

# St. Simon's Clubbe House

## Community Bulletin

April 9, 2021



## Introduction

As part of the City's response to COVID-19 and the need for physical distancing in the shelter system, 556 Sherbourne Street has been leased by the City of Toronto to act as a temporary emergency shelter. The new shelter, which opened on February 22, 2021, welcomed residents from St. Simon's existing shelter at 525 Bloor Street East as part of its relocation plan, and will provide some additional space to support people living outside that are looking to come indoors. The service at 525 Bloor Street East is not able to occupy its current facility beyond May 2021, therefore a new location is required. All 18 residents at the Bloor Street East shelter have been relocated to the new location at 556 Sherbourne Street.

This community bulletin is intended to share information and updates about St. Simon's Clubbe House based on questions or comments raised by the community through the project email address, phone calls, and through Councillor Wong-Tam's office. If you would like to sign up to receive any additional Clubbe House updates, please email us at [556sherbourne@gmail.com](mailto:556sherbourne@gmail.com) or call 647-945-7292.



## Facts about the shelter and its operation

- There are approximately 7800 people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. To respond to this urgent need, the City of Toronto has purchased various properties to provide new homes to support health and well-being of those experiencing homelessness. For more details please visit [Housing Secretariat](#).
- St. Simon's Clubbe House (hereafter Clubbe House) at 556 Sherbourne Street is being operated by St. Simon's Shelter Inc., a charitable organization that supports people experiencing homelessness
- Clubbe House will offer shelter and support services to up to 32 male and male-identifying adults
- The shelter at 556 Sherbourne Street opened in February 2021 as a relocation from 525 Bloor Street East and will remain operational until February 2022, with the potential for extension up to an additional year
- The landlord has leased the site to St. Simon's 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 - Jane Farrow of the Department of Words & Deeds - has been hired to support the successful integration of Clubbe House into the neighbourhood.

## Making local connections with the community

St. Simon's has been part of this neighbourhood for over 20 years and they understand the importance of integrating the shelter into the local community. Bob Duff, the Executive Director of St. Simon's Shelter Inc., has been on the ground in the community working with local businesses and residents to make connections and establish channels for communication and local suppliers.

Bob has contracted with Gabby's to provide all meals except Friday dinners which will be provided by local restaurants such as Paul's Roti on Sherbourne. . Bob is also in talks with other neighbourhood businesses for shelter provisions, such as Tim Horton's, Lord's Pharmacy for the first aid needs, Royal Home Hardware for the shelter's cleaning needs, and Parliament Street Furniture for office equipment.

The shelter residents have been able to enjoy local foods within the safety of the shelter, while putting shelter dollars back into the local economy. These are just some of the examples of St. Simon's commitment to serving and supporting the local community around 556 Sherbourne Street.



# Community safety, security and public wellbeing

## How will the safety and well-being of the local community be maintained?

Safety and security are a priority for the City, and ongoing safety planning is a key component of the community engagement process.

St. Simon's brings management practices that have proven successful at its other location. All St. Simon's staff are trained to respond to immediate non-police and non-EMS related matters. This includes training in de-escalation, conflict resolution and crisis prevention, intervention and management.

St. Simon's is working closely with Toronto Police Services, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and Corporate Security at the City of Toronto to develop community safety measures for the location. This includes 24/7 on-site security guards and surveillance cameras. A Community Safety Team (CST) will also conduct 12-hour patrols, 7 days a week, in the area around the property to respond to non-emergency concerns and pick up any drug paraphernalia. St. Simon's staff and residents have a long-standing tradition of neighbourhood improvement activities, such as community clean-ups, which will continue at this location.

## What are the plans if drug paraphernalia is discarded at and around the shelter site?

St. Simon's Clubbe House has sharps containers in each of the resident rooms and at the intake desk, and staff are trained in safe disposal procedures for drug paraphernalia. There are also several other existing and upcoming programs for elevated service delivery in the area. The nearby Casey House operates a needle pick-up service as part of their harm reduction program. As part of the Downtown East Action Plan, two other teams will become operational in April - a Community Safety Team made up of outreach workers for needle pick-up, and a De-Escalation Team to respond to people in distress or in crisis.

If you see a needle outside the shelter, the first recommendation is to contact the Community Safety Team at 647-688-8927 or call 311. They are responsible for picking up needles and any other drug paraphernalia. You can also call the shelter at 647-945-7292. If you see a needle on private property, you can send an email to [info@caseyhouse.ca](mailto:info@caseyhouse.ca).

## Shelter operations and services

### Who will the St. Simon's Clubbe House shelter serve? How are residents for this shelter selected?

St. Simon's Clubbe House is an emergency men's shelter which means any person who identifies as male who is experiencing homelessness can access this shelter. The shelter will serve up to 32 male-identifying adults. When residents leave the shelter and beds become available, new residents will be referred from the City's Central Intake office.



### **What services will be offered at the shelter? Are these services accessible to the broader community?**

The shelter will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and will provide wrap-around support for residents, including:

- All meals and laundry
- Access to mental and physical health supports through Inner City Health Associates (ICHA). This includes an on-site primary care physician who will provide supporting referrals as needed
- Access to harm reduction supplies and supports to reduce potential harms related to substance use, including a range of services available through Toronto Public Health
- Case Managers and Housing Help Workers, who will help clients develop a permanent housing plan, and obtain personal documents, a primary health care physician, employment and other community supports
- Recreational and social engagement programming

Physical, social and health supports from organizations serving residents from encampments will be invited to continue their work at 556 Sherbourne Street.

Services at the shelter are for residents of the shelter only; they will not be offered to the wider community.

### **Is 556 Sherbourne Street an accessible shelter?**

No, the site is not accessible. The building's access points have steps and do not have ramps. Also, the building's elevator does not have sufficient clearance required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). In addition, the rooms do not maintain barrier-free paths of travel to parts of the room, and do not have accessible showers/bathrooms. The City does offer shelters that are accessible and will work with anyone who requires an accessible shelter space to access these sites through Central Intake.

### **What are the shelter's operating hours? Is there a curfew for the residents, and do the residents remain on site through the night?**

The shelter's residents are allowed to remain on-site 24/7, but they can also leave and return. Curfew time for everyone is 1 am and this is instituted to ensure that the beds in the shelter are not going unused, and to ensure the safety of shelter residents and the community. Residents can request an occasional overnight leave with permission.

### **Are shelter residents provided support in gaining access to longer-term housing beyond the shelter system?**

Residents are provided with housing support services. St. Simon's staff work with residents to ensure they are prepared to apply for long-term housing and if housed, will continue to support residents in their new housing for a period of time. St. Simon's will also work with residents to facilitate a safe return to their community of origin or their family, if that is their desire.



## Site selection

### **How was 556 Sherbourne Street selected as the site for this emergency shelter?**

Shelters are one of many municipal services that the City provides. Like daycares, libraries and community centres, it is important that shelters are available in neighbourhoods across Toronto. When seeking sites to support the emergency need for physical distancing in the shelter system, City staff seek buildings that are available, affordable, of a suitable size and close to transit and services.

City Council has delegated authority to staff to find and select new locations for shelters, provided they meet certain criteria. This was done to help speed up and depoliticize the shelter development process and is consistent with a human rights-based approach to housing and related services for vulnerable residents. Further information about delegated authority for shelter citing can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD24.7>

Additional authority was delegated under Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management, as a result of the pandemic.

The City typically engages the community in advance of opening a new shelter to provide information about the program and support its successful integration into the community. This has not been possible for many of the temporary sites due to the speed at which the City has had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City must work quickly to save lives, protect the most vulnerable, and minimize the spread of COVID-19 in shelters and the community.

The City remains committed to working with the community to address any questions or concerns regarding the new temporary shelter sites. For more details, please visit [New Shelter Locations](#).

### **Why is the shelter service moving from 525 Bloor Street East to 556 Sherbourne Street?**

St. Simon's is not able to occupy 525 Bloor Street East after May 2021. 18 residents from the Bloor Street East shelter have already been relocated to the 556 Sherbourne Street shelter.

Opening a new temporary shelter at 556 Sherbourne Street in advance of 525 Bloor Street East closing has provided additional spaces during the winter months and ensured that there is space to accommodate the 18 residents from 525 Bloor Street East while the City looks for a new permanent home for the Bloor Street East shelter.

### **How long will the emergency shelter operate at 556 Sherbourne Street? Are there any plans for extending the shelter operations beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The City of Toronto has leased the site as a temporary physical distancing shelter until February 2022. There is an option to extend the lease for one additional year.

A decision to extend the lease will be based on advice from the City's Medical Officer of Health, and the Ontario Ministry of Health on guidelines for congregate settings and/or St. Simon's success in finding a new permanent home to replace the shelter at 525 Bloor Street East.

# Homelessness and Housing in Toronto

## **Can you speak to the conversion rate/success rate of finding long term housing since using the hotels is only temporary?**

For most people, homelessness is a short-term occurrence, resulting from a housing crisis caused by job loss, family breakdown, or other temporary crisis situations. More than half of the people who use the shelter system in Toronto stay less than two months and are able to successfully achieve housing stability. However, for some people, homelessness is a more significant challenge resulting from complex health, mental health and other systemic factors. A smaller group of people, 10% of those using shelters, stay for one year or more and require more supports to exit homelessness successfully.

The City's Streets to Homes team and our partner agencies secured permanent housing for 305 people living outdoors, including in encampments, in 2020. In the past 10 years, the City has helped 6,000 individuals sleeping outside secure permanent housing and 80 percent remain housed after one year.

## **Why is the level of homelessness in the City increasing and what needs to happen to reverse this trend? What is the City's longer-term strategy for addressing homelessness and the lack of affordable housing?**

In 2019, City Council adopted the [HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan](#), which provides a comprehensive blueprint to assist more than 341,000 people with a focus on creating permanent housing solutions. This includes 40,000 new affordable rental home approvals of which 18,000 would be supportive housing units.

In September 2020, City Council endorsed the Housing and People Action Plan and the COVID-19 Interim Shelter Recovery Strategy which identifies 12 priority actions for the next 12 months, including actions to invest in housing and supports to decrease the volume and duration of need for emergency shelter.

City Council also request support from other orders of government for the 24-month Housing and Homelessness Recovery Plan to create 3,000 permanent housing opportunities, including \$48 million to provide 2,000 housing opportunities with support.

## **COVID-19**

### **How has COVID-19 impacted shelters?**

As part of the City's response to COVID-19, and with guidance from the Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health, City staff moved rapidly to open new temporary shelter locations to support physical distancing and minimize the spread of COVID-19. This includes the requirement to ensure at least two-metre lateral distancing between beds as outlined under the City's current shelter standards directive.

556 Sherbourne Street is one of 40 additional sites in 13 different wards opened across the city as part of the City's COVID-19 response, of which more than 25 are currently active.

Learn more about the City's response to COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness: [COVID-19: Changes to City Services – City of Toronto](#)



## **What is being done to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the shelter?**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has implemented a number of measures to protect people across the shelter system, including those staying at new temporary sites. This includes:

- encouraging physical distancing in all areas of the shelter
- ensuring the mandatory use of face coverings or masks
- encouraging healthy habits such as hand washing
- conducting daily screening
- increasing infection control and prevention measures such as enhanced cleaning
- providing transportation to isolation and recovery sites for individuals who are awaiting results or test positive to recover

For a full list of COVID-19 measures implemented to enhance health safety in shelters, visit [COVID-19: Changes to City Services](#)

## **Community engagement & feedback**

### **How can the local community help support the shelter?**

If you would like to offer any support to the shelter and its residents, please reach out to Bob Duff, the Executive Director of St. Simon's Shelter Inc., at 647-945-7292 or [bobduff@bellnet.ca](mailto:bobduff@bellnet.ca).

- For site inquiries and immediate concerns at St. Simon's Clubbe House, please call 647-945-7292 or [556sherbourne@gmail.com](mailto:556sherbourne@gmail.com)
- General inquiries about services for those experiencing homelessness can be directed to [ssha.homeless@toronto.ca](mailto:ssha.homeless@toronto.ca).

### **How will the community feedback be used?**

All the feedback we receive by email, phone and at engagement events is shared with City staff and St. Simon's. Responses to questions and concerns about the shelter are prepared and posted in online bulletins and in regular communications through Councillor Wong-Tam's office. Bulletins are posted to the project website at [www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters](http://www.toronto.ca/PhysicalDistancingShelters).

Clubbe House staff, City staff, and Councillor Wong-Tam's office will regularly review the feedback that is collected and will work together to track progress in resolving issues.

# Status of establishing a local Community Liaison Committee

Over the past few months, the Community Engagement team, St. Simon's and City officials have engaged with the community through various avenues to gather feedback. While we have received notes of interest about whether a Community Liaison Committee (CLC) will be formed, we have not yet heard a direct ask from the community to establish one.

A CLC is composed of volunteers representing local stakeholders who meet monthly to act as an ongoing link between the shelter residents and staff, and the broader community. The role of the CLC includes to foster and maintain positive relationships between the community, the shelter operator, and service partners to support the integration of the shelter into the community, to facilitate information sharing and dialogue, and to identify and address any issues, opportunities and concerns related to the shelter.

Since the City has not received requests for the formation of a CLC for this shelter site, there are no plans to form one, however, if such interest emerges in the longer term, a CLC will be closely considered. If you are interested in the CLC, please get in touch at 647-945-7292 or [556sherbourne@gmail.com](mailto:556sherbourne@gmail.com).

## Links to resources and information

All information about the shelter, including a summary and close-captioned video recording of the community information session can be found on the [City's webpage](#).

For any inquiries or comments about the shelter or about the community engagement process, or to sign up for community bulletins, please email [556sherbourne@gmail.com](mailto:556sherbourne@gmail.com).

For any inquiries or comments about shelter operations, please contact 647-945-7292, or [bobduff@bellnet.ca](mailto:bobduff@bellnet.ca).

If you would like to reach the office of Councillor Wong-Tam, please email Luula Hassan, Advisor, Constituency and Community Relations, at [Luula.Hassan@toronto.ca](mailto:Luula.Hassan@toronto.ca)

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 St. Simon's Clubbe House.

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