

# Community Bulletin #2

The Roehampton Residence and 55/65 Broadway Avenue  
August 18, 2020

This is the second Community Bulletin for the temporary shelter activated to support physical distancing in response to COVID-19 – the Roehampton Residence at 808 Mount Pleasant Avenue and the interim housing site at 55/65 Broadway Avenue. These bulletins are intended to share key information and updates about the sites based on the frequently raised community comments, questions, and concerns shared via project e-mail, voicemail, and the online feedback form at [Toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](https://toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters). They are not intended to answer every community submission. Follow-up community bulletins will provide more information and project-related details, and we encourage you to continue sharing your feedback with us.

This Bulletin was developed by City staff and Swerhun Inc, a third-party community facilitator retained by the Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration Division at the City of Toronto as part of the community engagement process for the Roehampton Residence at 808 Mount Pleasant Avenue.

This Bulletin contains three sections and provides the following info:

1. **Important Notices**
2. **Updates from the Roehampton Residence and 55/65 Broadway Avenue**
3. **FAQ based on community feedback received from August 5 to 12, 2020**

All feedback received through the project email, voicemail and online feedback form is being tracked and shared with City staff for consideration.

These community bulletins will be issued regularly and posted on the project website.

Community Bulletin #1 is available [here](#).

If you'd like to sign up to receive the Bulletins and/or share your questions, comments, and/or feedback with us:

- Send us an email to: [clc.roehampton.residence@gmail.com](mailto:clc.roehampton.residence@gmail.com);
- Leave us a voicemail at: 416-479-0243; or
- Updates, as well as a feedback form can be found at: [Toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](https://toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters)

## 1. Important Notices

### Upcoming Online/ Telephone Information Session

The purpose of this session is to share information about the temporary program activated to support physical distancing in response to COVID-19 at the Roehampton Hotel and the interim housing site at 55/65 Broadway Avenue, answer community questions, and address some of the key community concerns.

**Date:** August 19, 2020

**Time:** 6 – 8 p.m.

**How to join:** by dialing 416-216-5643 (access code: 132 741 5840) or visiting [www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](https://www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters) and clicking on the meeting link.

The session will be recorded and available after on the project website.

We encourage you to send in questions in advance via project contact information above.

## 2. Updates from the City of Toronto SSHA team

The City staff continues working hard to bring more services and supports to the Roehampton Residence, including:

- The partnership program with Toronto North Support Services (TNSS) started on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Their [Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team](#) (M-DOT) and [Coordinated Access To Care from Hospital](#) (CATCH) come to the Roehampton Residence every Monday and Thursday from 1 pm to 4pm. The services range from one-on-one counselling and mental health supports to ID and income tax supports. You can read more about TNSS and their programs here: <http://www.tnss.ca/the-access-point/>
- As of August 18<sup>th</sup>, the Roehampton Residence clients are able to use the Hotel's pool area to congregate and smoke. Smoking is not allowed in front of the building.
- **As 55/65 Broadway Ave. approaches its closing date on September 6**, City staff have been working hard with clients to find them permanent housing. So far 15 clients from Broadway have found permanent housing in the last few weeks and a further 25-30 more clients have a strong possibility of finding housing before the end of August. Over the course of the pandemic, through our Rapid Re-Housing initiative, which includes housing allowances and rent-geared-to income supports, we have helped house 1,570 people from across the shelter system. Some of these success stories have been featured on our social media channels this week: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofto> and on twitter [@cityoftoronto](https://twitter.com/cityoftoronto).

Also, over the past week:

- We met with various local school representatives to discuss on how to best move forward with the development of the School Safety Plan. Walkabouts at locals schools are being scheduled and a formalized plan will be ready for the beginning of the school year; and
- Toronto Police Service added uniformed overnight bike patrols to patrol the community between 7 pm and 7 am. Toronto Police have also provided a dedicated team of two Police Officers to provide foot patrols of the Roehampton and Broadway Apartment Communities 24/7 utilizing their Primary Response Unit (PSU). These new patrols were achieved by re-allocating existing resources from within the division and does not include the use of paid duty police resources.

More updates on community safety, shelter services and supports, and more information about shelter clients' rights, responsibilities, and enforcement, are included in this issue of the Community Bulletin.

The City of Toronto thanks everyone for their well wishes for the staff member injured by a client at 55-65 Broadway Avenue. The member of staff is currently recovering well at home.

The City of Toronto also thanks those who have donated items over the last number of days following the two rallies that occurred last Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>.

And finally, The City of Toronto thanks the Toronto Police Service for swift action and City staff who alerted police about the alleged presence of a gun on the 55/65 Broadway Ave property. Weapons of any kind are not permitted in City shelters. The safety of all Toronto residents, including those residing in the shelter system, City staff and the community is the City's first and foremost priority. The full City statement at: [www.toronto.ca/news/man-staying-at-midtown-housing-program-arrested-charged-with-weapons-offences/](http://www.toronto.ca/news/man-staying-at-midtown-housing-program-arrested-charged-with-weapons-offences/)

More information about the City of Toronto's homelessness services COVID-19 response can be found at [www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](http://www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters).

### 3. Frequently Asked Questions

Between August 5 to 12, 2020, the Community Engagement Facilitators received 89 e-mails, 6 voicemails, and 101 submissions via the online feedback form.

This section summarizes frequently submitted comments, questions, and concerns shared by community members. Responses from the City of Toronto are noted in *italics*. The feedback from the community is summarized and organized into key categories below. Click on the topic of your interest below to read more:

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***Please note that the following documentation from community feedback does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of the perspectives shared, nor does this documentation of community feedback indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of the City of Toronto.***

#### A. City’s Authority and Decision-making around Temporary Housing and Shelter Programs

A significant number of the submitted questions and concerns related to the City’s legal authority to open temporary physical distancing shelters in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the terms of the Roehampton Lease, and the definition of “temporary”. Examples of the frequently asked questions and frequently raised concerns include:

- Under what specific authority / legislation did City staff open the Roehampton Residence with a 2-year lease and option to extend for a third year?
- Where are the other temporary sites located? What are the terms of their leases? The Roehampton site seems to be an outlier in terms of the lease duration.
- Can 'temporarily' be defined more specifically? The current information we have indicates 2-3 years which [is]... not so temporary.
- Is it possible to cancel the 2-year lease with Roehampton and move the shelter to a neighbourhood without so many schools?
- I am curious about the rationale for locating a shelter at the former Roehampton Hotel.

*City Council has previously delegated authority to City staff to site and secure shelters in locations that meet City zoning by-laws, without public consultation, and to respond to urgent or anticipated needs to relocate shelter or respite sites. Additional authority was delegated to City staff in City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management. Under this authority the City entered into negotiations to open the Roehampton Hotel, along with over 30*

*other sites, to create physical distancing in the shelter system. The Roehampton Hotel (also called Roehampton Residence) met all City zoning by-laws for use as a municipal shelter. Even though the City is not required to seek community input or permission on the location of new shelter sites, the City is committed to engaging the Roehampton community and the focus of the engagement process is how best to support and integrate the shelter as part of the neighbourhood. While engaging the community in advance is preferred, it is not required for our delegated authority, and the rapid nature of the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the critical need to open shelter space in order to save lives did not allow for this engagement process to occur prior to the opening of shelter.*

*On March 23, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an emergency was declared by the Province of Ontario, as well as in the City of Toronto under section 4 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, and section 59-5.1 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management. Actions taken by the City pursuant to City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59 were reported to City Council on April 30, 2020 in CC20.3. This included a summary of sites opened or in negotiations to open to that date:*

*Creating more capacity for physical distancing within the shelter system which includes opening 11 new shelter facilities with more than 470 new spaces, securing 11 hotels with more than 1,020 rooms, and establishing one hotel with 200 rooms as a dedicated recovery site.*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC20.3>

*Since then, through the emergency decision making structure of the Emergency Operations Centre, more sites, for a total of 3000 beds, have been approved to be opened as part of Shelter, Support & Housing Administration's work to create physical distancing in the shelter system due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Of the sites opened as part of our pandemic response to increase physical distancing in the system:*

- 1) 7 of the sites (now closed as shelters and returned to Parks, Forestry and Recreation) were community centres across the City – they were open for 3 months and were returned to Parks, Forestry and Recreation at the end of June. They are the only sites with this short of a tenure.*
- 2) 8 of the sites are part of a previous Request for Proposal process and there are still 4 years remaining on those terms.*
- 3) 3 sites made use of buildings in the City's portfolio.*
- 4) 14 sites were more recently negotiated and are primarily hotels that were operational to travellers prior to the pandemic – due to the uncertainty of the length of time the pandemic would impact travel and their business, the terms of these leases were initially 6 months with some up to a year. More of these sites are now being renegotiated for up to a year as we continue to need the space and the owners are more open to a longer term tenancy as the pandemic continues to impact travel. We will be doing an ongoing assessment of our capacity needs and will consider additional extensions at these sites if physical distancing requirements remain in place.*

5) Roehampton Hotel –The terms of the lease of the Roehampton Hotel, as proposed by the landlord, asked for a 2 year term (and a discount was offered if a 2 year term was agreed upon). Since it was becoming clearer that COVID-19 will be with us for at least the next year to 18 months, the City decided we need to secure space for the potential duration of the pandemic and for the likely extension of the requirement for physical distancing post-pandemic in the shelter system should it be required. As mentioned earlier, we are also actively extending any lease that is for a shorter period. This lease for the Roehampton is in line with this approach.

Our permanent programs typically have leases that are 10 years or longer with options for renewal, or the building is owned by the City or an agency partner. Any lease for shelter space that is 5 years or less is considered temporary.

We currently operate or oversee shelters in 22 Wards across the City, and almost all of those shelters are located close to schools and day cares. More information about our plans to work with schools close to the Roehampton can be found in the Updates on Community Safety section of this bulletin.

## B. Client's Rights, Responsibilities and Enforcement

Many questions and concerns shared over the last week focused on the responsibilities and rights of residents at the site. There were also many questions about what rules and guidelines the site has for residents and if/how these are enforced. A snapshot of the frequently raised questions is included below:

- We are seeing people from the shelter gathering in large groups, not wearing masks on and around the shelter property and in the local community. What's happening is the opposite of what is supposed to be happening (physical distancing to stop the spread of COVID) which is making things more dangerous for the people in the shelter and the community, especially children and seniors. What is being done to ensure shelter clients are wearing masks, social distancing, and following public health guidelines?
- There have been reports that security staff are not engaged and that staff, including security, are afraid to work at the shelter and interact with clients who may be carrying weapons and/or be violent.
- What happens to clients if/when they are discharged from the shelter, especially if they are being discharged for violent behaviour or having a weapon. Are they just put out on the street?
- Does the shelter have a curfew and how is it enforced?
- Do shelter staff search clients for weapons and drugs when they enter or leave the shelter?
- There needs to be zero tolerance for weapons and violence with strong consequences. Zero tolerance doesn't work without enforcement and consequences.

*It is important to remember that shelter residents are equal citizens of the city and have the same rights, freedoms and responsibilities as other residents of the city. Like all residents, they are expected to conduct themselves within the rules/laws and bylaws.*

*Shelter staff hold regular resident meetings where clients are reminded of the rules, policies and guidelines of the shelter as well as the consequences. The program has a zero-tolerance policy for weapons and violent behaviour. Possession of any illegal weapon is reported to the police immediately.*

*Masks and hand sanitizer are provided at main entry/exit and shelter staff screen residents for COVID-19 symptoms upon entry/exit to the building. Shelter staff promote the Provincial COVID-19 guidelines at the site through the Public Health posters. Staff on site also share educational information about COVID-19 and regularly remind residents of the importance of following COVID-19 guidelines, including wearing masks and socially distancing both while at the site and when in the community.*

*Any form of violence or aggressive behaviour, whether to staff or other residents, will lead to discharge and staff will involve the police as needed. Residents are never discharged to the street; they are provided with an alternative shelter space or, in extreme circumstances, taken into police custody for criminal behaviour.*

*Security staff have specific duties and responsibilities to be engaged and responsive at all times with oversight from the City of Toronto's Corporate Security division. Supervisors and Corporate Security regularly monitor security staff to ensure they are performing their duties and investigate any/all reports of failure to perform. Security staff are trained (including in de-escalation) and are provided with the necessary supports and equipment to keep themselves, staff and clients safe. Security involve the police if and when required.*

*In the shelter system, the term "curfew" is used to describe a process for checking whether the client is intending to make use of the bed. Curfews are in place to ensure beds are being used by those in need. Just like any other resident of Toronto, residents of the site are free to come and go from the shelter (their place of residence). However, staff generally encourage shelter clients to stay at the site overnight.*

*The Roehampton Residence has a standard curfew of 1:00am. Staff conduct a bed check at 11:00 pm where they physically check which clients are in the building. The clients who are not in at 11:00 pm are noted and staff will look for them again at 1:00 am. If they have not returned by 1:00 am, they are discharged from the site as a failure to return. Residents can be readmitted if they return after 1:00 am; however, if a resident is regularly coming back after 1:00, am they are reminded of the curfew time and may be referred to another site.*

## **C. Who the Roehampton Residence Serves**

A significant number of questions and concerns shared over the past week were about who specifically Roehampton Residence serves. There were a number of suggestions to change the Roehampton program to serve women and children escaping violence. Some of the frequently submitted questions and suggestions include:

- Is the Roehampton shelter intended for the incarcerated population released early due to COVID-19?
- Not that all homeless people have criminal records, but before registering these groups to their new surroundings, are they checked re: any past criminal history?

- Are there any children in the Roehampton site? What school arrangements have been made for them?
- Are there any plans to assess the mental and physical condition of the residents of the Roehampton to establish potential risk of criminal or violent behaviour?
- Are there any plans to place addicts into rehab prior to their taking up residence or are they going to be housed regardless of their need for medical intervention?
- Where are the individuals from the Broadway shelters going to be placed?
- There is tremendous support for converting this shelter to one for women and their children looking to escape a dangerous relationship - arguably:
  - More vulnerable (zero experience living as homeless)
  - Very likely more respectful
  - Far less criminal activity

*The Roehampton Residence provides services to adult couples and singles of all genders. Some residents come from other sites in the city and some transition from living outside. There are no children at the Roehampton site. It is not a family shelter.*

*Roehampton Residence is not a specialized program to provide jail beds or to serve incarcerated population released early due to COVID-19. However, anyone released from any institution in the city without a permanent address and in need of shelter can be admitted to the city's shelter system and placed at any shelter location across the city, including the Roehampton Residence, for physical distancing. The City does not perform any criminal background checks for admission but has rules and protocols the clients need to follow once admitted.*

*SSHA's top priority is to ensure that vulnerable people can access temporary accommodation when they need it. Please see the section on the Clients' Rights, Responsibilities and Enforcement in this Bulletin for more information.*

*The City follows the Housing First approach and operates based on harm reduction principles, which means direct access to permanent housing as quickly as possible, with the supports needed to maintain it. These supports include case managers that work with residents to determine services to meet their needs, including mental health and addictions counselling, primary care, and a range of social and employment services. To read more about the Roehampton Residence specific services and supports provided on-site, please refer to the section on the Shelter Supports and Services.*

*The clients of the interim housing site at 55/65 Broadway are being rehoused and/or relocated to other sites across Toronto; they will not be transferred to Roehampton. The Broadway site is closing by September 6, 2020.*

*Based on current demand, it is not feasible for the City to change the program of the Roehampton site to be a shelter for families and children. The highest demand for shelter services is among adult singles and couples.*

## D. Shelter Supports and Services

Community members have submitted many questions and comments about services and supports that are available to shelter clients. The following is a summary of points raised by community members:

- What services and supports are available to shelter clients?
- What is available for shelter clients to do in the shelter during the day? Where are they supposed to go?
- This location is not good for a shelter because there are too few/little resources and social support services available to the shelter residents in the area.
- It is important to provide all kinds of supports and services to the shelter clients because homelessness is complex and requires solutions and services beyond providing shelter. There is no short-term fix.
- Mental health, addiction services, and other social services are required to support vulnerable populations.
- Is there a supervised injection site at the Residence? This could help reduce overdoses by providing a safe, private place for those who use drugs.

*The information below outlines the supports offered to clients, including when the program opened, what is offered today, and what is currently planned. Please refer to Bulletin #1 for further descriptions of these supports: [www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](http://www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters)*

### **At Program Opening** (on July 3, 2020)

- *4 security guards assigned 24/7 to respond to security issues and conduct perimeter patrols of the area immediately surrounding Roehampton Residence and the two adjacent properties.*
- *28 security cameras installed to monitor the building.*
- *1 Community Safety Team (CST) of two people assigned to pick up hazards such as discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia.*
- *The Works provided on site harm reduction services once a week.*
- *Housing Services worked with clients happening on a daily basis.*
- *Ongoing meetings are held regularly with clients which include reviewing the Good Neighbours Policy and their responsibilities.*
- *Posted signs in the building regarding conduct in the neighbourhood.*
- *Established a regular garbage pick-up schedule.*

### **Current Service Enhancements** (July and August 2020)

- *5 additional cameras installed to have a live view of the exterior as well as the properties immediately surrounding Roehampton. A total of 33 cameras are currently on site.*
- *There are now a total of 7 people (3 CSTs and an individual) available 24/7:*
- *A second team to provide coverage for the community surrounding the Roehampton Hotel;*
- *A third floating team; and*
- *An additional CST agent specifically to monitor the Roehampton Hotel exterior.*
- *Toronto Police Services – Community Response Unit is visiting site regularly.*
- *1 dedicated mobile guard and vehicle for the community 24/7.*

- *Additional TPS duty overnight bike patrol to patrol the community between 7 pm and 7 am and foot patrols 24/7.*
- *Toronto North Support Services (TNSS) has started to offer mental health case management services. Their multidisciplinary team provide one-on-one counselling and support every Monday and Thursday from 1 pm to 4pm.*
- *The Works now provides daily access to harm reduction supports.*
- *A fence has been installed to allow residents to use the pool deck to concrete and smoke until the pool is filled in and courtyard is finished.*

#### **Planned Service Enhancements (September 2020)**

- *Conversations ongoing on how TPS can further support and/or provide enhanced community safety measures to the surrounding community.*
- *A dedicated housing team will be available in the coming weeks to provide clients with individualized supports and housing search assistance, as well as referring clients to mental health professionals, employment services, skills training, harm reduction and addictions counselling, and other supports as needed.*
- *Solid Waste Management and Transportation Services will be looking into: increasing the number of bins in the area around schools in the area for easy access to dispose of garbage found; increasing pick-ups of public garbage bins; and increased cleaning of TTC shelters.*
- *A fence will be installed for the neighboring day care program.*
- *A deck on third floor is in design phase and will be under construction by September, providing outdoor space for individuals staying at Roehampton. The existing pool structure will be filled in to create a courtyard.*
- *Inner City Health Associates will be providing on-site clinical mental and physical health supports with services as of next week.*

## **E. Updates on Community Safety**

Many community questions, comments, and concerns were about community safety, especially for children, students, and seniors. Some of the questions and comments representing commonly raised community concerns include:

- *There are many schools in close proximity, which will be opening soon. Northern Secondary on Mount Pleasant is just across the street, a Day Care is in the next building on Mount Pleasant and Roehampton, and a Montessori School up the street on Mount Pleasant to name a few. There is North Toronto Collegiate and St. Monica's on Broadway, and other schools on Eglinton Avenue. We do not want children and teenagers exposed to bad elements.*
- *I think the shelter is important but that the city should be more transparent with the school board, daycare, and community. As well as, installing safe injection sites and a close foodbank!*
- *What guardrails are being implemented to ensure the safety of children in neighbouring elementary schools and day cares beyond "increased security presence"?*

- Concerned about some of the behaviour some of the clients of the shelters are exhibiting. What plans do you have in place to protect our children and elderly in the neighbourhood?
- What is the City's action plan? What is the timeline?

*The City is working with the local school partners and TDSB school trustees to develop and implement a school safety plan. The community meeting will be a helpful venue to hear community concerns to inform the development of a plan that will be in place ahead of school re-starting in September.*

*Steps that have been undertaken to date:*

- *3 community safety teams of 2 people are available to respond 24/7 to schools', day cares', and other community requests to pick-up needles and drug paraphernalia and respond to immediate non-police or non-EMS related matters via 24/7 Shelter Line -- 437 247 2287.*
- *One 24/7 security mobile patrol with two security staff frequently checks identified hot spots and conducts proactive patrols of the school properties reporting any issues or concerns found to the 24-hour TDSB Security Operations Centre. The patrols are conducted between Erskine Avenue and Roehampton Avenue, Mount Pleasant Road and Bayview Avenue.*
- *Toronto Police Service additional uniformed bike patrols overnight to patrol the community between 7 pm and 7 am.*
- *As of August 13, the Roehampton Residence clients use the Hotel's pool area to congregate and smoke. Smoking will not be allowed in front of the building.*
- *The City is working with Tiny Tots Daycare at 820 Mount Pleasant to erect a fence between the daycare's property and the Roehampton Hotel.*

*Next steps:*

*The City is establishing a regular process of communicating and engaging with the school principals and trustees. The first meeting was held on August 12, 2020 and the next meeting is being scheduled before August 31, 2020.*

*The City is following up with the principals of the five schools within the walking distance of the Roehampton Hotel to:*

- 1. Go on a "safety walk" to identity hotspots around the schools;*
- 2. Understand peak times, flows, and key geographic areas of student travel; and*
- 3. Develop a detailed safety plan in time for the opening of the school.*

*Most shelters in the city are co-located or located close to schools and other children's spaces and are good neighbours. A few examples include - Fort York Men's Residence is co-located with a City-run daycare; St. Paul's Catholic School is across the street from the Good Shepherd Ministries shelter. The Salvation Army's 124-bed men's shelter operated next door to Ronald McDonald House and one block from Orde Street Public School for 40 years. When that shelter relocated, it formed a good relationship with the four Leslieville schools located within three blocks of the shelter.*

*For general information on community safety and other safety measures in place, please refer to [Community Bulletin #1](#).*

## **F. Community Support and Opportunities to Volunteer**

A number of people reached out over the last week to inquire about providing support and donations to the shelter clients and staff working at the shelter. Some of the comments include:

- Thank you for responding to the need to open more beds for people experiencing homelessness. We would also like to see more longer-term solutions for homelessness, options for affordable housing across Toronto, and mixed-income communities.
- I think the City has done the right thing in moving people into hotels. Vacant hotels are a good idea to combat the housing crisis. I would welcome more in Midtown.
- I would like to make our new neighbours at the shelter feel welcome and supported. How can I best help? Is there a way to donate food/furniture/clothing?
- I would like the residents to know that there are neighbours who support their right to housing and who wish them well.
- I would like to offer my support to shelter residents and staff. Please let me know if there is any help I can provide as a community member.
- Are there any opportunities to volunteer at the shelter, or community-led initiatives to provide supports?

*Thank you. Volunteer opportunities and other community-led initiatives will be discussed and determined through the Community Liaison Committee (CLC). This question was answered in [Community Bulletin #1](#) and more information can be found in that Bulletin.*

*In the meantime, you can get in touch with Hellen Haziprodromu at [Hellen.Haziprodromu@toronto.ca](mailto:Hellen.Haziprodromu@toronto.ca)*