

COMMUNITY BULLETIN #3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Community engagement at new shelter project sites seeks to receive feedback from local residents, businesses, and other agencies or groups on key issues arising related to the shelter location, to ensure stakeholders are informed of the plans for the site and to foster a good relationship between the shelter and its neighbours. These activities help contribute to the success of the shelter service in the community. At the beginning of June, we, Community Engagement Facilitators from Barnes Management Group, completed all planned community engagement activities for the 76 Church Street site.

Our community engagement activities included:

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Communications:
 - Regular Community Bulletin updates to community
 - Addressing community questions and concerns through a project-specific email account (clc.76church@gmail.com)
 - Regular update meetings with representatives from the City of Toronto, 76 Church St. operator and Councillor's office
- Community Feedback Session
- Community Safety Walk
- Establish Community Liaison Committee (CLC) and assist in facilitating the initial CLC meeting.

76 CHURCH COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE UPDATE

The inaugural Community Liaison Committee (CLC) meeting was held on June 2, 2021. Committee membership was recruited during stakeholder meetings using a self-selection process and stakeholder contact via the project specific email account and phone calls. The purpose of the 76 Church Street CLC is to work collaboratively with relevant city agencies and local stakeholders to contribute to the success of the temporary shelter in the community. After the first meeting, the CLC has been transitioned to 76 Church Street shelter staff to lead, including coordination, convening, and meeting facilitation. If you are interested in CLC activities, or in joining the committee, please send an email to: clc.76church@gmail.com.

Below, we continue sharing responses to questions received during the May 3, 2021 Community Feedback Session.

If you wish to provide any comments/feedback, or share your questions related to the 76 Church Street shelter site, please contact us:

Send us an email and ask to be added to the mailing list:

clc.76church@gmail.com

Any updates will also be posted to the project website at:

[76 Church Street](#)

Q&As FROM THE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SESSION

Community Engagement Process at 76 Church

1. Why was the community engagement process for 76 Church started so late?

The City typically engages the community in advance of opening a new shelter to provide information about the program and to support its successful integration into the community. This has not been possible for many of the temporary sites, especially for those opened in spring 2020 (such as 76 Church Street), 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.

Even though the site has opened, the City remains committed to engaging the community around 76 Church Street to ensure the shelter is a success. As a result of a lease extension for the site, the City hired a community engagement team who gathered input from the community and shared information about the temporary shelter program at 76 Church Street. Details about the community engagement activities undertaken are outlined on the first page of this community bulletin.

Because of physical distancing restrictions, most engagement events were done online and over the phone, rather than in person. For questions, comments or concerns, community members are encouraged to contact:

Violetta Ilkiw and Maria Crawford, Barnes Management Group
Email: clc.76church@gmail.com
Telephone: 416-800-2914 ext. 202

City of Toronto Shelter Plans

2. Is there a long-term plan for shelter housing and services (both temporary and continuing) for the area between Yonge and Parliament Streets and the Esplanade and Carleton Street? If there is a plan, what is it?

Long-term, the City wants to prioritize housing as a solution for homelessness, including for the Downtown Area. All shelters in Toronto work from a Housing First model, with a priority to assist clients to secure permanent housing and provide support to help with transitions to housing. The City's Streets to Homes team and community partners engage with individuals sleeping outside daily to offer support and referrals to safer, inside spaces. The City's Streets to Homes team and our partner agencies secured permanent housing for 305 people living in the outdoors, including in encampments, in 2020. In the past 10 years, the City has helped 6,000 individuals who were sleeping outside secure permanent housing, and 80 percent remain housed after one year.

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 requested 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 supportive housing opportunities.

In summer 2019, City Council approved the Downtown East Action Plan, a Five Year plan to respond to community concerns related to issues such as homelessness, mental health, community safety, and substance use. To date, the plan has provided increased garbage and needle pickup in parks, laneways, and streets and increased street outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness. Going forward, City staff will be working on a more detailed Neighbourhood Plan for the Dundas and Sherbourne area, with guidance from local stakeholders to inform future service planning and development recommendations in the community. The roll-out of some of the intended actions in the plan for 2020 was hampered by the COVID-19 response. Please let us know if you would like to be connected with the team working on the [Downtown East Action Plan](#).

In Ward 13, the City continues to work with Toronto Community Housing on the revitalization of Regent Park and the Dan Harrison Complex, and with Waterfront Toronto on the completion of the West Don Lands redevelopment projects. More recently, the City opened a 120 unit supportive housing building at 389 Church Street for women, to be operated by YWCA, and is leasing the property at 218 Carlton to Native Men's Residence, to be operated as affordable housing for Indigenous peoples.

3. Is there any thought on the percentage of homeless shelters in the area and the suggestion made that clients would be better served in smaller groups distributed throughout various neighbourhoods in the city - instead of the heavy concentration in our downtown east neighbourhoods?

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.

The City is actively developing shelters in other neighbourhoods, including shelters in Junction, Dundas West, and Scarborough, to accommodate men relocating from the Seaton House Shelter. Ensuring that there are services available to people in communities across the city will enable individuals seeking homelessness services to stay in their community while accessing these services.

As a result of physical distancing measures, the number of shelter beds in Ward 13 in Toronto has actually decreased by 493 beds from 1719 (March 15, 2020) to 1226 (April 30, 2021).

Community Safety

4. Will the neighbourhood receive additional police/security patrol?

People who use this site are equal residents of the city and are free to move around the neighbourhood and use amenities, such as parks and other public areas. Like all Toronto residents, they are expected to conduct themselves within the laws and by-laws. For City by-law inquiries, hazardous material removal, or shelter support, please contact 311. If you witness illegal activity or an emergency situation, please contact the police.

The City is committed to safety and security of staff, clients, and the general public. City staff are highly trained and educated when it comes to operating low-barrier shelters and supporting those that have complex needs. All staff are trained in de-escalation and participate in regular training in health and safety, including First Aid and CPR. 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.

Shelter staff will also regularly engage with the local police division to establish direct communication, advise on safety, and increase community engagement.

For general questions or concerns about shelter operations, resident activity, or shelter supports, please contact:

Chad Gould, Site Program Supervisor: Chadwick.gould@toronto.ca

76 Church Community Liaison Committee: clc.76church@gmail.com

Community Safety Walk

The 3rd party Community Engagement Facilitation team, together with City staff, organized and held a community safety walk around the site. Community members were invited to participate, though numbers of participants were limited due to current public health COVID-19 group restrictions. Three separate small group walks were held. A collaborative report of the community safety findings is under review by the safety walk participants, and will inform the coming activities of the Community Liaison Committee. The final Community Safety Report will be made available on the project website.