

Outreach to Faith Organizations regarding Winter Respite Services

Date: January 30, 2018
To: City Council
From: Deputy City Manager, Cluster A
Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise City Council of staff's outreach to various faith organizations regarding opportunities to provide winter respite services in churches that are no longer conducting services. It responds to direction from Community Development and Recreation Committee (CDRC) at their meeting of January 17, 2018 to the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A in consultation with the Deputy City Manager, Internal Corporate Services, to report directly to Council on this matter.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of January 17, 2018, CDRC considered item CD25.5 *Review of Current Winter Respite and Shelter Services During the Recent Cold Weather*. The Committee directed that staff report directly to City Council on January 31, 2018 on its discussions with faith organizations regarding opportunities to provide winter respite services in local churches no longer conducting services.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CD25.5>

COMMENTS

Staff have communicated with the various faith organizations on the City's increasing need for respite sites and emergency shelter locations. Shelter Support and Housing

Administration has an ongoing relationship through Dixon Hall with several faith based groups that provide Out of the Cold services one night a week. Committee specifically requested that churches that are no longer providing services be approached to serve as additional respite or shelter locations.

Letters were sent to the Archdiocese of Toronto and the United Church of Canada from the office of the Deputy City Manager, Internal Corporate Services. The organizations were advised of the significant pressure on the City's shelter system and the need for new emergency shelter locations. They were requested to advise the City of any surplus or vacant sites that may be in their portfolio which the City could use for shelter services. A follow up conversation was held with the Cardinal's Office of the Archdiocese of Toronto who advised they will review their properties and will advise the City of any that may be available for lease or sale. The Cardinal's Office also advised that while services may not be ongoing in some of their locations, they do regularly accommodate community programs, which makes dedicating a site entirely for respite beyond a few nights a week more difficult to accommodate.

Real Estate Services will continue outreach to various organizations, other levels of government and private property owners to seek out new emergency shelter locations to address the current and future occupancy needs.

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SIGNATURE

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