

Review of Service System in Downtown West Neighbourhoods

Date: May 25, 2018

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Wards: 20

SUMMARY

The City's Social Development, Finance and Administration Division has been leading a multi-stakeholder review of the local community services in the downtown west area of the City. The Downtown West area is bounded by College Street to the North, Adelaide Street to the South, University Avenue to the East and Bathurst Street to the West. The intent of this service system review is to identify current and planned community assets, service overlaps and/or gaps, and opportunities for service improvements. This report presents the findings of the review for consideration.

In addition to the service review, this report outlines the framework for a Social Development Plan for the Alexandra Park community which sits within the Downtown West area boundaries and is currently undergoing a revitalization process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. Community Development and Recreation Committee direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to conduct a review of current City of Toronto infrastructure uses against the needs identified through the Downtown West service system review in order to optimize facility use to best meet community needs and report back in the first quarter of 2019 on these findings.
2. Community Development and Recreation Committee direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to identify options for the proposed operating structure and funding resources to support the new Alexandra Park

Community Centre and report back in the first quarter of 2019 on the findings of this process.

3. Community Development and Recreation Committee direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to notify community agencies operating in the downtown west of new funding opportunities through the Community Partnership Investment Program and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration grant programs as they become available to address local needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the implementation of the recommendations in this report beyond what has been included in the 2018 Approved Operating and Capital Budgets for the City.

Funding requirements and options to support the new Alexandra Park Community Centre will be reported to City Council in the first quarter of 2019.

New grants funding recommendations to community agencies in the Downtown West area, will be reported through the SDFa and SSHA grants allocation reporting processes, if applicable.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its October 8, 2013 meeting, City Council adopted the Final Report - 571 Dundas Street West, 21, 21a, 23, 23a and 91 Augusta Avenue, 73-75 Augusta Square and 20 Vanauley St. - Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision, Rental Housing Demolition (TE26.9). This report granted the authority to complete the necessary Official Plan Amendment (No.189) to implement the Revitalization of the Alexandra Park and Atkinson Co-operative lands.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.TE26.9>

At its December 2015 meeting, City Council adopted the TOcore: Planning Toronto's Downtown – Phase 1 – Summary Report and Phase 2 Directions (TE12.43). Recommendation 6 requested that identified City Divisions, including Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFa), develop a community services and facilities strategy for Downtown to be responsive to the needs of population for recreation, childcare, libraries, schools, human services and public health.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.TE12.43>

At the Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting on June 23, 2016, the Committee approved a motion to direct to the Executive Director SDFa to lead a

multi-stakeholder review of the Downtown West community service system and prepare a local community service strategy that identified current and planned assets, service overlaps and/or gaps and opportunities for service improvement (CD13.13).
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD13.13>

At its October 2017 meeting, City Council adopted the TOcore: Proposed Downtown Plan (PG22.1). In recommendation 5 SDFA and other City Divisions are requested to undertake a stakeholder and public consultation on the draft Infrastructure Strategies from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG22.1>

At its October 2017 meeting, City Council also adopted the Impact of Community Partnership and Investment Program Grants and Social Development, Finance and Administration Division Request for Approval of New Initiatives report (CD22.6). This report approved funding for one staff resource to support the creation of a Social Development Plan for the Alexandra Park community.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD22.6>

At its meeting of February 21, 2018 Toronto and East York Community Council adopted the report, Alexandra Park and Atkinson Housing Co-operative Revitalization - 571 Dundas Street West, 91 Augusta Avenue, and 73-75 Augusta Square - Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision Amendment, and Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion - Preliminary Report. This report provides preliminary information on changes to the Official Plan Amendment (No.189) to implement the Revitalization of the Alexandra Park and Atkinson Co-operative lands.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.TE30.43>

At its meeting of April 12, 2018, Community Development and Recreation Committee adopted CD.27.5, Resources to Support the Clients at West Neighbourhood House Meeting Place where Committee requested the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and other City Divisions to identify the resources needed and the funding options available to better meet the needs of the service users at The Meeting Place and report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee before July 2018.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CD27.5>

At the May 1, 2018 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting, the Committee adopted the Downtown Community Services and Facility Strategy (PG29.7) and the report will be considered by City Council on May 23, 2018. In recommendation 5 the Executive Director SDFA and other City Divisions are directed to establish an Inter-Divisional Working Group to review the future renewal, retrofit and/or expansion needs and opportunities for Association of Community Centres (AOCCs) and other City-owned community facilities serving the Downtown (except for those operated by Parks, Forestry and Recreation) in consultation with AOCCs and Toronto Neighbourhood Centres. Recommendation 6 directs the Executive Director SDFA and other City Divisions in partnership with University Settlement to explore opportunities to develop a plan for City-owned assets such as University Settlement, Harrison Pool, St. Patrick's Market and other sites including St. George the Martyr Anglican Church, in consultation with the Ward Councillor and local community.

COMMENTS

Background

The Downtown West is broadly defined as the area from University to Bathurst and College to Adelaide which includes Chinatown, Kensington Market, Alexandra Park and other vibrant communities. These dynamic communities have been home to innovative services for many years, delivered by community centres, agencies and the City of Toronto. In recent years, the area has experienced a number of local service system changes. In addition, a number of critical services and new investments will be moving into the Downtown West including revitalization projects in the neighbourhood. The revitalization projects include the redevelopment of Alexandra Park and the Atkinson Housing Co-operative lands and a proposed redevelopment of the Scadding Court Community Centre campus including the outdoor pool and library branch. New community assets in the area include the introduction of the Yonge Street Mission Evergreen program, the expansion of FOCUS Toronto in collaboration with Toronto Police 14 Division, and the launch of the Supervised Consumption Service at Queen West – Central Toronto Community Health Centre.

In June 2016, the Community Development and Recreation Committee passed a motion to direct City staff from Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) to conduct a community service system review in Downtown West. This report will provide an overview of the consultation process and participation from local agencies, a summary on the findings and an assessment of the utilization of current key community infrastructure. In addition, this report will provide a framework for a Social Development Plan to guide the revitalization of the Alexandra Park community which is being developed by City staff in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and the larger community.

Downtown West - Overview of Key Community Infrastructure

Downtown West is serviced by a number of different City-owned community facilities including:

- Cecil Street Community Centre
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- Alexandra Park Community Centre
- University Settlement and;
- Harrison Pool

Both Cecil St. Community Centre and Scadding Court Community Centre are part of the Association of Community Centres (AOCCs). The AOCC model is a hybrid between a City agency and an independent not-for-profit community-based organization. The City funds defined core administrative costs including all salaries and benefits, facility operations, and maintenance costs except those directly associated with a specific program. The program component is funded through fees, donations, and grants and is treated like an independent not-for-profit community-based organization.

Cecil St. Community Centre

Cecil St. Community Centre was launched in 1978 after the building was acquired by the City of Toronto. The facility is about 5,700 ft² in size and is governed by a Board of Management. This community centre houses a variety of programs for children, youth, adults and seniors. These include sports & fitness classes, arts & recreation opportunities, community programs and an Early ON centre. The community centre receives about 200 visits per day.

Despite the number of programs and contacts, the community centre is not operating to its full capacity with a little over half of programs being fully utilized. As an AOCC, Cecil St. Community Centre is mandated to leverage City Core Funding to raise Centre Program funding from various sources such as donations, rental fees, special events, government grants, private and public foundations, United Way, and social or private enterprises. In 2017, the community centre raised only 16% of its total budget to provide Centre Program funding. As a result, this community centre presents an opportunity to expand services or offer new services to address a variety of community needs.

Scadding Court Community Centre

Founded in 1975, Scadding Court Community Centre is approximately 19,000 ft² in size and includes an indoor pool in the basement of the building that is managed by Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR). The operations of the community centre are governed by a Board of Management. Scadding Court provides a wide array of services and programs including: social recreation and wellness, support for children, youth and families, child and youth programs, an Early ON Centre, food security and urban agriculture, social enterprise opportunities, anti-racism and community-building, support programs for people living with disabilities and seniors, and newcomer services. The community centre is visited by 500 to 600 people each day to participate in programs or services or just to socialize. In 2017, the community centre raised 60% of its total budget to provide Centre Program funding. The Scadding Court Community Centre campus includes the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Sanderson Branch and the Alexandra Park outdoor pool managed by PFR and the Toronto District School Board's Oasis Skateboard Factory.

A study led by the City's Real Estate Services is currently exploring the feasibility of revitalizing the Scadding Court Community Centre, the adjacent TPL Sanderson Branch, and the Alexandra Park outdoor pool and change room building.

Alexandra Park Community Centre

In 2014, the Alexandra Park community began the first phase of a revitalization process that includes the redevelopment of the Alexandra Park and Atkinson Housing Co-operative lands including the construction of new mixed-use, mixed-income housing in the neighbourhood. The redevelopment of the Alexandra Park Community Centre (APCC) is part of the revitalization process.

Governed by the Alexandra Park Residents Association, APCC is a non-profit charitable organization with 6,000 ft² of community centre space. The community centre provides a range of programming including youth mentorship, summer camp, youth drop-in, community activities, meal services for seniors and families, afterschool program,

mental wellness programs, and an Early ON Centre. APCC focuses on providing direct services to the residents of the Alexandra Park community. The redevelopment of the centre, will provide additional square footage and would allow for the provision of enhanced services and programs. A community consultation process has been undertaken by the community with Evergreen and Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to garner feedback on the centre's current programming and services and vision for the future. The consultation review will be released in summer 2018 and the construction of the new community centre will proceed early in Phase 2 of the Alexandra Park Revitalization.

University Settlement

Downtown West is also serviced by University Settlement a Toronto Neighbourhood Centre (TNC). Managed by a Board of Directors, TNCs are non-profit organizations that act as community hubs to develop and deliver local programs and services. University Settlement was established in 1910 and was the first community-based social service centre in Toronto. It has three locations with one in the area at 23 Grange Rd. which is a City of Toronto owned-facility that has 47,300 ft². The 23 Grange Rd location includes a pool that is owned and operated by the agency and over 600 people visit or use programs daily. University Settlement receives funding from many City Divisions as well as federal, provincial, user fees and grants to offer various types of programming including day care, employment & training, children's programs, language services, music and arts school, adult recreation and facilities, and seniors, settlement & social services.

A key service provided by University Settlement is the Weekend Emergency Shelter which operates 3 days a week in the winter and 2 days in the summer. In 2017, the Emergency Shelter Service was accessed by almost 1,500 individuals and approximately 23,500 meals were served. Recognizing the need in the community, University Settlement has been offering this service for over 15 years and has received funding and support from the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division to provide this service.

Harrison Pool

Harrison Pool is a PFR facility located in Downtown West. The facility operates a 20 yard pool that is free for the public to use as well as shower facilities that are also open for community members. It operates 7 days a week and offers lane swim, leisure swim and a women only swim program The Harrison Pool is currently operating at 70% of capacity with 35 swimmers per day. Lower participation could be a result of the close proximity to the University Settlement pool which is only 200 metres away. Harrison Pool also offers a shower service, known as Harrison Bath that is used by vulnerable community members with 50 users per day. As clients are familiar with this facility, there is an opportunity to streamline neighbouring City-owned facilities such as Harrison Pool, University Settlement and St. Patrick's market. SDFA, Real Estate Services, PFR, City Planning and University Settlement could develop a vision for a comprehensive plan for these three sites. PFR is already committed to repurposing this facility in order to better meet community needs.

Community Services Review - Consultation Process and Participation

The purpose of the Downtown West Community Services Review is to identify gaps or overlaps in service delivery among various demographics, suggest opportunities for improving these services and assess relevant community infrastructure assets. In order to accomplish this, three consultation meetings were held with local community agencies and the Ward councillor. The consultations began fall 2016 and a second meeting was convened in early 2017. Eight organizations attended the consultation sessions including: Evangel Hall Mission, The Scott Mission, Yonge Street Mission, Cecil St. Community Centre, Toronto Community Housing, St. Stephen's Community House, University Settlement, and City of Toronto- Streets to Homes. In winter 2018, the table was reconvened for a final meeting. Scadding Court Community Centre and Alexandra Park Community Centre were present in addition to the aforementioned organizations.

City staff from SDFA facilitated the consultation meetings and asked the agencies to clearly identify local needs and discuss opportunities to better align service provision. In order to achieve this, participants were asked to apply a holistic perspective to community service planning and consider the social infrastructure that would be required to support collaboration among stakeholders. The discussion was then focused on determining key service areas and recommendations for improvements in each of those areas. Final input was provided by the participating organizations and the Community Service Review was completed in April 2018. Staff will undertake a dialogue process with local stakeholders in late 2018 as part of the infrastructure review noted in recommendation #1.

Community Services Review – Summary of Findings

Three key service sectors frame the Community Services Review, chosen to align with the sectors identified in Downtown Community Services and Facilities Strategy report ([PG29.7](#)). These are:

- Early Learning & Childcare: This category refers to licensed childcare facilities, afterschool programs, Early ON centres, and occasional or drop-in type programs that focus on early years development.
- Community & Recreation: This category refers to specialty classes such as fitness for all ages, arts and culture programs, and drop-in programs targeted toward particular groups including pre-school, youth, homeless, seniors etc.
- Human Services: A range of programs fall into this sector such as healthcare and mental health supports, housing and shelter, food access and security, community and economic development, employment and skills training, and community engagement.

Using this framing, the findings on service gaps and overlaps were drawn from the Community Services Review consultation process. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 1: Downtown West Service Needs - Sector Breakdown Summary on page 8. Greater detail including potential opportunities for community service improvements in each sector are discussed below.

Table 1: Downtown West Service Needs – Sector Breakdown Summary

Sector	Meeting Service Needs	Challenge Meeting Service Needs	Emerging Needs
Early Learning & Childcare	Childcare available for 0-14 years	Early Learning for 0-9 years	Childcare Fee Subsidies for more families
Community & Recreation	Arts & Culture programs, Drop-ins for most age ranges	Arts & Culture programs for those 20 years and older	Oversubscription in Arts & Culture for ages 10-19 and Recreation for ages 10-14
Civic Engagement	Community centres as informal hubs for civic engagement especially for youth		Civic literacy/action programming for the community
Food Access & Security		Demand often exceeds resources	
Emergency Shelter & Shelter Supports		Demand can exceed resources	
Mental Health		Complexity of issues facing vulnerable populations	
Outreach			Need for more outreach work for harm reduction, youth housing and street outreach
Employment & Skill Training		Employment training for 29 years and older	Career development services for youth
Harm Reduction			Multi-sectoral group to identify specific interventions

A common theme identified by participating community agencies was the potential benefit from adopting a coordinated approach to service delivery and leveraging existing City services to support their initiatives. Coordination of services could benefit the local community by offering an integrated response, particularly for vulnerable populations that experience a number of complex challenges. Leveraging innovative partnerships is another option for coordinating services and this could encourage the sharing of best practices among local agencies.

Downtown West Service Needs – Detailed Sector Breakdown

i) Early Learning & Childcare Sector

The area has 16 licensed childcare providers, 12 with Service Agreement for Fee Subsidy and, three Montessori schools and one Early Learning Centre which all operate without a Service Agreement for Fee Subsidy. In addition, there are two Early ON Centres in Scadding Court Community Centre and Alexandra Park Community Centre that provide emergency and occasional childcare, specific education programs and drop-in services. Although a number of services exist, community agencies noted that there is still a need for additional childcare spaces and Fee Subsidies for families.

ii) Community & Recreation Sector

Downtown West has a breadth of services from this sector including arts & culture, recreation and drop-in programs. There is a high use and demand for these programs in this area, particularly among youth aged 15 to 19 years old. This significant demand has resulted in some service providers operating at or over full capacity and having to generate waiting lists. In response to increased demand, highly utilized community centres have been stretching their resources to accommodate additional clients, providing services that may be out of scope, and if required, referring clients to other agencies. A few agencies are accessing space via permits to offer programs and this increases financial pressure on their limited funding resources. Further, there is a lack of arts and culture programs for adults and a need for more recreation programs for 10 to 14 year olds. Given that some service providers are experiencing oversubscription, the findings demonstrate the need for more collaborative recreational programming. For example, the proposed redevelopment of the Scadding Court Community Centre site with new integrated facilities including the library and pool provides a model that could be applied to increase local services through expanded space and amenities for a variety of programming options.

iii) Human Services Sector

Based on the consultation with community agencies, stakeholders divided the Human Services Sector into sub-sectors that reflected the needs of the community and the following sub-sectors were highlighted as they may require additional resources to address complex needs: Outreach, Civic Engagement, Food Access & Security, Employment & Skills Training, Emergency Shelter & Shelter Supports, Harm Reduction, and Mental Health.

a) Outreach

Outreach is defined as two services: 1) engagement with specific groups or demographics in the community for example, youth outreach work and 2) promotion of programs and services by local agencies to connect with residents. Based on the

Review, there are currently engagement programs addressing issues such as harm reduction, youth housing, and street outreach but these services were found to be under resourced in comparison to community needs within the area. In addition, an opportunity exists for local agencies to coordinate outreach and promote programs or services in order to reach specific demographics.

b) Civic Engagement

Although there is considerable interest, the Downtown West area lacks programs and services that provide information on civic engagement and advocacy. As a result, a number of local agencies have taken on the role of informally educating community members on civic processes and advocating on issues pertaining to the area, all with limited or no funding. For community members, particularly youth ages 15 to 29, this has led to positive outcomes and people have come to expect community centres as places of civic engagement, advocacy and to find information on civic processes. As suggested by the findings, there is an opportunity to provide services in a coordinated manner with other organizations focusing on civic literacy, systems and education.

c) Food Access & Security

From April 2016 to March 2017, there were almost 60,000 food bank visits in Ward 20 which encompasses Downtown West and the number of visits have increased by 10-20% from the previous year(1). With the Fort York Food Bank moving slightly north of the area, existing agencies are experiencing more pressure while operating at full capacity. In many cases, the existing programs are unable to accommodate this influx of demand. In response to these findings, community agencies providing these types of services should collaborate with the Toronto Food Strategy at Toronto Public Health, the Toronto Food Policy Council, and the local community members to identify strategies to support access to nutritious and affordable food in the area. In addition, funding for non-profit organizations and/or community groups implementing food initiatives to address food security should be considered.

d) Employment & Skill Training

A number of service agencies are located in or near the Downtown West. Toronto Employment & Social Services (TESS) provides financial, social supports, and employment services to social assistance recipients. Metro Hall Employment Centre provides employment services to City residents including access to employment opportunities, and job search supports. In 2017, 15,000 visitors used these services. In addition, there are several non-profit organizations including St. Stephen's Community House, Youth Employment Services (YES), Vanauley Street YMCA, Yonge Street Mission, University Settlement, Opportunity for Advancement, Operation Springboard (in Alex Park), ACCES Employment Services (College & Bathurst), West Neighbourhood House (King & Strachan) and Centre Francophone de Toronto. These organizations provide a variety of services including employment services, settlement services, and training programs.

YES and St. Stephen's Community House offer a 12-week employment training program funded through the Federal and Provincial governments. The Youth Employment Partnership at SDFA works with YES which provides targeted services to

(1) Source: Daily Bread Food Bank Ward Map <https://www.dailybread.ca/wardmap.php>

youth aged 15 to 29 facing various socio-economic barriers to finding employment, and the organization has assisted thousands of young people over the past 50 years. Vanauley St. YMCA offers skill building services in finding and obtaining employment to youth ages 16 to 24. Yonge Street Mission has a variety of programs such as youth job connections, training and work placements for youth, adults and families living in poverty. In addition, the City's Economic Development and Culture Division supports agencies such as Artscape and the Toronto Arts Council to provide grants to artists. The City also provides business start-up support to individuals and appointments can be made with advisors located in City Hall.

Although a number of programs exist, service providers identified the lack of career-oriented employment training as a gap, particularly for youth aged 17 to 29. There is also a need for employment and skills training supports for community members over the age of 29 years as they are not served by many current programs. The Revitalization of Alexandra Park does currently provides some opportunities for this demographic but only for residents of Alexandra Park.

e) Emergency Shelters & Shelter Supports

There are four shelters located in Downtown West:

- Women's Residence, a directly operated City emergency shelter for women with 121 beds;
- Vanauley Street YMCA, an emergency youth shelter with 40 beds;
- Fife House Denison, a transitional mixed adult shelter with 5 beds; and
- University Settlement, a part-time mixed adult emergency shelter with 85 beds.

There continues to be a significant demand for services from people experiencing homelessness throughout the city, attributable to various interconnected factors, including a tightening rental market, lack of affordable housing, and lack of appropriate health and mental health services. In Downtown West, the Community Service Review findings show that agencies offering emergency shelter services are experiencing high demand and are operating at capacity. This demonstrates the need for additional services in this sector, including more shelter capacity, other homelessness services such as drop-ins, and appropriate supportive housing options in order to prevent people from returning to homelessness. To that end, the City will ensure it notifies agencies in the downtown west of any new funding opportunities as they become available to address the local needs of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

f) Harm Reduction

In 2017, Downtown West experienced 85 situations of Acutely Elevated Risk (AER) – 18% of all incidents in Toronto. AER refers to any situation where circumstances indicate an extremely high probability of harms or victimization occurring. The top risk factors for AER include mental health, lack of access to housing, antisocial/negative behaviours and the inability to meet basic needs. Coupled with the number of incidents in the area is the opioid crisis which has led to over 100 suspected overdose calls to paramedic services in the last eight months and accounts for 6% of the total number of calls in the City. In response, Toronto Public Health through The Works and the Toronto Urban Health Fund, has provided funding and supplies to nine agencies in the area that offer harm reduction services such as Safe Consumption Sites, outreach and kit distribution and harm reduction education programming. St. Stephen's Community

House is one such service provider and was part of the consultation process. In 2017, these centres had over 12,500 visits and distributed about 71,000 needles. These nine agencies provide critical health services for those with substance use issues and can help reduce the number of overdose deaths. Harm reduction services further provide programs to reduce the incidence of HIV, Hepatitis and other blood borne diseases. Although progress has been made in the area, the Community Service Review found there is a need for more support as some local agencies are not currently equipped to provide the necessary harm reduction programs.

The consultation also identified the need for a multi-sectoral group to identify specific interventions and pilot programs that will address challenges in the area. There is an existing avenue for this type of multi-agency discussion known as the Furthering Our Community by Uniting Services (FOCUS) table in Downtown West. This table is facilitated by the Toronto Police Services, SDFA, and the United Way. FOCUS convenes over 30 community and public organizations, once a week, to identify individuals, families, groups or places that are at high risk of anti-social or criminal behaviour and helps address underlying issues of substance use, mental health, unemployment, poverty, gang involvement or homelessness by referring to the relevant service agency. An enhanced engagement and outreach process of the Downtown West FOCUS table will begin in Q3 2018 to ensure appropriate service providers are invited.

g) Mental Health

In the Downtown West, many community organizations attempt to provide services and programs to support mental health but there is an absence of partnered interventions which are required to deliver and sustain relevant long-term services as the current system is difficult to navigate, especially for vulnerable populations. The intersectionality of poverty, housing, lack of employment opportunities, and food security issues are necessary to consider when addressing the needs of those suffering from substance use and mental health concerns. The findings of the review suggest the need for a holistic, collaborative and coordinated approach to mental health service delivery with wrap-around supports to meet the complex needs identified in Downtown West. In addition, local agencies identified an opportunity to provide training to front-line staff in order to effectively manage interactions with clients experiencing crisis.

Downtown West – Alexandra Park Social Development Plan Framework

Alexandra Park, located in the south west corner of downtown Toronto, is a culturally diverse community that is home to over 2,000 residents. It is comprised of the Atkinson Housing Co-operative and Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) buildings. The Alexandra Park community is now undergoing revitalization which will include the replacement or refurbishment of 806 social housing units along with the introduction of approximately 1,800 market housing units. At the end of revitalization, Alexandra Park will transition from a community that was once solely social housing to a mixed-use, mixed-income community. Further information about the revitalization of the Alexandra Park and Atkinson Co-operative Lands are beyond the scope of this report, with details on the redevelopment included in:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-112635.pdf>

Discussions about a new vision for Alexandra Park began in 2007. In order to create this new vision for the neighbourhood, the Alexandra Park Revitalization Working Group was established and is comprised of various key community stakeholders. As part of the vision for revitalization, the community adopted a zero displacement policy to guarantee that existing residents will continue to be part of the new Alexandra Park community. The construction process for the Alexandra Park revitalization began in 2014.

The City and TCHC recognize that successful revitalization processes are best served by having a long-term and coordinated plan in place to guide the social transformation of the community – a Social Development Plan (SDP). SDPs help guide changes in the community that result from revitalization, ensure that the vision of the changing community is considered throughout the process and, capture opportunities for capacity building and social inclusion by identifying priorities and actions with community.

The SDP in Alexandra Park is co-led by the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) Division and TCHC, and in collaboration with neighbourhood residents and community members.

The governance model for the Alexandra Park SDP includes four stakeholder groups:

1. An **SDP Staff Working Group** consisting of SDFA and TCHC.
2. The **Alexandra Park Revitalization Working Group** including The Atkinson Housing Co-operative, The Alexandra Park Community Centre, TCHC, the Ward councillor and local residents.
3. The **SDP Resident Committee** consisting of Alexandra Park residents (representing market residential housing and social housing) provide leadership, feedback, and guidance to staff on implementing the engagement process that will create the Alexandra Park Social Development Plan.
4. A **Partnership Table** with local agencies and City Divisions that will be consulted to inform the SDP process and have a role in implementation.

Developing the SDP

The Alexandra Park SDP process began in winter 2018 and regular meetings have been convened with the four stakeholder groups to provide information for the plan. The first engagement point with community members was at the Alexandra Park Community Townhouse meeting in March 2018 which informed residents that the SDP process had started. Following this event, a flyer drop was undertaken to all current and temporarily relocated residents of the Alexandra Park community to raise awareness and encourage community participation in the SDP process. Through consultation with the SDP Resident Committee, a SDP framework was established that identifies five themes - Community Economic Development, Community Safety and Wellness, Programs and Services, History Preservation, and Social Cohesion - which are defined as follows:

1. Community Economic Development (business development and employment as a catalyst for change) – Through the revitalization of Alexandra Park, TCHC has committed to enhancing opportunities for residents by implementing a Community Economic Development Program in partnership with Tridel and various City Divisions.

This can include employment, training, physical spaces, scholarships, business development opportunities and other initiatives.

2. Community Safety and Wellness (creating a safe environment for all to flourish) – To support the inclusion of all community members throughout and after revitalization; residents need to feel a sense of belonging in a safe community where their wellness is proactively addressed.

3. Programs and Services (funding and support for initiatives) – Community based organizations can support the development of resident-led initiatives, and ongoing programming and community events. These programs help animate the community, facilitate relationships amongst community members and respond to community needs.

4. History Preservation (maintain the history and culture of the neighbourhood) – The history of Alexandra Park is rich and filled with stories of resident-led community initiatives. Through revitalization there are opportunities to commemorate this history.

5. Social Cohesion (spaces and opportunities to build strong relationships) – A key goal of the revitalization is to create a community where residents and spaces are connected in equitable ways.

The SDP development process will include the following elements.

1) Social Development Plan Resident Committee – 15 Alexandra Park residents (representing market residential housing and social housing) have formed a committee to provide leadership, guidance, and direction to staff on implementing the engagement process that will lead to the co-creation of the Alexandra Park Social Development Plan

2) Alexandra Park Survey – through a visioning exercise the Social Development Plan Resident Committee developed a set of five priority areas for data collection: Community Economic Development, Program and Service Delivery, Safety and Wellness, Social Cohesion, and community heritage. With these priority areas, the project team, committee members, and local service providers co-created a survey to understand service baselines and favoured initiatives. The survey will be administered online and in-person.

3) Conversation Cafes – a series of 7 – 10 small conversations with resident groups that represent the cultural and geographic diversity of the community. The conversations will focus on identifying a vision for social inclusion throughout and after revitalization, and ways residents, organizations, and revitalization partners can support the vision.

4) Prioritization and Visioning Meeting – data collected from the survey and conversation cafes will be analyzed by staff and stakeholders to identify early vision statements and supportive initiatives. A Prioritization and Visioning Meeting will be facilitated with the broader community to build consensus on the long-term vision; receive further resident input around needed initiatives; understand how residents will be involved throughout implementation, and prioritize actions that will form the SDP.

Using the community identified SDP vision and priorities, the Partnership Table will undertake a service and program gap analysis to determine the appropriate approaches and recommendations for addressing these community priorities in the SDP. This information will be formed into a final SDP. City staff will work with the Alexandra Park community stakeholders to incorporate an appropriate evaluation and feedback mechanism such that the SDP can be periodically revisited to meet the future needs of the community.

Moving Forward

Information from the Downtown West Community Services Review will be used to compare the social service gaps and overlaps to key community infrastructure assets in order to provide a comprehensive community service strategy for Downtown West and City staff will report back in 2019. The Alexandra Park SDP framework will be used as the basis for the formation of the community plan.

CONTACT

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