

**629 Adelaide Street West
Summary Report of Stakeholder Engagement Sessions
Compiled by Barnes Management Group**

Table of Contents:

1. Report Summary
 2. Public Stakeholder Sessions – October 25 and 26, 2023
 3. Stakeholder Update Session – November 16, 2023
 4. Community Information Session – November 22, 2023
 5. Frequently Asked Questions
-

1. Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on public information and engagement sessions held in October and November 2023 regarding the planned relocation of homelessness services from 25 Augusta Ave. to 629 Adelaide St. W. These sessions were hosted and facilitated by Barnes Management Group (BMG) in cooperation with the City of Toronto, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and St. Felix Centre – the site operator. 629 Adelaide St. W. was originally planned as a 24-Hour Respite site and will now open as a shelter in Spring 2024 (To Be Confirmed).

In keeping with the Community Engagement Plan established for 629 Adelaide St. W., the Community Engagement Facilitators, BMG, organized stakeholder meetings with various groups in the community including residents, residents’ associations, schools, faith-based organizations, businesses, and community service agencies. In addition to the six sessions described in this report, 19 other focused stakeholder meetings were held virtually to have dialogue and discuss questions and concerns.

Additionally, a large volume of email requests was received in the dedicated email account established for 629 Adelaide St. W., which is managed by BMG (629AdelaideStW@gmail.com). This includes emails related to 629 Adelaide St. W. shared by the office of Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik and other City of Toronto staff and elected officials. Of the 323 emails received, 198 were from unique email addresses; all of which were added to the mailing list used to share information about the planned service and invite stakeholders to community information sessions.

In response to the high number of communications received which requested information and cited concerns pertaining to 629 Adelaide St. W., four Public Stakeholder Meetings were held on October 25 and 26, 2023 to inform the public about the 24-Hour Respite Site. A Stakeholder Update Session was held on November 15, 2023, to respond to community feedback and announce the change from a 24-Hour Respite site to a shelter. Lastly, a Community Information Session was held on November 22, 2023, to provide up-to-date information on the shelter at 629 Adelaide St. W. to the general public.

The total stakeholder meetings held regarding 629 Adelaide St. W. include the initial 19 stakeholder meetings, one on-site visit with representatives of St. Mary Catholic Elementary School, four Public Stakeholder Sessions, one Stakeholder Update Session and one Community Information Session.

In total, 26 stakeholder meetings involving 282 community members were held in October and November 2023. Included in these numbers are several community members who attended more than one of the sessions. The purpose of each of these sessions was to clarify information regarding planning for 629 Adelaide St. W. and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions or share concerns, with the overall goal of supporting the successful operation of the shelter.

Stakeholder Meetings	Platform	Date	Number of Sessions	Number of Participants
Focused Group Sessions	Zoom and/or by phone	October & November, 2023	19	43
School Site Visit	In-person	November 7, 2023	1	5
Public Stakeholder Sessions	Zoom	October 25 & 26, 2023	4	82
Stakeholder Update Session	Zoom	November 16, 2023	1	56
Community Information Session	Zoom	November 22, 2023	1	96
Total			26	282

Sections 2 to 4 of this report describe the overview, meeting objectives, and key discussion items for the six sessions that were dedicated to community engagement of residents and the general public.

Section 5 of this report provides Frequently Asked Questions that encompass the 26 stakeholder sessions and those shared via email at 629AdelaideStW@gmail.com. The key themes include Homelessness and Shelters in Toronto, Shelter Operations and Programming, Neighbourhood Safety and Security, and Community Engagement Activities.

2. Public Stakeholder Sessions – October 25 and 26, 2023

Overview

On October 25 and 26, Barnes Management Group (BMG) hosted four virtual Public Stakeholder Sessions about the planned 24-Hour Respite at 629 Adelaide St. W. The meeting was hosted on Zoom with 82 unique participants including City staff from the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division, Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, and representatives of St.

Felix Centre. Community feedback, questions, and concerns were documented with the commitment to inform the Senior Management Team at Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and to report back to the community.

Meeting Objectives

Four virtual sessions were organized with residents near 629 Adelaide St. W. who shared their concerns via email. The meetings were held to ensure that community members could receive information pertaining to the 24-Hour Respite site relocation to 629 Adelaide St. W. and for the Community Engagement Facilitators to hear additional feedback from the community, as well as support SSHA and St. Felix Centre to respond to questions and concerns raised by community members.

During the four Public Stakeholder Sessions, City staff presented information pertaining to the relocation of the 24-Hour Respite site from 25 Augusta Avenue to 629 Adelaide St. W., how sites are selected for a range of homelessness services provided by the City, shared information about 24-Hour Respite sites and the planned services for 629 Adelaide St. W. Information was also shared about the scale of the homelessness crisis in Toronto and the services provided by the City of Toronto.

During these stakeholder meetings, discussions and questions centered around Key Discussion Items as outlined below. Multiple participants spoke about the same issues and attended several of the stakeholder meetings.

Key Discussion Items

The primary topics and concerns raised during these four Public Stakeholder Sessions are as follows:

Neighbourhood Safety and Security

- Many participants spoke to the issue of safety and security in the neighborhood. It was the most frequently cited concern and encompassed safety for children in the nearby school, as well as the safety and security of residents in the community. Incidents were cited where community members felt threatened or had been confronted and felt unsafe in the neighborhood because of experiences with other service providers operating in the area. Participants mentioned parents being afraid to send their children to school, and/or afraid to go to the park due to concerns they had about their safety. Participants said they were seeking information to make them feel confident that adequate supports would be in place to address their concerns.

Drug Paraphernalia

- Several community members shared their concerns about drug-related activities that were currently observed in the community. Concerns included that the community already sees drug paraphernalia in public spaces, streets, schoolyard, and parks. They also cited seeing activities ranging from drug consumption and congregation related to drug-related activities. The concern is that these types of activity and the proliferation of

drug paraphernalia found in the community would increase with the opening of the 24-Hour Respite site.

24-Hour Respite Program

- Several community members raised concerns about the low-barrier model proposed for the 24-Hour Respite site. There was uncertainty about how long people would be staying on the site and the type of clients these services support. Community members also highlighted concerns that there would be no central intake process to access the 24-Hour Respite site.

Site Selection

- Concerns were voiced about the lack of consultation with the community prior to the decision to relocate the 24-Hour Respite site to 629 Adelaide St. W. The community members felt the neighborhood already had a high concentration of programs and services for homeless and marginalized individuals.

At the conclusion of each of the sessions, two commitments were made:

1. To document answers for the most frequently asked questions raised at these Public Stakeholder Sessions as well as those posed to the dedicated Gmail account.
2. To take back the numerous concerns of the 24-Hour Respite site to the Senior Management Team at Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and present next steps or updates.

3. Stakeholder Update Session – November 16, 2023

Overview

On November 16, 2023, Barnes Management Group (BMG) hosted a one-hour virtual Stakeholder Update Session for community stakeholders interested or concerned about the planned 24-Hour Respite site at 629 Adelaide St. W. The meeting was hosted on Zoom with 75 participants in total including City staff from Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), the site operator, St. Felix Centre, and Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik. SSHA announced the programming at 629 Adelaide St. W. will be changed from a 24-Hour Respite to a shelter model.

Meeting Objectives

The purpose of this stakeholder meeting was to provide information updates and to fulfill a commitment made to community stakeholders during the previous four Public Stakeholder Sessions. The update session related to changes and more information regarding planning for 629 Adelaide St. W. that resulted from previous stakeholder engagement. SSHA announced a number of changes to the programming at 629 Adelaide St. W. relating to the decision to change the site from a 24-Hour Respite to a shelter model.

Key Discussion Items

The primary topics and concerns raised during the Stakeholder Update Session are as follows:

Change from 24-Hour Respite to Shelter

- A key topic in the Stakeholder Update Session was the presentation of the change in the planned programming for 629 Adelaide St. W. from a 24-Hour Respite Site model to a shelter model. Many attendees expressed support for this decision but wanted to know more about how this change impacted planned programming at the site, how 629 Adelaide St. W. would be renovated, and what extra resources would be included at the new shelter. Participants also wanted to know why this decision was made. SSHA shared that community feedback received via meetings, emails and deputations at City Council were useful in considering plans for the site. A variety of other factors influencing the change were described and included required services, available budget, and a further assessment of the layout and square footage of the space.

Community Engagement and Confirmation of Lease

- Session attendees expressed concern that they learned about plans for 629 Adelaide St. W. outside of official channels which made it appear the plans were being enacted without any community engagement. The City described that formal community engagement is not typically begun until the signing of the lease is complete. However, community engagement was expedited in early October due to information being shared about the planned service before a lease was finalized. The City worked with BMG to share available information and hear arising community concerns with residents and organizations operating near 629 Adelaide St. W. The lease for this site was finalized between St. Felix Centre and the landlord on November 3, 2023. It was clarified in this discussion that an alternate location for this service is not being considered.
- BMG provided an update on upcoming engagement activities and briefly described how/when a Community Liaison Committee will come together in the new year, before opening the shelter. This includes requesting the participation of key community stakeholder representatives from groups such as the local Business Improvement Areas (BIA), Resident associations, condo boards, schools, faith community, service providers and the Toronto Police Service (TPS). They also confirmed that a Community Information Session will be held on November 22, 2023.

Shelter Operations and Neighbourhood Safety and Security

- Panelists highlighted that the shelter program is anticipated to open in Spring 2024 (To Be Confirmed). The shelter will be accessed by individuals (aged 18+) experiencing homelessness through the City of Toronto's Central Intake. All guests will be subject to the rules and regulations of the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#) and have access to wrap-around supports and services. As a shelter, the site will accommodate up to 50 guests, which was a decrease from the planned 60-80 beds as a 24-hour respite site. An enclosed outdoor space is being designed for guests to gather in with picnic tables and

beautification features. The specifics of where and how this will be constructed are still being ironed out.

- The majority of questions in this session were related to how the proposed shelter would address safety for the community and the shelter guests. SSHA stated they met with other divisions, TPS, and Community Crisis Response Teams and will develop a holistic, inter-divisional, approach to safety and security at this location. St. Felix Centre regularly connects with Neighbourhood Community Officer teams with TPS – 14 Division. A Who-To-Call sheet will be developed and shared community-wide in advance of the opening of the shelter.
- Questions were raised related to community members encountering difficult or hostile situations related to shelter guests. There were also concerns about drug paraphernalia in the area. The role of the Community Safety Team (CST) was highlighted as a proven approach that is successful at other shelter sites in Toronto. CSTs monitor a defined geographic area around a shelter site and provide engagement support to shelter clients, community members and local businesses. CST staff can de-escalate situations, provide referrals to shelter guests, and can pick-up biohazardous materials outside of shelter sites when needed. For more extreme and complex situations, contacting the police is best practice.
- Concern was shared for the safety of guests inside the site as there have been reports and experiences shared by 24-hour respite users that they may feel less safe inside the shelter than out. The panelists explained that the shelter staff and CST are all part of the safety strategy that includes both inside and outside of the shelter space. They will also work alongside a Community Liaison Committee so that community residents and organizations can provide ongoing feedback on how to address community concerns.

4. Community Information Session – November 22, 2023

Overview

On November 22, 2023, Barnes Management Group (BMG) hosted a Community Information Session about the planned shelter at 629 Adelaide St. W. The meeting was open to everyone and hosted on Zoom with 112 participants including City staff from the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division, Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, representatives of St. Felix Centre, and Neighbourhood Community Officers of the Toronto Police Service – 14 Division.

Meeting Objectives

The meeting was held to introduce and discuss the planned shelter at 629 Adelaide St. W. with residents, businesses, local organizations near the site and interested or concerned members of the public at large. The agenda was designed to share the most up-to-date information regarding homelessness in Toronto, planning, operations, and community engagement activities related to the site and to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the planned

shelter. The information presented at this session was developed from feedback provided by community stakeholders in the five previous sessions (described above) and via questions or comments provided by email or phone.

In the session, City staff responded to both written and verbal questions from participants posed during the session, as well as questions that had been submitted by email prior to the session. All previous stakeholder meeting attendees were invited to the Community Information Session along with those who emailed SSHA, the project email address or via forwarded emails from elected officials. Additionally, a flyer was mailed with information about the shelter and the Information Session to postal codes in the surrounding area 629 Adelaide St. W.

Key Discussion Items

The primary topics and concerns raised during the Community Information Session are as follows:

Concentration of Shelters Downtown

- Community residents felt that there were many shelters downtown, with five sites specifically in the vicinity of Portugal Square. City staff highlighted that the concentration was based on the historic trend of opening homelessness services in areas with existing supports for people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. The City is working to open additional shelter sites outside the downtown core, but as 629 Adelaide St W. is a relocation of an existing service in downtown Toronto, the site needed to remain in the same area.

Shelter Programming and Operations

- Residents asked several questions related to standards and rules guests are required to adhere to. Panelists highlighted Toronto Shelter Standards and Good Neighbor policies are documents that outline best practices. The City has quality assessment teams that visit all shelters in Toronto to ensure operators comply with the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#).
- Shelters have requirements for guests to be assigned a case manager within the first two days of admission. Anyone accessing St. Felix Centre services must follow the code of conduct, rules, and guidelines. St. Felix Centre hosts regular meetings with guests to ensure they are aware of expectations and potential consequences of not following those guidelines. If a guest is unable to adhere to rules, several actions are taken to address the situation. If guests are to be discharged, they are given a referral to another shelter program with the supports they require.
- St. Felix Centre develops regular activities and programming in communication with its guests. They build relationships with guests, and guests also build relationships with each other, fostering an experience of community both inside and outside the shelter space. To mitigate outdoor line-ups of guests accessing the shelter, a larger reception

area is planned to welcome guests while staff work with them and Central Intake to provide services.

Shelter Integration and Neighbourhood Safety

- Many community members highlighted that their most important concern was related to safety and how best to integrate a shelter near local schools. Shelters are located and successfully operated in residential neighborhoods throughout the City of Toronto near other community services such as schools, libraries, community centers, and health care services. The panelists highlighted that the City and St. Felix Centre have already begun regular meetings with the local principals and school representatives. They are working together to develop a comprehensive safety plan that includes several different schools including St. Mary Catholic School.
- There is a continued concern that the negative experiences of residents near the 24-hour respite site in Liberty Village will occur near 629 Adelaide St. W. Although appreciated, community members felt that the Community Safety Team (CST) was not a sufficient resource to maintain safety alone. The City stated issues related to homelessness services in any neighborhood require an interdivisional approach with the Operator, residents, Neighbourhood Community Officers, CSTs, the Encampment Office, and other City divisions. St. Felix Centre and the City worked regularly with all these groups at the previous location and will continue to do so at 629 Adelaide St. W.

Community Engagement Activities

- Community members also asked about the implementation of harm reduction at 629 Adelaide St. W. Although this shelter will not be a safe injection site, some of its guests do require access to harm reduction services to ensure their ongoing safety. St. Felix Centre, and the City, including Toronto Public Health, are taking a holistic approach to harm reduction and ensuring the safety of guests. St. Felix Centre is specifically working with Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre in advance of opening the shelter at 629 Adelaide St. W to create a collaborative approach to harm reduction.
- Toronto Police Neighborhood Community Officers have a long history of working with St. Felix Centre, the City, other agencies, residents, and those experiencing homelessness. They emphasized that the community approach includes bringing the experience of all parties to the table to work together.
- Community members asked about the definition of 'success' in community engagement related to 629 Adelaide St. W. Panelists highlighted that success for the shelter means providing safe, secure shelter and support to people experiencing homelessness with a built-in plan to help shelter guests move into housing. Shelters are vital for those in need and are in high demand. When a program is succeeding it is an asset to the community and is well integrated with local resources. Residents, businesses, and other stakeholders can help the program succeed by engaging with the City and St. Felix Centre to collaboratively understand what works best for long-term operation of the site.

- Many residents asked how the City will respond to the opposition to the opening of 629 Adelaide St. W. Opposition to the site opening was demonstrated in protests, communications, deputations, signed petitions, and during question-and-answer periods during information sessions. The City has committed to addressing opposition through collaboration and community engagement activities such as stakeholder meetings, community information sessions, and community walk abouts. A Community Liaison Committee will be established to provide a continuous avenue for community feedback to inform the ongoing operations of this site.
-

5. Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers have been compiled in collaboration with Barnes Management Group, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, and St. Felix Centre. These questions were submitted by email at 629AdelaideStW@gmail.com or during the sessions described above. The answers to these questions are current as of December 5, 2023.

The questions are organized here according to four broad themes:

1. Homelessness and Shelters in Toronto
2. Shelter Operations and Programming
3. Neighbourhood Safety and Security
4. Community Engagement Activities

Theme 1 – Homelessness and Shelters in Toronto

Questions and concerns about the state of homelessness in Toronto, the needs of vulnerable populations and the site selection process were brought forward by community members. The City of Toronto has complied with all shelter standards, zoning, and shelter by-law requirements to ensure services are provided to those most in need.

1. Q. What authority does the City have to open shelters? What process does the City follow to select sites?

A. The need for additional shelter and respite space is urgent. Demand is currently far greater than the current system can accommodate. In November 2021, Toronto City Council [adopted a report \(Item - 2021.EC25.6\)](#) that authorized the City to enter into new or amend existing agreements with landlords in order to maintain or add new respite or shelter beds. This step was taken to allow the City to open or relocate shelter programs quickly to respond to shelter system pressures and ensure the City can provide critical shelter services and support to as many people as possible. This authority was reaffirmed [in a report \(Item - 2023.EC7.7\)](#) approved by City Council in November 2023.

When seeking sites for new shelter services for people experiencing homelessness, the City and its operator partners look for buildings that are available, affordable, of a suitable size and close to important services for clients such as transit.

2. Q. Does 629 Adelaide St. W. meet the zoning requirements for shelters?

A. 629 Adelaide St. W. is zoned “I1 D3” under former General Zoning By-law 438-86 and is subject to the Municipal Shelter By-law. Under the By-law, a municipal shelter is permitted here.

3. Q. Are there any distancing requirements for shelter locations?

A. There are no requirements for separation distances between municipal shelters operated by or for the City of Toronto or its agencies. Municipal shelters were previously subject to separation distance requirements; however, City Council removed these restrictions in March 2019 to provide adaptability for the City in addressing the growing demand for shelter services and allow for quick responses to changing circumstances ([Item 2019.PH3.2](#)).

4. Q. Why was this location chosen for a homelessness service? 629 Adelaide St. W. is near a school, church, and residential housing.

A. Shelters are located and successfully operated in residential neighborhoods throughout the City of Toronto near other community services such as schools, libraries, community centers, and health care services. Shelters are not allowed in areas zoned only for employment or industrial use (Zoning By-law 569-2013). Information on shelters and other homelessness services can be found on the City’s website at www.toronto.ca/homelesshelps.

The City and its operating partners have significant experience in successfully operating homelessness services in close proximity to schools and childcare facilities.

5. Q. Are there no other properties available in the downtown area that could be used for homelessness services?

A. The City is actively looking for additional sites to support its winter response and meet the needs identified in the recently approved [Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy](#). It is difficult to find sites that meet the criteria for shelter and 24-Hour Respite use.

6. Q. Why are shelters so highly concentrated in the downtown area?

A. Shelters are located based on the needs of the homeless population and to make it easy for individuals to access wrap-around support services. According to the most recent Street Needs Assessment, 51% of people experiencing homelessness are located in Toronto and East York. The majority of community-based agencies offering supports and services to the homeless population are located in the downtown area. The City is working on a strategy to locate more services outside the downtown core so people can access services close to their existing communities. Since 629 Adelaide St. W. is a relocation of an existing site, it was important that it remained in the area.

7. Q. What is the difference between a Shelter, 24-Hour Respite and Warming Centres?

A. Emergency shelters are intended to provide temporary accommodation and related support services that assist people to move into housing. Emergency shelters can be accessed by any individual experiencing homelessness and include mandatory intake triage and case management services. Shelter clients have access to programming and

support to help them find more appropriate and permanent housing. Shelters also provide additional wrap-around supports, such as recreational and social engagement programming, access to primary, mental health and harm reduction services, and employment and income supports.

A 24-Hour respite site provides low-barrier essential services to individuals experiencing homelessness in an environment that prioritizes ease of access to safe indoor space. Such sites operate 24/7 and provide resting spaces (cots), meals, and service referrals. Although available, there is no requirement to participate in a case management program. Respite programs have cots, maximizing the capacity of the indoor space at the site.

Warming Centres provide immediate, safe indoor space for those who are vulnerable and may be experiencing homelessness during cold weather. Services vary depending on the facility but include, at a minimum, a safe indoor and warm resting space, meals, washroom facilities and referrals to emergency shelter. Beginning in the 2023/24 winter season, Warming Centres will open when temperatures dip to minus 5 degrees Celsius or colder. This service operates 24/7 for the duration of the Centres' activation.

8. Q. Given the number of refugee claimants in need of shelter, why is this site not being opened for refugees?

A. This is a relocation site and will need to serve a similar population. The shelter site will not cater specifically to refugee claimants; however, space at this site will be available to any single adult, 18 years and older including refugee adults. The City is currently supporting more than 5,000 refugee claimants inside and outside the shelter system, and more people in need of emergency shelter services continue to arrive in Toronto.

9. Q. Will there be reimbursements to community members for private property security upgrades?

A. The City does not pay for or compensate people for security measures on private property. Vandalism and trespassing are crimes and should be reported to your local police division as the local police division will assign officers/patrols and activities based on information from the community. Community members can also report minor crimes and issues in the community at www.torontopolice.on.ca/core/.

A Community Safety Team will be established to support the shelter monitor the area of this site. Once the site is live, contact information for the shelter will be provided on the [project webpage](#).

10. Q. Who will be contributing to the cost of the shelter – provincial, federal, and/or municipal?

A. The site is a municipally funded shelter.

11. Q. What happens if the shelter is full? Are people turned away?

A. Walk-ins will be referred to Central Intake to have a space secured through the proper process. If space is not available at 629 Adelaide St. W., appropriate space would be secured elsewhere, and the client redirected. Access to a phone is provided.

Theme 2 – Shelter Operations and Programming

The community sought clarity on Shelter Operations and Programming at 629 Adelaide St. W. The City provided the most up-to-date information with the caveat that the shelter is months away from opening and not all things have been finalized.

12.Q. In the spring of 2023, City Council directed City staff to prioritize opening and operating 24-Hour Respite Sites. Why is the City changing the service at 629 Adelaide St. W. from a 24-hour respite site to a shelter?

A. While 629 Adelaide St. W. was originally envisioned to replace and serve as a 24-Hour respite site, it will now open as an emergency shelter for single adults of all genders. A variety of factors influenced the change to the service model, including community feedback, available budget, and a further assessment of the layout and square footage of the space.

13.Q. How will the shelter site be staffed and what supports are provided to those staying in the shelter site? What life skills or counselling will shelter guests receive?

A. Shelters provide case management for all clients, with a focus on helping them secure permanent housing. The site will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by St. Felix, providing wrap-around supports such as recreational and social engagement programming, crisis management, referrals for income support, housing help, and access to primary health care. Staff are trained in de-escalation, conflict resolution, crisis prevention, intervention and management, and harm reduction services and support. The site will be pet friendly, ensuring pets and owners can stay together. The site will also include an enclosed outdoor area to provide clients with a private, open-air gathering space.

14.Q. Why was the previous location at 25 Augusta no longer feasible?

A. The 24-Hour respite program operated by St. Felix Centre at 25 Augusta Ave. closed in July 2023 to be converted into 31 new affordable housing units for women and women with children.

15.Q. What is the capacity of the site at 629 Adelaide St. W.?

A. The site will open with approximately 50 spaces for people experiencing homelessness. This site will be available to any single adult, 18 years and older. This includes seniors, refugees, and anyone else who is experiencing homelessness and needs a shelter space.

16.Q. When will the site open and for how long?

A. The shelter site is scheduled to open in Spring 2024 (To Be Confirmed) and is intended to operate for the long term.

17.Q. Will there be a Central Intake component?

A. Yes. Access to this site will follow the same processes as all shelters across the city. Central Intake will be the primary referral source, with individuals in-need securing space based on availability.

18.Q. Will this new site have background checks?

A. No, there is no requirement to conduct background checks on individuals accessing services.

19.Q. What experience does St. Felix Centre have managing shelters as opposed to respite sites?

A. St. Felix Centre has extensive experience servicing and supporting vulnerable populations, as well as implementing CSTs and Community Liaison Committees. Most of the operating components and standards of shelters and respites are similar. The additional guidelines are outline in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#).

20.Q. What is the ratio of counsellor to guests?

A. St. Felix will provide case management support according to their operational standards, in conjunction with [Toronto Shelter Standards](#).

21.Q. Are there any nurses on site?

A. There will not be nurses as part of the regular staff. St. Felix Centre will partner with a variety of health service providers, and they will deliver a spectrum of services that could include nursing care.

22.Q. Can those who aren't staying at the shelter use washrooms?

A. While the general operating approach will be to limit access to the space to individuals registered to the program, exceptions may be made in exceptional circumstances.

23.Q. Given that shelter guests are required to engage in case management, how many employees will be assigned to ensure this is possible?

A. St. Felix will assign case management staff according to their operational guidelines and the Toronto Shelter Standards.

24.Q. What rules will the shelter guests need to abide by? What performance indicators will be tracked to ensure that guests successfully transition to permanent housing?

A. Guests are asked to review and abide by a code of conduct. St Felix Centre maintains records of all reasons why a guest leaves the program, including when they secure housing. As every individual has a unique journey to permanent housing, there are no quotas or specific measures associated with securing permanent housing.

25.Q. What is the curfew for shelter guests?

A. There will not be a curfew for guests. There will be scheduled bed checks and staff will conduct wellness checks through the entire building on a regular basis. Front-line staff will be responsible for checking in with guests each day to inquire about how they are doing

and what further can be done to connect them with program support. If guests are not engaging with the program and are away from the program for an extended period of time, it may result in being discharged from the program.

26.Q. What is the average timeline that someone resides at the shelter before they find their own housing?

A. Each guest has their own timeline and journey to finding housing or other supports that are needed. Due to challenges in the availability of appropriate housing options, an average stay can be approximately six months.

27.Q. Will the location have harm reduction approach as a shelter?

A. All shelters offer harm reduction supports. Harm reduction is an approach and set of strategies designed to reduce substance related harm without requiring abstinence. Harm reduction is a key aspect of SSHA's Housing First approach, which focuses on the provision of housing and supports with no preconditions or 'readiness' requirements for the person to accept treatment for any physical, mental health or substance use issues. Staff are trained in harm reduction, overdose prevention, and recognition and response, including the use of naloxone and sharp boxes. The shelter will not offer an urgent public health needs site or a supervised consumption site.

28.Q. What medical and crisis supports will be provided at the shelter?

A. The site will be staffed 24/7 by individuals who are social workers, social service workers or people with lived experience trained in case management for housing and support, harm reduction services, de-escalation, conflict resolution, crisis prevention, and intervention and management. All team members are trained to respond to immediate non-police or non-EMS-related matters when made aware by the community. The site will also have access to a range of primary care services and mental health and harm reduction supports.

29.Q. What are the rules around using in and around the site?

A. While substance use is not permitted within the building or the associated property, guests will not be discharged for use unless there is an ongoing or acute safety risk. Instead, they will be supported to connect to supportive interventions.

30.Q. Will there be a safe injection program at this site?

A. No – the program at 629 Adelaide St. W. will not include an Urgent Public Health Needs Site or safe injection site.

31.Q. How will this site be managed in relation to other homelessness services in the area including the supervised consumption site?

A. St. Felix Centre and SSHA have started discussions with other agencies and organizations in the neighbourhood regarding resources and services that may be available. To date, collaboration has started with local faith groups, different service providers, TPS 14 division, Toronto Public Health, SDFA (Community Crisis Response Teams), local resident associations and BIAs, and other key stakeholders. The new shelter

site will include a Community Liaison Worker, who will be a conduit for coordination of services in the immediate area.

32.Q. How will lineups of people trying to access the shelter be managed?

A. Walk-ins will be referred to the City of Toronto's Central Intake to have a space secured through the proper process. If space is not available at 629 Adelaide, staff will work to refer the client to another space in the shelter system. Access to a phone is provided. Community Safety Teams will continuously monitor the shelter outside to help discourage lineups and refer people to the appropriate services. Additionally, St. Felix is incorporating a larger vestibule at the entrance to the building to accommodate potential walk-ins to mitigate line-ups.

33.Q. Where will the planned enclosed outdoor space be located on the site?

A. SSHA is working with St. Felix Centre to determine the best location for the outdoor space. The tentative plan is to utilize the property and eliminate the existing parking spaces.

34.Q. How many pets will be allowed in the shelter at one time and how will pet waste removal be handled?

A. St. Felix Centre has had many years of experience working with pets, making sure their sites remain clean and welcoming for both guests and pets. Guests have the right to use public spaces and are responsible for the behaviour of their pets outside the site. Pet owners will also be provided with pet scoop bags. Guests can also register for the P.A.W.S. program, which provides emergency veterinary care.

35.Q. Will there be a drop-in food program at this proposed site for those not staying at this site?

A. No – this site will not have a drop-in food program.

36.Q. Are there opportunities for local artists to assist with the beautification of the outdoor space?

A. St. Felix Centre always welcomes volunteers who want to get involved in beautification projects. As the opening of the site gets closer, the Centre will have a better idea of the areas where it will need support from volunteers, including beautification initiatives.

37.Q. Will there be any volunteer opportunities at the proposed shelter for community members wishing to help the residents?

A. See previous response.

38.Q. What is the Good Neighbour's Policy? Please provide specifics.

A. Guests at 629 Adelaide St. W. will receive information about the expectation that they will participate in building a positive atmosphere for everyone in the neighbourhood by sharing in actions such as keeping the volume down outside the shelter, placing garbage in the appropriate containers available for safe disposal, refraining from entering private

common areas, not using oppressive or threatening language against anyone inside or around the space, and engaging with neighbours, staff and other guests in a respectful way.

Theme 3 – Neighbourhood Safety and Security

Multiple questions and concerns about Neighbourhood Safety and Security were raised within all the sessions, communications, and engagement. City staff take the safety of community members and shelter guests very seriously and are working with numerous partners to ensure the safety and success of the site.

39.Q. What will be done to ensure safety and security in the neighbourhood once the site is open?

A. The City is committed to the safety and security of clients, staff and the broader community, and working together to ensure the success of the site. Shelters are located and successfully operated in residential neighbourhoods throughout the city of Toronto which include community services such as schools, libraries, community centres, and health care services. Shelters are located within communities not only because it is important for people staying at these locations to be close to community resources, but shelters are only allowed in areas that are zoned as residential or mixed commercial/residential use.

The City will work closely with St. Felix Centre to develop ongoing community safety measures for this site. We will work closely with community stakeholders to discuss issues of community safety, including work with Toronto Police Service, and create a school safety plan in collaboration with St. Mary's Catholic School.

The building will be equipped with access control and video surveillance systems. A Community Safety Team will also monitor the catchment area 24/7 to address safety issues. Assessments of the site have been done and will continually be reviewed. Community Safety Team will also help pick up drug paraphernalia.

The site will be staffed 24/7 by individuals who are trained in de-escalation, conflict resolution, crisis prevention, intervention and management, and harm reduction services and support. All team members are trained to respond to immediate non-police or non-EMS-related matters at the site when made aware by the community.

A Community Liaison Committee will be created, which will provide a forum where representatives from the local community (e.g., condo boards, residence associations, businesses, or local community organizations) can meet regularly with St. Felix representatives to share information, ask questions, and work together to problem solve community concerns.

40.Q. What is a Community Safety Team?

A. A Community Safety Team (CST) will monitor the catchment area 24/7. CSTs offer an alternative approach to safety provision, grounded in a comprehensive understanding of homelessness, substance use, and mental health issues in Toronto. CSTs consist of frontline workers who bring a compassionate, patient, and non-judgmental attitude to their roles. They hold the necessary experience to engage with individuals confronting complex challenges.

The primary objectives of CSTs include aiding shelter guests, fostering safer community environments, and addressing concerns like the safe disposal of used needles and drug-related items.

St. Felix Centre will be installing security cameras with CCTV and opportunities to install additional lighting in the area will also be explored to help staff supervise the building's perimeter.

41. Will there be any staff outside 24/7 and will they be properly trained in de-escalation and vulnerable communities?

A. See previous response.

42. Q. What will be done to ensure that drug paraphernalia near the proposed shelter program is cleaned up?

A. St. Felix Centre will have a Community Safety Team in place monitoring a pre-established catchment area in proximity to the site, include cleaning up drug paraphernalia and biohazardous materials on the street, in parks, or in laneways. St. Felix Centre will work collaboratively with other service providers in the neighbourhood who also have staff doing similar duties and explore further opportunities for collaboration with them to deepen current practises in place and ultimately enhance and expand this service. Working collaboratively, the City and St. Felix Centre will work with community members to identify hotspots of interest within the catchment area that should require extra attention.

43. Q. There are many residential laneways and driveways in the area. What measures are in place to ensure guests don't spill onto private property?

A. The Community Safety Team will monitor the catchment area 24/7 to address safety issues. The catchment area can include public laneways and driveways to help ensure guests do not spill onto private property. Assessments of the site will take place and will continually be reviewed.

St. Felix Centre will be installing security cameras with CCTV and opportunities to install additional lighting in the area will also be explored to help staff supervise the building's perimeter.

44.Q. What authority do the Community Safety Teams have to intervene in prohibited behaviour on the premises? Is the scope of their intervention limited to verbally intervening or can they physically intervene?

A. CSTs are not law enforcement personnel. They are trained to de-escalate situations and people to the services they need. For situations where there is immediate danger to people or property, please call 911.

45.Q. How will St. Felix work with the existing Toronto Community Crisis Response pilot to increase community capacity to respond to experiences of crisis that can improve everyone's safety and health?

A. St. Felix Centre currently participates in an inter-agency collaboration of service providers in the area. They are a solution-focused group and are exploring ways they can collaborate further to ensure their programs are effective.

46.Q. What is the plan to keep encampments from forming in the nearby areas?

A. St. Felix Centre will work with the SSHA, including Streets to Homes and the Encampment Office. Streets to Homes staff will also monitor the area if encampments are forming. In addition, CSTs will monitor the catchment area 24/7. These teams offer an alternative approach to safety provision, grounded in a comprehensive understanding of homelessness, substance use, and mental health issues in Toronto.

Theme 4 – Community Engagement

Many stakeholders asked about the community engagement process for homelessness services provided by the City of Toronto. Questions regarding the format of consultations, announcements, and the engagement processes with the public were addressed.

47.Q. Why does the City not consult with residents and community stakeholders on the location of shelters?

A. The need for additional shelter and respite space is urgent. The demand for shelter space is greater than the availability of shelter in the system. As authorized by Council, City staff have [Delegated Authority](#) to site new shelters in locations that meet zoning by-laws. In November 2021, Toronto City Council [adopted a report \(Item - 2021.EC25.6\)](#) that authorized the City to enter into new or amend existing agreements with landlords in order to maintain or add new respite or shelter beds. This step was taken to allow the City to open or relocate shelter programs quickly to respond to shelter system pressures and ensure the City can provide critical shelter services and support to as many people as possible. In alignment with Council direction, the focus of community engagement is on the successful implementation of the service and not the location.

48.Q. What is the engagement plan for the site and how will community members be involved?

A. Community engagement is a crucial component to supporting the successful integration of shelters into neighbourhoods. The community engagement process includes

communicating details about the shelter development process, responding to community inquiries, addressing community concerns, improving public understanding of shelter development, and providing ongoing shelter updates. The City is committed to engaging the community to support the program's success – both for the individuals who will be staying there and the surrounding community.

The City has hired a Community Engagement Facilitator, Barnes Management Group, to lead and manage community engagement for 629 Adelaide St. W. Any questions and concerns can be submitted to 629AdelaideStW@gmail.com.

To support successful integration into the neighbourhood, the City and Barnes Management have been meeting with local stakeholders on a regular basis. This includes both large information sharing meetings and smaller, focused stakeholder meetings with community members and organizations for open, solution-focused dialogue and discussion. Working with Deputy Mayor Malik, St. Felix Centre, and other partners, the City hosted a Community Information Session on November 22, 2023. The Information Session was intended to allow members of the community to learn more about the program and ask questions about the site.

A Community Liaison Committee will be created, which will provide a forum for representatives from the local community to meet regularly with representatives from St. Felix Centre to share information, ask questions, and work together to problem solve community concerns.

49.Q. What is a Community Liaison Committee?

A. The process of establishing a Community Liaison Committee (CLC) starts once a site is confirmed. A CLC is a formal committee connected to a shelter service made up of representatives of the community (condo boards, resident associations, businesses, Toronto Police Neighbourhood officers and/or local community organizations) that meets semi-regularly to address questions, share information, discuss and collectively problem-solve community concerns, and link shelter needs with community offers of support. The work of this committee is focused on the positive integration of the shelter service into the community. The terms of reference for the committee, as well as minutes from all meetings will be shared with the CLC members, who can provide updates to their respective groups.

50.Q. How will the centre liaise with the local elementary schools?

A. The City is working closely with St. Felix Centre to develop ongoing relationships with schools in the area. Staff held Stakeholder Meetings with St. Mary Catholic Elementary School, as well as Niagara Street Junior Public School to discuss common issues and concerns. Garrison Creek daycare was invited but unable to attend.

For St. Mary Catholic school in particular, staff also:

- Met with them in multiple stakeholder meetings

- conducted a walk of the school property with the school principal, trustee and superintendent to identify safety and security issues
- are supporting the school to develop a school safety plan

The City and St. Felix Centre will continue to meet with local schools to address ongoing questions and concerns.

51.Q. What can community members and community organizations do to support St. Felix and the City in its efforts to provide shelter?

A. As the shelter starts operations, information will be shared on volunteer opportunities and other ways that community organizations can help support St. Felix Centre and their guests.

52.Q. What was the procurement process for Community Engagement Facilitators?

A. In 2016, City Council requested that staff engage an external expert to review best practices for improving community engagement, related to emergency shelter development. The consultant report ([from Item - 2017.CD19.6](#)) identified that new shelter sites that comply with zoning by-laws did not require approval from local communities and could be developed as of right. In alignment with the consultant review, SSHA's engagement and planning process was changed to focus on how communities can support and improve the success of new services instead of the shelter location. This included a recommendation for the City to hire a facilitator with expertise in managing complex and potentially contentious community engagement processes to plan and implement each project's engagement plan.

In 2020, the City of Toronto issued a Request for Proposals for Community Engagement Facilitators to assist in supporting community engagement in areas where new shelters or homeless-related services were being implemented. Barnes Management Services was one of the Community Engagement Facilitators chosen to assist with community engagement activities.

The role of the Community Engagement Facilitator includes:

- Identifying opportunities to enhance community engagement and ensure that all new shelters and services for people experiencing homelessness are set up for success.
- Increasing understanding and address concerns among residents about how decisions about these services are made and the impact on communities.
- Responding to individual community needs and circumstances with a flexible approach.

53.Q. I was not available to attend stakeholder meetings and information sessions. Will there be more opportunities for community engagement?

A. The initial stakeholder meetings were conducted to start dialogue and share accurate information with community members. We hope to continue to engage with the community

629 Adelaide Street West – Summary Report of Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

in future small solution-focused discussions. A Community Liaison Committee will be established with key community stakeholders including local BIA, Resident associations, condo associations, other local service providers and Toronto Police Community Neighbourhood Officers.

We are also exploring options to hold an on-site open house and information meeting closer to the opening of the site. We will be adding a Community Liaison Worker position to the St. Felix staff team to engage with community members, local businesses, and resident associations to respond to concerns and to seek opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

The City hosted a virtual Public Information Session for all community members on November 22 from 6.30 – 8.00 p.m. This session was organized as part of the Community Engagement Plan and provided an opportunity for community members to be informed about the site. Details from that meeting, including a recording of the meeting are available on our webpage at www.toronto.ca/629AdelaideStW.