



REPORT FOR ACTION

Expanding Supportive Housing in Toronto - Update

Date: June 19, 2019
To: Planning and Housing Committee
From: Executive Director, Housing Secretariat
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to the Planning and Housing Committee's request to bring forward an aggressive and targeted strategy for supportive and transitional housing in Toronto. Since February 2019 City staff have been working closely with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) and members of the supportive and transitional housing sector to discuss options to address the shortage of supportive housing in Toronto.

On June 5th, 2019 the City and TAEH jointly hosted a supportive charrette to discuss options to how to remove barriers to increase supportive housing in the City. A pre-event survey was sent to ask supportive housing providers to identify short, medium and long-term opportunities to increase supportive housing in the City. Together over 40 participants discussed ideas to increase supportive housing supply in the City.

A portion of the charrette also focused on how modular housing could play a role in addressing supportive housing needs. A guest speaker, Mariner Janes, Program Manager from PHS Community Services in Vancouver, joined the group to share the operator perspective on introducing modular housing. Participants supported a modular housing approach to address short and medium needs in the sector while emphasizing the need to create permanent pathways to housing.

The City will incorporate a supportive housing strategy into the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan in the fall. Staff are working closely with TAEH to summarize the ideas coming out of the June 5th charrette and options for developing modular housing solutions in the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, recommends that:

1. Planning and Housing Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts arising from this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On January 20, 2019 Council adopted MM 2.9 Expanding Supportive Housing in Toronto calling for an aggressive and targeted strategy for supportive and transitional housing. The decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM2.9>

On March 20, 2019 the Planning and Housing Committee adopted PH 3.6 Expanding Supportive Housing in Toronto- Update asking for staff to make best efforts to bring a follow-up report by May 28, 2019. The decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH3.6>

COMMENTS

The City is working closely with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and other partners to develop a strategy to increase the supply of supportive and transitional housing in the City. The City convened a preliminary meeting in February 2019 and continues to be in discussions with TAEH to address supportive housing opportunities.

In April 2019 TAEH released a paper entitled "Developing Supportive Housing in Toronto: Experience, Challenges and Ideas". This paper outlines opportunities for greater collaboration with the City to increase the supply of supportive housing. Together the City and TAEH built on this report by jointly hosting a supportive housing charrette on June 5th 2019 to identify solutions in the short, medium and long-term to increase the supply of supportive housing. An additional session was held as part of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan consultations specifically with supportive and transitional housing providers. Together the events reached over 70 providers and generated ideas to improve the supply of and access to supportive housing.

One of the areas that both the City and the sector are committed to is developing modular housing as a pathway from homelessness. This approach is being implemented aggressively in British Columbia with BC Housing acting as the developer and supportive housing providers operating the new housing. Mariner Janes, Program Manager from PHS Community Services in Vancouver, one of the new modular housing providers, participated in the June 5th charrette. He shared the experiences in Vancouver with the group and also participated in discussions on how to implement this model in Toronto. Toronto providers made suggestions on ideal conditions for siting modular housing for supportive housing proposes. Providers also spoke to the need to create pathways to permanent housing.

As part of the planning for the charrette TAEH reached out to members to identify short, medium and long-term opportunities to increase the supply of supportive housing. This will contribute to a larger TAEH report due in the fall that will speak to development opportunities in the sector.

The supportive housing strategy will be incorporated into the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and be presented to Council in the fall. The strategy will consider the results of the supportive housing charrette, the HousingTO 2020-2030 stakeholder session on supportive and transitional housing, modular housing opportunities and growth opportunities identified by the sector. It will also focus on maintaining the existing supply of supportive housing; promoting opportunities for residents to transition to other housing options; and expanding the supply through a range of initiatives that address the challenges identified by the sector. Discussions with federal and provincial officials will continue over the summer and inform the fall report.

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