

FATIMA HOUSE COMMUNITY BULLETIN

FATIMA HOUSE (1059 COLLEGE STREET) COMMUNITY BULLETIN #1

This is the first community bulletin for Fatima House, a women's shelter that is relocating to 1059 College Street. These bulletins are intended to share information and updates about Fatima House based on questions or comments that are raised by the community through the project email address, voicemail, and through Councillor Bailão's office.

These community bulletins will be issued about once a month and posted on the project website. If you would like to sign up to receive the bulletins by email or would like to share your questions or comments with us, send an email to clc.1059college@gmail.com or leave a voicemail at (437) 522-9510.

This bulletin was developed by City staff and the Dept of Words & Deeds, a third-party community facilitator retained by the City of Toronto to carry out the community engagement process for Fatima House.

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FAST FACTS

- Fatima House at 1059 College Street will be operated by Fred Victor, a charitable organization that supports people experiencing homelessness.
- Fatima House will offer shelter and support services to up to 52 women and will welcome 20 to 25 women when it first opens in December 2020.
- Fatima House is a relocation of an existing service at 86 Lombard Street. Fred Victor is moving its operations from 86 Lombard Street to the new location at 1059 College Street.
- The landlord has leased the site to Fred Victor for use as a shelter. The City of Toronto does not need to approve the use of the site as a shelter as this is a permitted use.
- A Community Engagement Facilitator has been hired to support the successful integration of Fatima House into the neighbourhood. The Community Engagement Facilitator for this project is Jane Farrow of the Department of Words & Deeds.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is happening at 1059 College Street?

Fatima House, a shelter for women experiencing homelessness, is scheduled to open at 1059 College Street. The shelter is scheduled to open in December 2020.

2. Why is a shelter being opened at this location?

Fred Victor, a charitable organization that supports people experiencing homelessness, operates several shelters in the city. Fatima House is relocating from 86 Lombard Street to 1059 College Street. The property on Lombard Street will be re-purposed so the shelter is moving to this new location.

3. Who will the new shelter serve?

Fatima House will be run by Fred Victor staff and will provide services to women experiencing homelessness. The shelter will be pet-friendly, accessible, and will serve adult women. At full capacity, the shelter will have a capacity to house 52 residents.

4. What services will be offered at the shelter?

The primary purpose of Fatima House is to provide housing support services. Staff will work with residents to develop housing plans with the goal of securing affordable, permanent housing. The shelter will also offer meals, counselling services and medical services.

5. Will Fatima House include a safe injection site?

No, the shelter will not include a safe injection site. Shelter staff will offer counselling support to residents who use drugs and will provide supplies for harm reduction. Peer support, safety checks and education to prevent overdose will all be offered to shelter residents. People will not be permitted to use drugs in the shelter and will be referred to a safe injection site if needed.

6. Why is Fatima House moving from 86 Lombard Street?

The property at 86 Lombard Street is being considered for possible re-development into affordable housing. Moving the shelter offers the opportunity to provide better accommodations for women experiencing homelessness. The new shelter will be fully accessible and will offer more space per person in improved accommodations.

7. There are already other shelters nearby. Why is another service for people experiencing homelessness being opened in our community?

Organizations in our community that offer services to people experiencing homelessness are overwhelmed by the need. This shelter will help to alleviate some of the pressure on those sites. Fatima House will offer services that are not currently offered by other organizations and will develop partnerships with other services in the area.

8. How can we help? What does the shelter need? Can I volunteer there or donate food, clothing or supplies?

A Community Liaison Committee made up of representatives from local resident and business organizations will be set up to provide a link between Fatima House and the community. Opportunities for volunteering and providing donations will be discussed and determined through that committee. To share your ideas for supporting the shelter, please send an email to the Community Engagement Facilitator at clc.1059college@gmail.com.

The shelter operator, Fred Victor, welcomes involvement of the local community. At other shelters, community members have helped with things like sock drives, gardening, music and art programs, and holiday celebrations. Links with the local community help reduce the social isolation of Fatima House residents and makes the programs more successful.

9. I have concerns about safety and security. How will community safety be maintained?

Staff conduct regular rounds of the property to ensure the safety of the residents and to ensure that the grounds are kept safe and clean. The building has been designed with outdoor lighting and design features to create spaces that feel welcoming.

Shelter residents are offered education and support for how to be good neighbours. They each sign a Community Support Contract that outlines their rights and responsibilities in joining the community.

People who use shelter services are equal citizens of the city and are free to move around the neighbourhood and use amenities such as parks and public benches. Like all citizens, they are expected to conduct themselves within the laws and by-laws. If you witness illegal activity or an emergency situation, please contact the police.

10. What is going on with the Committee of Adjustment application for the building?

The new building requires a minor variance from the zoning by-law to permit a higher floor space index. This will allow for the use of the third floor. An application has been made to the Committee of Adjustment for this minor variance.

The site is already zoned to permit a shelter. The application to the Committee of Adjustment is only to increase the amount of usable space inside the building. The application does not consider whether or not the site can be used as a shelter, as this is already permitted under the zoning by-law.

In December 2020, clients and staff will occupy the basement, first and second floors of the building. If the application for a minor variance for an increase to the floor space index is approved, the third floor can then be used for office and client space.

11. How long will people live at this shelter? Where would they go after?

All shelters in Toronto work from a Housing First model, with the priority being to assist clients in securing permanent housing with appropriate supports in place to help them transition from the shelter. Clients are expected to develop a housing case management plan with their Counsellor, and then to meet with them regularly to move that plan forward.

COVID-19 QUESTIONS

12. Can the shelter maintain physical distance between all occupants?

In December 2020 the shelter will open with room for 20-25 women, with physical distancing measures in place, using the basement, main floor and second floor of the building. When the third floor is ready to be occupied, the capacity of the shelter will increase to 31 beds, with physical distancing measures in place. When physical distancing requirements are no longer needed, the shelter can accommodate up to 52 residents.

13. What is being done to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the shelter and the community?

The City has implemented a standard screening process using the Public Health Ontario guidelines at all points of entry by phone or in-person for those seeking shelter, as well as active monitoring and screening of all current clients.

People are not required to get a COVID-19 test upon admission to a shelter. Mobile testing is happening across the shelter system. Toronto Public Health (TPH), community health partners and shelter providers are working together to provide testing in shelters.

When someone using the shelter system tests positive, TPH notifies the shelter provider and arrangements are made to transport that person and any close contacts to an isolation and recovery program.

14. What if a shelter resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

Anyone using the shelter who tests positive for COVID-19 will be cared for by healthcare providers at facilities that can offer safe isolation.

Clients of the shelter who are identified as close contacts of a positive case through the TPH investigation of confirmed cases will be referred to an isolation program for 14-day isolation. Transportation to the site will be provided by the City of Toronto.

ABOUT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

15. Why was the community not consulted about the relocation of the shelter to 1059 College Street?

Services for people experiencing homelessness are already permitted under by-laws and planning permissions for this location. When selecting sites that are already approved for use for shelters, the City engages residents once the site has been selected and works with them moving forward.

16. What kind of community engagement will there be? How can I make my views known?

The shelter operator, Fred Victor, is committed to being open and transparent about its operations and welcomes involvement from the community.

The City has hired a community engagement team who will be gathering input from the community about any potential concerns and will be sharing information about Fatima House. Because of physical distancing restrictions, we will be running engagement events online and over the phone rather than in person.

You can email us with questions or concerns at clc.1059college@gmail.com or leave a voicemail at (437) 522-9510.

Community Information Session

An online information session will be held on October 29, 2020 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Instructions for how to attend will be posted on the project website at www.toronto.ca/ShelterExpansionSites

Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

A Community Liaison Committee will be set up to provide a link between the shelter residents and staff and the broader community. The role of the CLC will be to:

- foster and maintain positive relationships between the community, the shelter operator, and service partners to support the successful integration of the shelter into the community;
- facilitate information sharing and dialogue; and
- identify and address any issues, opportunities and concerns related to building operations.

If you would like to join the Community Liaison Committee, send an email to clc.1059college@gmail.com.

17. How will the community feedback be used?

All the feedback that we receive by email, by phone and at engagement events will be shared with City staff and Fred Victor. We will prepare responses to questions and concerns about the shelter and will post these in online Bulletins and in regular communications through Councillor Bailão's office. Bulletins will be posted to the project website at www.toronto.ca/ShelterExpansionSites.

Fatima House staff, City staff, and the Community Liaison Committee will regularly review the feedback that is collected and will work together to track progress in resolving issues.

18. What if I have more questions or have immediate concerns?

If you have any questions about Fatima House at 1059 College Street, please contact the Community Engagement Facilitator, Jane Farrow, at (437) 522-9510 or clc.1059college@gmail.com. If you are witnessing or involved in an emergency, please call 911. All media inquiries should be directed to media@toronto.ca.