

Advancing Truth, Reconciliation and Justice: Supporting 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations' Development of a 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous Emergency Shelter at 996 Woodbine Avenue

Date: January 14, 2025

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management

Wards: 19 - Beaches - East York

SUMMARY

Since July 2023, CreateTO, Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM), Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) and the Indigenous Affairs Office have worked collaboratively with the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations ("2-Spirits") in identifying potential sites for Toronto's first purpose built emergency shelter for 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous individuals seeking shelter or fleeing violence.

The City-owned property at 996 Woodbine Avenue (the "Property") has been identified as the preferred site, and 2-Spirits is proposing to construct and operate an 11-bed emergency shelter to meet the unique needs of Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous community. The proposed emergency shelter includes an integrated transitional housing component, as well as 24/7/365 onsite staff to provide culturally appropriate supports.

To support 2-Spirits' initiative, as an effort to forward the City's commitments set out in the City's Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032 (RAP), and to address the critical need for additional 2SLGBTQIA+ shelter space and transitional housing, City staff are seeking Council authority to transfer a portion of the Property to 2-Spirits for nominal consideration.

2-Spirits is a Toronto based Indigenous community organization offering a wide range of social services and supports within Toronto and is a member of Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council. 2-Spirits has been in operation for over 30 years providing support to the Indigenous and Two Spirit community and leads and operates a Toronto Community Crisis Service team in partnership with Social Development, Finance and Administration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management recommends that:

1. City Council accept an Offer to Purchase from 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations for the sale of a portion of the City-owned property municipally known as 996 Woodbine Avenue as described in Attachment 2 of this report (the "Developable Property"), for the nominal sum of \$2.00, on such terms and conditions as may be deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Transit Commission and Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, to assume all costs and charges related to the disposal of the Developable Property including, but not limited to, land transfer tax, reasonable expenses related to third party consultants, legal and surveying costs, and to waive any customary City related charges and fees associated with the conveyance of lands.
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to complete the disposal of the Developable Property on behalf of the City, including making payment of any necessary expenses and amending the closing and other dates to such earlier or later date(s) on such terms and conditions as they may from time to time consider reasonable; and the appropriate City officials be authorized to take necessary action to give effect thereto.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The foregone revenue for the disposal of a portion of the Property is estimated at \$0.6 million, being the estimated market value of the Property.

The City will also pay land transfer tax, and waive any customary City related charges and fees associated with the conveyance of lands. The cost of this is estimated to be approximately \$20,000 and will be funded through CREM's operating budget.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the financial impacts associated with this report to be considered along with other priorities in future budget processes.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 15, 2024, the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee adopted item QS5.2 "The Access Plan for Two-Spirit Trans and Non-Binary Youth", which is the City's first coordinated initiative to improve health and social outcomes for gender-diverse people in Toronto.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.QS5.2>

On April 6, 2022, City Council adopted item 2022.EX31.1 "Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032" and directed the City Manager to ensure that City staff work towards the City's implementation of the Strategic Actions contained within the Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX31.1>

On November 22, 2019, the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee adopted item AA2.2 "Meeting in the Middle - Update on Implementation", which outlined the actions TSSS has undertaken to implement Meeting in the Middle, an engagement strategy and action plan co-developed by TSSS, the Indigenous Community Advisory Board, and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council to foster better relationships in order to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.AA2.2>

COMMENTS

Background

Since July of 2023, CreateTO, Corporate Real Estate Management, Toronto Shelter and Support Services and the Indigenous Affairs Office have been actively working with 2-Spirits to support the development of an Indigenous-led, purpose built and operated emergency shelter for 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous individuals facing homelessness, and/or fleeing violence. 2-Spirits has secured construction and operational funding through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Indigenous Services Canada's *Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative* for the proposed shelter project.

2-Spirits is a Toronto based Indigenous community organization offering a wide range of social services and supports within Toronto and is a member of Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council. 2-Spirits has been in operation for over 30 years providing support to the Indigenous and 2-Spirit community and leads and operates a Toronto Community Crisis Service team in partnership with Social Development, Finance and Administration. See Attachment 3 for details on 2-Spirits' organizational history and a brief introduction of the shelter project.

Need for 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous Shelter Services

There is a critical need for services tailored to 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. The Toronto Shelter and Support Services *2021 Street Needs Assessment* found that Indigenous people are significantly overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in Toronto, making up 15% of people experiencing homelessness yet only approximately 2.5% of the general Toronto population. This overrepresentation is even more significant among people experiencing outdoor homelessness, with 23% of people sleeping outdoors identifying as Indigenous. 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals face challenges in Toronto's shelters related to a lack of privacy, loss of control, vulnerability, and related safety fears in open shelters with shared sleeping arrangements and/or multi-stall bathrooms/showers.

In its *Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan*, TSSS has committed to supporting the development of Indigenous-led homelessness services and Indigenous people's right to self-determination. TSSS is supportive of 2-Spirits' proposal for an Indigenous owned and operated purpose-built 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous shelter.

Advancing the City of Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan

The transfer of a portion of the Property to 2-Spirits is a meaningful opportunity for the City to advance the commitments set out in the City's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032*, including but not limited to:

- Action 6 - Improve Relationships with Indigenous Organizations
- Action 11 - Improve Community Safety and Well-being
- Action 13 - Support Indigenous Health and Well-being
- Action 14 - Increase Access to Affordable Housing
- Action 15 - Support Indigenous Placemaking
- Action 19 - Return Land and Stewardship Rights

In addition to supporting community safety and well-being and increasing access to housing, the proposed transfer clearly advances the City's commitment under Action 19, being a commitment to "make every effort to facilitate the transfer of stewardship, control and/or ownership of lands and waters to Indigenous Nations, communities, collectives and organizations and agencies". It is an opportunity for the City to support Indigenous place making by providing land to Toronto's Indigenous community to create a dedicated Indigenous Two Spirit space and supports an important Toronto-based Indigenous community organization in enhancing and expanding Indigenous-led service delivery to Toronto's Indigenous community. This project affords the City a meaningful and important opportunity to advance the work of reconciliation.

Advancing the City's Access Plan for Two-Spirit, Trans, and Non-Binary Youth

2-Spirits' proposed development supports the delivery of the City's *Access Plan for Two-Spirit, Trans, and Non- Binary Youth* (the "Access Plan") facilitated by Social Development, Finance and Administration. Specifically, by delivering 11 beds of additional shelter and transitional housing capacity tailored to the unique needs of Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous community, the proposed development advances numerous actions, including but not limited to:

- Action 1 - Increase access to culturally appropriate referrals and service navigation supports for Two-Spirit, and Indigenous trans and non-binary youth.
- Action 4 - Increase the number and relevance of programs and services that promote access to traditional cultural practices for Two-Spirit, and Indigenous trans and non-binary youth.
- Action 6 - Invest in shelter system policies and protocols that support Two-Spirit and Indigenous trans and non-binary youth to access medicines and engage in cultural practices.

- Action 23 - Improve access to intersectional gender affirming shelter options tailored for Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary youth through enhancements to policies and protocols.
- Action 24 - Improve gender inclusivity of family shelter spaces for Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary diverse youth through enhancements to policies and protocols.
- Action 29 - Increase the supply of gender-affirming affordable and supportive housing for Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary diverse youth.
- Action 30 - Reduce barriers to gender-affirming affordable and supportive housing and housing services for Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary youth.

The City's support for an Indigenous-led, developed, and operated 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous, emergency shelter would ensure much-needed culturally appropriate gender and sexuality inclusive shelter and transitional housing supports for some of the most vulnerable Torontonians.

Property History

The City purchased the Property, known municipally as 996 Woodbine Avenue, in 2013 on behalf of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to facilitate the buildout of an underground tunnelling in connection with the secondary entrance and exit of Woodbine Station. Following completion of TTC's construction, the TTC Board declared portions of the Property surplus (shown as Part 1 and Part 2 in Attachment 2) to its operational needs, except for a below-grade portion in the rear (shown as Part 3 in Attachment 2). The retained below-grade portion in the rear contains an underground stairwell which connects the eastbound platform of Line 2 with a tunnel leading to the second exit structure installed at Woodbine Station, and the City will retain ownership of this infrastructure.

The Property has been vacant for more than 10 years. CreateTO and CREM have been actively assessing opportunities for redevelopment or repurposing the Property for the past five years.

Proposed Nominal Transaction

The Property was identified as the preferred location for a new emergency shelter that meets the unique needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous community in Toronto following a comprehensive assessment of potential sites, led by CreateTO. The Property was identified as ideal given the size of the Property and location, being in the vicinity of 2-Spirits' current operations and community. See Attachment 1 for a location map of the Property.

2-Spirits is proposing to construct a new 11-bed purpose-built emergency shelter for 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous individuals seeking shelter and/or fleeing violence on a portion of the Property, as described in Attachment 2 of this report. The emergency shelter will have a reconfigurable transitional housing component, as well as 24/7/365 onsite staff to provide culturally appropriate supports.

The Property would be severed, allowing the City to retain ownership over such portions of the Property as required by TTC. The remainder of the Property would be transferred

to 2-Spirits at nominal value. It is anticipated the proposed transaction will be completed in early March 2025, following the satisfactory completion of the TTC's diligence on the proposed shelter design.

CONTACT

Alison Folosea, Director Transaction Services, Corporate Real Estate Management, 416-721-0953, Alison.Folosea@toronto.ca

Loretta Ramadhin, Director, Infrastructure and Development, Toronto Shelter and Support Services, 416-392-7169, Loretta.Ramadhin@toronto.ca

Selina Young, Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, 416-392-8936, Selina.Young@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Patrick Matozzo
Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map of the Property
Attachment 2 - Property Sketch of Developable Property
Attachment 3 - 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations: Organizational History and Shelter Project

Attachment 1 - Location Map of the Property



Attachment 2 - Property Sketch of Developable Property

