Develop strategic performance indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Develop an SSHA People Plan to support divisional capacity</li> <li>→Develop new Quality Assurance process for emergency shelters</li> <li>→Develop and monitor regular indicator report</li> <li>→Develop SMIS Case Management capabilities and add functionality for new services such as Streets to Homes and Housing Help services</li> <li>→Implement the next Street Needs Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement an SSHA People Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement SMIS enhancements to create a City-wide housing services management information system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adapt services as required based on Street Needs Assessment findings</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Direction</b>	<b>Phase 1: 2014/15 <i>Building the Foundation</i> Completed Activities</b>	<b>Phase 2: 2016/17 <i>Stabilizing Implementation</i></b>	<b>Phase 3: 2018/19 <i>Sustainable System Transformation</i></b>
7. Strengthening partnerships and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify Human Service Integration opportunities with TESS and Children's Services</li> <li>✓ Establish partnership opportunities with Toronto's LHINs and CCACs</li> <li>✓ Establish multi-sectoral community reference group</li> <li>✓ Develop Community Engagement Framework</li> <li>✓ Co-host a Toronto research symposium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Implement Human Service Integration opportunities with TESS and Children's Services</li> <li>→ Develop new service model with LTCHS on new George St revitalization</li> <li>→ Develop pilot partnerships for service coordination with LHINs and CCACs</li> <li>→ Develop an SSHA research agenda</li> </ul>	
8. Continuing to maintain a strong emergency shelter system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Implement interim strategies to increase shelter capacity</li> <li>✓ Add additional permanent shelter capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Redevelop existing shelter locations to better meet client needs</li> <li>→ Identify permanent replacement shelter sites as required</li> </ul>	
9. Advocating to other orders of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Support and inform the City's advocacy efforts</li> </ul>		