

# 67 Adelaide St

## Public Meeting & Community Engagement Report

November 2, 2021

### 1.0 The City's Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

The City of Toronto is committed to supporting the rights of Indigenous People as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and in its Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto adopted in 2010. This includes Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and determining and developing priorities and strategies. Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division is also committed to supporting self-determination of Indigenous peoples and organizations through Indigenous-led solutions and meaningful engagement and collaboration as articulated in its *Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action plan*, co-created with Indigenous partners to identify actions to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto.

### 1.1 Overview

As part of the City of Toronto's response to people experiencing homelessness, and in particular, men from Indigenous communities, the City of Toronto has partnered with Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence) to develop a new Indigenous men's shelter at 67 Adelaide St East. [The 2021 Street Needs Assessment](#) revealed that Indigenous communities represent 15% of people experiencing homelessness, while Indigenous people only represent 2.5% of the population of Toronto.

Na-Me-Res has been supporting Indigenous men experiencing homelessness for several years, and operates their shelters in a culturally sensitive manner, that reflects Indigenous ways of knowing. Na-Me-Res has a long history of providing shelter, housing, health, and social supports to Indigenous men, and offers some programming that is inclusive of non-Indigenous men. The organization works with men across a spectrum of housing status, including individuals living on the streets, in a shelter accommodation, in transitional housing, as well as social housing.

### 1.2 Notification & Communications

The virtual public meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup> was advertised through a hard copy flyer invitation that shared information on the shelter and invited residents to participate in a public meeting. The flyer was delivered via Canada Post to 14,000 residents and businesses in the wider community with a 500m radius around 67 Adelaide St. E. The public meeting invitation was also posted on the City's project and [webpage](#).

### 1.3 Virtual Public Meeting

The City's Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) Division held a virtual public Meeting on Thursday, November 2, 2021, between 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The meeting was attended by 42 people, along with 5 speakers and 5 additional City staff supporting technical logistics. The meeting included presentations to share information on the new service proposed for 67 Adelaide St. E. and provided local residents with opportunity to ask questions and share comments.

The meeting was led by Community Engagement Facilitator Joe Mihevc and the agenda included:

- Introductory comments from local Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, included in Appendix 2. This Appendix is in a letter format which was used as the basis of her comments;
- A presentation from Justin Lewis, Director of Infrastructure Planning and Development, SSHA on the context of homelessness in Toronto, the state of Indigenous homelessness, and the City's response;
- A presentation from Charles Rosenberg, Principal Architect of Hilditch Architect Inc. on the planning and architectural features of the project;
- A presentation from Steve Teekens, the Executive Director of Na-Me-Res, on the service model and the vision and values informing the new shelter; and
- A presentation from Joe Mihevc on the community engagement strategy.

Following the presentations, questions and comments were chosen on a rotating basis to include live phone questions, questions submitted via email in advance, and questions typed live in the Q&A box during the virtual event.

The presentation and recording of the meeting are available on the project web page and a complete list of presenters and staff in attendance is available in Appendix 1.

## 2.0 Feedback Summary

During the meeting, 11 questions and comments around five main themes were received live and in a written format in the Q&A box.

The synthesized questions and comments received, and the responses from the panelists, are below. The attendees to the event were also invited to add their names to the email listserve (via [clc.67adelaide@gmail.com](mailto:clc.67adelaide@gmail.com)) to receive ongoing progress reports and to have a forum to ask additional questions. Future questions, concerns and responses received will be provided in subsequent community bulletins sent to the email list maintained by the Community Engagement Facilitator.

### Questions from the Community Information Meeting

#### 1) Heritage consideration themes:

***Relating to the initial exterior design, it seems to be cladding and disappointing. The limestone, brick and granite and marble is being abandoned and there is an encouragement to improve this. Has Heritage has looked at this site?***

***Has the Heritage division in the City of Toronto looked at this site and commented on the cladding?***

***The existing building is a constant target of graffiti, and so I am somewhat encouraged by the architectural rendering you showed that includes a mural on the Church St side. That tends to be where a lot of graffiti occurs. Hopefully, that kind of surface treatment might discourage tagging. I just also would like the designers and the operators to know that currently, the City has not been that responsive to cleaning up graffiti when it does occur. Usually, they wait to be prompted by a report by one of the neighbouring buildings, and even when that is reported, it takes a long, long time for the graffiti to be remedied. I just want you guys to be aware that that is a***

***bit of an issue, and it may play into some of your design ideas or concepts.***

Response: Charles Rosenberg: I don't believe that Heritage Services at the City has looked at this site. We do know that it is not a heritage listed building, and that there has not been any input from the City team in terms of concerns around heritage.

Post Meeting Note: The property at 67 Adelaide Street East is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as part of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District (SLNHCD). The SLNHCD Plan was approved by the Ontario Lands Tribunal on November 16, 2021, bringing the Part V designation and the Plan into force. The property is identified as a non-contributing property in the Plan, meaning that it does not contribute to the heritage character of the District. The property may be altered, provided the alterations are consistent with the policies and guidelines for non-contributing properties or approved by City Council.

The colour scheme of the cladding, as seen in the presentation, is meant to represent the purpose of the building as a cultural reference for Indigenous people. We are also introducing wood and natural elements in the building.

In line with the City's commitment to honouring Truth and Reconciliation, SSHA and Na-Me-Res will continue to collaborate with the City Planning team at the City of Toronto to respond to the historic considerations of the building in a way that prioritizes the rights of Indigenous people.

***On graffiti and tagging:*** There are a couple of things in the works right now. This site will have what we call more "eyes on the street" with how we have situated the welcome centre and the staff area of the building. Our experience with the existing three Na-Me-Res buildings at Bathurst and St Clair is that there has been no experience of graffiti on their building.

The other thing that we will do is put a graffiti proof coating on the lower level which makes it much easier to remove graffiti and discourage people from tagging the building. The material on the lower level will be a porcelain tile which will be a great material on which to put a graffiti coating.

**2) How many beds are currently available at the Fred Victor Women's Drop-in Program? Will there be an increase in capacity at the new shelter?**

Response: Justin Lewis: The current COVID-19 occupancy of the building, run by Fred Victor as a Women's Resource centre, is 44 beds. The occupancy of the new service will be 75 beds. The pre-COVID occupancy was 70-80 beds.

Charles Rosenberg: The project involves adding floor space which is possible because of the third floor being a double high ceiling. The additional floor space will accommodate additional beds.

**3) What services will be offered at the new Shelter?**

**Related question: Can you define "low barrier"?**

**Related question: Is there a guarantee that there will be consequences for bad behaviour in our neighbourhood?**

Response: Steve Teekens: Low barrier is just a term used for not having preconditions for accessing shelter services. For instance, the current Na-Me-Res shelters are abstinence-based, so if you want to come into an existing Na-Me-Res shelter and you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, there is a barrier to accessing service.

**On bad behaviour in the neighbourhood:** Response: Steve Teekens: Na-Me-Res currently operates two shelters. We work with a number of individuals that come with a range of experiences, including trauma in their life. How we deal with people who may be erratic is that we try to talk to them. We treat them with kindness. We try to get through to them and then communicate in a good, supportive and healthy way to address the issue. Nine times out of ten, that usually works well. Now there is the odd time where it doesn't necessarily work. If the behaviour gets too erratic, we'll call the proper authorities to either diffuse the situation or deal with the situation. With the current Na-Me-Res shelters, we have very few incidents with residents where the police have been engaged.

We have very few complaints from local citizens in our neighbourhood. With the two shelters on Vaughan Road, we are actively engaged with our neighbours, and they are very supportive of the programs and services. Sometimes the neighbours even contribute to winter drives of clothing or socks for the guys, and they are always asking for ways to be helpful. There will be an opportunity at 67 Adelaide for local residents to participate in the Community Liaison Committee that will be formed once the shelter is operational. This will be a healthy forum for residents to voice those concerns so that we can address them in a timely and effective manner.

**4) Could you share a bit more about how harm reduction and how it actually increases individual and community safety?**

***Related question: What is a managed alcohol consumption program?***

Response: Steve Teekens: There is a need for a continuum of shelter services in the downtown core. The reason we want to have a harm reduction shelter downtown is because that is where there are many people who need that kind of service. We will also be increasing the housing options within this continuum of care which will allow a larger number of individuals to be housed.

In addition, there is research regarding Indigenous people in particular being wary of services because of negative experiences. We want a culturally safe program for Indigenous folk in the downtown area. We know from the Street Needs Assessment that Indigenous people are overrepresented among the homeless population in Toronto. In a harm reduction model, it is a way to work with a lot of people who are experiencing homelessness that have issues with drugs and alcohol.

There is a need for a continuum of shelter services, including "wet shelters". By increasing shelter/housing options on this continuum, it will enable a larger number of individuals to be housed. In addition, some research has reported that Indigenous people in particular may be wary of service providers and not engage with outreach programs due to previous negative experience, discrimination, distrust of non-Aboriginal healthcare providers, disservice and trauma from Western policies and practices.

***On Managed Alcohol Program:*** Response: Steve Teekens: The main purpose of this harm reduction shelter is to provide a managed alcohol

program for residents that are alcohol dependent. Managed Alcohol programs are starting to pop up at various sites across Canada. I understand that the first managed alcohol program actually started here in Toronto at Seaton House back in the mid-1990s. At the time it was created, a lot of Seaton House residents would drink during the daytime in the local parks around Seaton House. Quite often the police would get phone calls about public intoxication. Some of the men would end up with various charges and fines and very often did not have the means to pay them. When Seaton House did an evaluation of the program, they found that the incidences with police were drastically reduced. Other studies report that they saw a reduction in program participants using hospital and ambulance services.

The reason for these reductions is that sometimes when people are severely alcohol-dependent, and if they cannot get alcohol and continue their usage, their body gets physically ill because they are going through withdrawal. If there is a managed alcohol program, there will be a safe place to get their alcohol and the quantity will be prescribed by a doctor who will also be examining their liver function. Thus, they are reducing the harms associated with consuming alcohol because it is prescribed like medication. Residents are prescribed doses of alcohol to take at different times of the day and the intervals are spread out far enough that it does not decrease liver functioning. Also, having the shelter site in place and allowing people to stay there during the day will reduce them going out in public places reducing drinking in public parks and that sort of thing. They will be in a safe place working with experts and medical professionals that will benefit their health in the long run.

*More information about Seaton House's Managed Alcohol Program can be found at [Appendix 2](#) at the end of the document.*

***Related question: Will this be a safe consumption site?***

Steve Teekens: No this will not be a safe injection site or a safe consumption site.

***5) I realized that 76 Church is right now a temporary shelter; but let's say hypothetically, that was to become a permanent shelter. Would that have any bearing on your planning and programming for your building?***

Response: Justin Lewis: There currently is no shelter service in the downtown core that can adequately support Indigenous men with a harm reduction approach. Health, wellness and housing services are often inflexible to Indigenous clients, and in some cases, discriminatory. Adding this service in a location that is easily accessible by transit and centrally located will allow for more successful outcomes for future residents.

With regards to 76 Church Street, it is unlikely that this location will become a permanent site. There is currently a five-year lease at this location. Its program is a part of the broader George St Revitalization project. The plan is to move that program back to that location. I do want to reinforce that fact that this is a temporary location.

***6) Why isn't the service being introduced sooner than 2024, which is the anticipated opening date?***

Response: Justin Lewis: To have this service located centrally in a City-owned building, there is a process of shuffling of current service locations. This process takes some time. There is a need for improved renovations as well to ensure this site is welcoming, and culturally safe for the future residents and staff. In addition, there is the pandemic that we are still dealing with.

Response: Steve Teekens: I am eager to open in 2024. I wish I could open sooner, but these renovations take time, and we are waiting for the current operator to vacate the building so that we can start the renovations.

### 3.0 Next Steps

The shelter at 67 Adelaide is expected to open in 2024, three years or so from the time of this first public information meeting.

The next step for the project is the planning approvals necessary through the Committee of Adjustment process. This will occur in early December 2021.

Following the public meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the presentation and recording of the event is posted on the 67 Adelaide St. E. project [webpage](#)



The Community Engagement Facilitator and Na-Me-Res will issue bulletins to the email list to share updates and responses to frequently asked questions received. These will also be posted to the project webpage. These will start in early 2022. Sometime in early 2024, or within 6 to 9 months of the new shelter opening, a Community Liaison Committee will be formed. The Community Liaison Committee will offer a space for community members, the shelter operator, and City staff to collaborate on ideas and opportunities that can help foster partnerships and mitigate any community concerns related to the shelter. It will include interested representatives from stakeholder groups such as residents, businesses, and community organizations.

The Community Engagement Facilitator, working with Na-Me-Res and City staff, will continue to connect and make themselves available to the public for on-going questions, concerns, and engagement inquiries. The project [webpage](#) will also remain a central place to access for information. The Community Engagement Facilitator can be reached at [clc.67Adelaide@gmail.com](mailto:clc.67Adelaide@gmail.com).

## Appendix 1: Presenters and Staff in Attendance

### Panelists:

Justin Lewis, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Development, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, City of Toronto

Joe Mihevc, Third Party Community Engagement Facilitator

Charles Rosenberg, Principal, Hilditch Architects Inc.

Steve Teekens, Executive Director, Na-Me-Res

Kristyn Wong-Tam, City Councillor, Ward 13

### Virtual Logistics Support Staff:

Sahal Ahmed, Manager, Planning and Engagement

Markus Charles, Support Assistant B

Carolyn Doyle, Acting Supervisor, Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Alessandra Scarpitti, Programs Coordinator

Calvin Scott, Indigenous Youth Research Associate

## Appendix 2: Managed Alcohol Program Information

The Seaton House Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) was originally developed in response to recommendations from a Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of the 3 men who died on the streets in Jan/Feb 1996.

Recommendations from the Inquest included designated alcohol harm reduction programming within shelter services. As a result, the Seaton House MAP was developed and reduced service use barriers, related to alcohol use, and created a space where those who were excluded from traditional shelter services could seek support, shelter and gain access to medical services.

There are 40 MAPs in Canada that all operate slightly differently based on the individual model. One consistent theme of all MAPs is that they recognize abstinence is not achievable or appropriate for everyone and that people who use alcohol deserve access to supports and services that can meet basic needs. MAPs also address the acute, chronic and social harms associated with drinking alcohol in street based settings.

Other goals of MAPs are to:

- reduce non-beverage alcohol use and support people to transition to drinking beverage alcohol
- increase access to health care related supports and services (GP, Nursing, allied health care supports, case management, and social supports)
- reduce interface with police related to drinking in public (MAPs offer a safe space to drink alcohol and reduces street based/public drinking)
- reduce number of ER visits connected to alcohol related concerns
- improve overall quality of life



## Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

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October 3, 2021

### **Re: 67 Adelaide Street East**

I am writing to share that Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and their selected operator, Na-Me-Res, and I have met on three occasions about their plans for the enhanced services at 67 Adelaide Street East. The topics discussed have been constructive and broad reaching. Many of the issues that I raised with SSHA and Na-Me-Res, are the same ones that I know have great community interest, such as property standards, safety, security, public order and 24/7 wraparound supports for the clients.

I explained to SSHA and Na-Me-Res that the soon to be renovated facility must be programmed and adequately resourced to ensure the health and well-being for all in the neighbourhood, both their clients and residents in the immediate area. This transitional living and shelter housing facility has been in development by SSHA for some time and the planning for the renovations began before the pandemic. This facility represents a new model of culturally appropriate care and support that we have not often seen in outdated and ineffective shelter programs.

Na-Me-Res is a well-regarded shelter and housing provider for Indigenous men. I have previously worked with them to introduce a new affordable housing program on Homewood Avenue. Furthermore, they successfully operate housing facilities across the city and have a stellar reputation for being neighbourhood-minded in their thoughtful approach to service delivery.

In the spirit of meaningful reconciliation, it is important to invest in facilities and programs that are culturally informed - thereby services created by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. Like all fair-minded citizens, I believe that everyone deserves a safe home and I know Na-Me-Res will work tirelessly with the City and all orders of government to obtain permanent stability housing for their new residents.

This building will be completely renovated and purpose retrofitted to include a formal reception area on Church Street and an outdoor space on the rooftop for residents. In addition, I have been assured that there will be many enhanced supports onsite including health care, housing management, employment counselling, job skill development and Ontario's first Indigenous Managed Alcohol Program (MAP).

I have asked Na-Me-Res to maintain a Community Liaison Committee (CLC) where local residents, businesses, BIA, neighbourhood association, property managers and other important stakeholders can meet monthly to open a dialogue to ensure the successful integration of this program into the neighbourhood. This will be an important step in developing a strong working relationship built on trust and honest communication among all parties. It will create a forum to enable regular and formal solution-making to address emerging issues. I look forward to remaining active in these community discussions.

Na-Me-Res has a long history of delivering innovative and successful programs in Toronto. There's no reason for us to expect anything less here. I look forward to working with the community to ensure this success.