

Community Bulletin #3

The Roehampton Residence and 55/65 Broadway Avenue
August 27, 2020

This is the third 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 12 to 19, 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 #2 is available [here](#).
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;
- 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

Community Liaison Committee

The City of Toronto's Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA) Division is creating a Community Liaison Committee (CLC), an advisory body, to work collaboratively with City staff operating the shelter, other relevant City staff and community partners to achieve a successful integration of the shelter into the neighbourhood. Regular CLC meetings will be held with the first taking place in mid-September.

The CLC will include representatives from local organizations, including resident associations, condo boards, Business Improvement Areas, police, schools, and other community organizations. The draft Terms of Reference and Application Form will be available on the

project website at www.toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters by early next week. Interested in applying to be on the CLC? Please review the draft Terms of Reference and submit an application. Details on how to apply are included in the application form.

Please note that while not everyone interested will be able to join the CLC, representatives from local resident organizations, business improvement areas, and community organizations will be selected. Meeting summaries will be made publicly available on the project website so that everyone can stay updated. Those not able to attend will still be able to work with the City and the engagement team to share key concerns and suggestions for inclusion on meeting agendas. Time will be reserved at each meeting to review feedback/concerns shared in advance.

2. Updates from the City of Toronto SSHA team

- The City continues working hard to bring more services and supports to the Roehampton Residence. Starting this week:
 - The Toronto North Support Services (TNSS) Multi-Disciplinary Outreach Team and Coordinated Access To Care from Hospital team continue providing their services at 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.
 - The City is actively working with Inner City Health Associates (ICHA) to set up a primary care clinic. Medical professionals from ICHA have been visiting the shelter to assist with setting up the clinic. The services ICHA provide include primary health care, counselling, mental health support/services & referrals, addiction support/counselling, and referrals for on-going health care services in the community.
 - The City is working to create outdoor space off street level for residents to use onsite at the Roehampton Residence. The permits for the construction of the deck in the pool area have been submitted. Construction is expected to start sometime next week with an estimated completion at the end September. Temporary fencing has been installed to allow for the rooftop to be used by Roehampton residents, but the rooftop will have to be closed for an approximately two week period during the final construction of the roof top space.
 - A number of you have raised questions about the addition of supervised consumption for residents of Roehampton as part of our onsite harm reduction services. If the City does pursue this service – and no decisions have been made – it would NOT be a publicly accessible program. In other words, it would be one of many discrete health services available to people who are staying at Roehampton and not available to members of the public.
There are many benefits to a health service like harm reduction, particularly as we see an alarming increase in opioid overdoses and deaths, not just in Toronto, but across Canada. Availability of this type of program may also reduce drug use out in the community, which has been a concern for many. Should the City pursue this health service at Roehampton, we will advise the community well in advance, and fully outline and explain how the program will work.
- Currently, there are 140 people occupying 100 of the available 109 units at the Roehampton Residence. Ongoing vacancies will be filled through our central intake process and by referral from other programs.

- As 55/65 Broadway Ave. approaches its closing at the end of the month, City staff continue working hard to help people find permanent housing. So far 18 people from Broadway have found permanent housing in the last few weeks and a further 25-30 more people from Broadway have a strong possibility of finding housing before the end of August. People living in 55/65 Broadway Avenue who are not able to secure housing by the end of the month will be offered referrals to other hotel locations across the City.
- 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).
- The City of Toronto thanks the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Paramedic Services, on-site security and City staff for their swift action in responding to an assault of a Roehampton resident outside the Roehampton shelter on August 22, 2020. None of the individuals sought as suspects in the assault are residents at the Roehampton site.
- Inaccurate reporting related to the length of the lease has come to the City’s Attention. The terms of the lease are 2 years, ending on May 31, 2022 with an option to renew for one more year, ending May 31, 2023.
- School Safety Plan – following the first meeting with local school representatives on August 12, 2020, the Manager of the Roehampton Residence has reached out to the five area schools to conduct a safety walk with the school principals, parent council, and corporate security that will highlight areas of concern and help gather data on peak times and student walking routes to inform the School Safety Plan. The second meeting with local school representatives and local TDSB Trustees occurred on August 26, 2020. Weekly meetings are continuing to be scheduled to finalize the School Safety Plan before the start of the school year.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

Between August 12 to 19, 2020, the Community Engagement Facilitators received 89 e-mails, 8 voicemails, and 138 submissions via the online feedback form.

This section summarizes frequently submitted comments, questions, and concerns shared by community members that have not been addressed in the previous Bulletins. 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 refer to [Community Bulletin #1](#) and [Community Bulletin #2](#) for more information on:

- Safety and crime in the community
- Urgent need for temporary housing programs, lack of community engagement and notice prior to opening the sites, City's legal authority
- Information about the people who access our programs
- Shelter resident rights, responsibilities, and enforcement, including COVID-19 and public health recommendations
- Services and supports available to residents in our programs
- Donations and community support

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. Serving Populations with Different Needs

A number of the submitted questions and concerns related to serving people with different needs. People were interested in the possibility of providing shelter focused on specific populations – from those who might be experiencing severe mental health challenges, those who might have criminal history, and those who are seeking shelter to stabilize during financial instability.

Some of the submitted questions and frequently raised concerns include:

- Is there any vetting of residents before admissions? Why doesn't the City provide separate shelters / programs to accommodate populations with different needs?
- What's of concern to me is the health and safety of both other residents in the shelter, and the staff if it isn't known who's there. My understanding is limited personal information is collected from residents, which indeed depending on the nature of their offences does put lives at risk.
- We've been told that many residents were released from mental and correction facilities. Those released early from correction facilities, if they have bail conditions, are those being followed up on?
- Across Toronto, should shelter residents be billeted in separate clusters, with respect to their specific needs?

The City's Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration Division's primary responsibility is to provide shelter to anyone who is in need of a safe indoor place to sleep and to support housing plans. If we do not shelter someone who is experiencing homelessness, they remain in our communities, but now are likely staying outside and without adequate supports.

People experiencing homelessness are typically referred to shelters by Central Intake, our centralized call centre that helps oversee Toronto's emergency shelter system. Central Intake does an initial interview to confirm that the individual/family is experiencing homelessness, and then determines where the available appropriate shelter space is and makes that referral.

SSHA is not a mental health and/or addiction support service; instead, we rely on partnerships with mental health and addiction services from the Provincial and other agency levels.

We have been working with provincial institutions including corrections and hospitals to ensure individuals released from Provincial facilities have housing plans in place, so that fewer people are discharged into homelessness.

City staff are trained and experienced in understanding the people they serve, and the variety of complex needs they may come with. We provide housing support, informal counselling support, case management, and community referrals, and we seek out partnerships as much as possible. In addition, SSHA provides on-going follow up supports to former residents for up to one year after being housed.

B. Cost-related Questions

We have received several questions about the cost of operating the Roehampton Residence, including:

- How much does the City pay to rent and operate the Roehampton Hotel?
- If you decide to keep the Roehampton Hotel as a shelter, will you be adjusting our property taxes? Specifically, my commercial property taxes went up \$3,600 this year which is an 11% increase from 2019.
- In the last week, more security around these residences have been noticed. Will the increase in these security costs be budgeted as a permanent line item on the City's books for the next two years or is this expected to be a temporary expenditure?

The overall cost including staffing, food, rent, cleaning and security costs is \$140/night/person. This includes a cost of \$55/night/room for the hotel.

Property taxes are assessed by Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), a natural third party and collected by the City of Toronto. Local property tax rates are not specifically tied to this project.

Security expenses are part of the shelter's operating budget and will continue to be assessed and adjusted according to the needs of the site and community.

C. Other Questions and Feedback

Some other frequently asked questions include:

- The number of homeless people is expected to increase due to the continuing economic crisis, especially if the next COVID wave brings more shut-downs, and evictions surge. Where would the new homeless be housed?
- What is the long-term strategy for this shelter? When the lease is up, where would you transition the homeless too?
- Why not open temporary shelters at the Exhibition Place, Metro Convention Centre, or Downsview – large spaces that are unoccupied now. They would provide plenty of space for physical distancing.

The City is continuing to seek out access to more shelter space, if required, due to a potential second wave of COVID-19 this fall or winter, increases in evictions, and winter demand that is required every year.

More information on our ongoing COVID-19 response can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/affected-city-services/?accordion=housing-and-shelter>

Specifically for the Roehampton Residence, our current lease is two years, with the possibility of a third year extension. Our first goal is to help find all residents housing. The expectation of anyone using shelter services is that they are working closely with their Counsellor on a housing plan. The City of Toronto works from a Housing First approach. People living in the Roehampton Residence will be housed throughout the city, and within the GTA. At any site that is closing, people who are not housed will be referred to other shelter programs across the City.

For physical distancing sites, hotels were deemed the best option as opposed to open congregate settings such as large open buildings, including those at Exhibition Place, Metro Convention Centre, or Downsview. Hotels provided "ready to occupy" spaces that were fully furnished. Additionally, hotel rooms are better suited for physical distancing to stop the spread of COVID-19 as an infection control prevention measure as opposed to large open spaces, based on the public health guidance from Toronto Public Health and the Ontario Ministry of Health.

D. Feedback on the August 19th Online and Telephone Information Session

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on the Online / Telephone Information Session held on August 19th, 2020. Your feedback helps us consider how to continuously improve this community engagement process. Some of the received feedback in response to the August 19th Information Session includes:

- I would like to know what, if anything is being done to ensure that the participants in this meeting are, indeed, members of the community and not people who are totally unfamiliar with what we are really angry about?
- Will all questions be addressed, and is there the opportunity to interact and follow up with questions directly with our elected officials during and after the session?
- I was on the meeting. I did not get to give input once and the host went to same people over and over again.
- The Speakers and the Questions were clearly and severely orchestrated!
- What I found surprising was that all the people that were selected for questions were all pro having the shelter in our community?? How is that possible? I suspected your moderator selected folks that she knew would be supportive.
- In any event, please do not walk away thinking that you heard the voices of the community. There were two people who commented that no one who lives in the area is afraid. That is simply not true!
- Very disappointed with the presentation today from the moderators. To find out the criminality has been disregarded and to make us believe that is ok to have over 3,000 students around the area, in the middle of drugs and violence is beyond acceptable.
- Tonight's meeting was well organized and facilitated. The amount of preparation taken by the city staff, the fact that the Mayor and Councillors were actively engaged with the meeting and the number of participants interested brings me hope that we can work together towards a better future.
- I also want to thank you for all your hard work to date and the work that you will continue to do for the residence and the community.
- Thank you for a great session regarding the Roehampton/Broadway Residences. I want to voice my full support of the shelter residents.

The August 19th Information Session was advertised by the City through a flyer which was mailed to over 30,000 residents and businesses within the 750 m radius of the 55/65 Broadway Ave and 808 Mount Pleasant Ave. Like all City-led community meetings, this information session was public.

Over 1,100 people attended the public information session for the shelter at the Roehampton Hotel and the interim housing at 55/65 Broadway Ave online and by phone. During the session the facilitator, Yulia Pak, saw the list of approximately 90 participants that virtually raised their hand, which was indicated by a small icon next to the participants' chosen names or their masked phone numbers. The facilitator did not see any of the participants' faces (except the panelists). The facilitator then randomly selected participants and one-at-a-time unmuted them for the participants to ask their questions and/or share feedback. WebEx Events, the software used to host the session, does not allow any pre-screening of the comments or identification of comments by a particular topic. The participants and their questions/feedback were not screened in advance and participants were free to share any question or feedback they wished. No participant or a phone number was unmuted more than once. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitator asked all participants to keep their questions/feedback to no more than 2 minutes, to be considerate, and to refrain from using any hurtful language.

We know that there have been and continue to be many significant and real concerns in the community, not the least of which is community safety. We understand not everyone was able

to ask their question and/or share their feedback during the information session and those who did share their thoughts/questions represent themselves, not all voices in the community.

The information session held on August 19th is one of several ways the City is receiving questions and feedback. Other ways include the project email (clc.roehampton.residence@gmail.com), the project voicemail (416-479-0243), and the online feedback form on the project website (www.toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters). The facilitation team continues to collect, track, and share community feedback with City staff; and the City continues to work to address key categories of questions and concerns received via all the mechanisms listed above through the Community Bulletins. The Bulletins are being shared by email and posted to the website on a weekly basis. The first two Bulletins are available on the [project website here](#).

We are setting up a Community Liaison Committee for representatives of the broader local community interests, including Business Improvement Areas, Resident Associations, and Community Serving Organizations. The purpose of the committee is to provide an open and collaborative forum to discuss how to best integrate the Roehampton Residence into the neighbourhood. More information is available at www.toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters.