



City of Toronto

COMMUNITY INFORMATION DROP-IN SESSION SUMMARY

New Shelter at 2204 Eglinton Avenue West

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Fairbank Public School, 2335 Dufferin St

Drop-In Information Session from 6 – 8 p.m.

Overview of the community information session

On Tuesday, May 13, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, over 50 people participated in a Community Information Session hosted by the City of Toronto about the new shelter at 2204 Eglinton Avenue West.

Community members were invited to the drop-in via an E-Update and a mailed flyer (see Attachment B) sent to residents neighbouring the new shelter within a 250m radius. Also in attendance were City of Toronto staff from various divisions, Fred Victor staff (the future shelter operator), Deputy Mayor Mike Colle and members of his staff, and Third Party Public, the independent facilitation team retained by the City to support the community engagement process.

The purpose of the drop-in was to:

- Provide more information about the new shelter, including how the site was selected, the kind of shelter being planned, how local communities will continue to be engaged, and more.
- Answer questions and understand perspectives from the community.
- Discuss how to best integrate the new shelter successfully into the community.

Community members were invited to share their feedback by talking with staff at various stations to learn more about different topics, including Introduction and Overview, Site Selection, Planning, Development and Construction, Shelter Operations, Community Safety, and Community Engagement. Community members were also invited to share their feedback with the team by completing a feedback form (see Attachment A for Participant Guide).

Quick glance at the feedback heard

The following includes a quick glance at the feedback heard during the Community Drop-In. It should be read in conjunction with the following detailed feedback sections.

- **Concern with the rationale for site selection.** Participants wanted to understand how the City selected this site, and raised concerns that there were already many social services in the area, and that the selection criteria were not grounded in the lived realities of the area.
- **Concern with the lack of community consultation prior to the site being selected.** Participants were frustrated that the community drop-in happened after the site was selected as a shelter.
- **Concern with community safety, and how the new shelter may further contribute to issues in the neighbourhood.** Participants already had bad experiences with break-ins in their neighbourhood and are concerned about what future shelter residents may bring.
- **Concern with shelter operations and how staff will manage loitering and litter spilling into the community, as well as how staff will manage potential mental health crises and substance use of clients.** They wanted to understand how the shelter operator and the City would address these issues and maintain the area.
- **Some support for the shelter, and the need to figure out how to best integrate the shelter with the community.** Some suggestions included: providing private greenspace for shelter clients, improving neighbourhood infrastructure like garbage collection and lighting, and other examples.

This summary was written by Third Party Public. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript but as a detailed overview of the feedback and questions provided by participants. The City of Toronto will post the summary to the website at [Toronto.ca/2204eglinton](https://toronto.ca/2204eglinton)

Detailed feedback, questions, and answers from the community drop-in session

The following section includes the detailed feedback and questions provided by participants during the community drop-in session. They are summarized under the station themes and are numbered for ease of reference only. Note that responses from City of Toronto staff, where provided, are written *in italics*. The answers also include responses provided by the City after the community drop-in session.

1. Site Selection

Many participants questioned the fairness, transparency, and rationale for the site selection process. Few attended the community drop-in to show support for the site. Participants said:

- The area already has a significant concentration of social services, shelters, and halfway houses. Some were frustrated with the City's response/definition that only one shelter existed in the ward, as they believed at least five other facilities were offering similar services in the area.
- The Eglinton and Caledonia neighbourhood is already doing its part with social services. Participants wanted to understand why the City isn't putting the shelter in wealthier neighbourhoods like Forest Hill or Rosedale. They said it's a sign that the City's approach isn't equitable. Some also said that the City is relying on technical site criteria without meaningfully engaging with the lived realities on the ground.
- Specific questions asked at the community drop-in included:
 - Q: Given the amount of land available in the broader Greater Toronto Area, why did the City choose to locate the shelter here?
City answer: The City is looking for new shelter locations throughout Toronto. The City is limited by sites that meet site selection criteria. CreateTO conducted a thorough analysis of City-owned sites and selected sites based on size, zoning, suitability to meet shelter guidelines, and proximity to amenities. The City's focus is on

transitioning from an emergency COVID-19 response to a long-term proactive approach. This includes transitioning from a system with temporary shelter spaces in hotels, which are not designed for shelter use and are more costly to operate, towards a system with permanent, purpose-built spaces that can respond to the evolving needs of Toronto's homelessness sector.

- Q: To what extent did the City consider that there are several other shelters or supportive services in the neighbourhood when selecting this site?

City answer: Toronto needs services across the housing continuum to meet the needs of Toronto's diverse population. Shelters exist in many neighbourhoods across the city, often near other services and businesses. Their proximity to these services does not prevent the establishment of a new shelter in the area if the location meets all applicable criteria.

- Q: What other nearby sites were considered, and why were they ruled out?

City answer: The City reviewed over 100 sites across Toronto in 2024, including 4 sites in Eglinton-Lawrence. The City cannot share the details of sites that are part of ongoing real estate processes. Sites were deprioritized because they did not meet zoning requirements, cost, were not the right size or design, or could not be built into a site that would conform with Toronto Shelter Guidelines.

- Q: Does the City only site shelters in less wealthy neighbourhoods? Why does the City not site shelters in Rosedale or Forest Hill?

City answer: The City does not have a policy that prevents or limits it from siting shelters in every neighbourhood across the City. It can be challenging to site a shelter in some neighbourhoods if there is a lack of suitable land/ property or the cost to acquire a property is higher than the City's budget.

- Q: What happened to a previous plan to build seniors housing at 2204 Eglinton? Many would prefer seniors housing to be built here as opposed to a shelter.

City answer: In 2023, the Toronto Parking Authority reviewed its assets to determine which ones were surplus to operational

needs. Through this exercise, it was determined that the parking lot at 2204-2212 Eglinton Ave. W. was no longer required. CreateTO, an agency that manages the City's real estate holdings, then conducted a thorough evaluation and determined that the lot would be best used as a shelter location. The City takes a holistic lens to its real estate assets and given the City's priorities to expand shelter options across the city, a determination was made to repurpose the lands at 2204 Eglinton to a shelter.

2. Planning, Development and Construction

There was some interest in understanding the future design of the shelter. Participants had the following questions:

- Q: How close will the shelter be to the property line?

City answer: Shelter design is still in the conceptual stages, and preliminary designs can be seen on the City's [website](#). As we move through the process, more detailed designs will be completed, allowing for a clearer understanding of how far the perimeter extends.

- Q: Is the site large enough for outdoor use by clients? Will there be a private outdoor green space for clients?

City answer: The new shelters will be thoughtfully designed and purpose-built for shelter use, following best practices outlined in the Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines. Current plans for the site include designs for a private outdoor space for client use.

3. Shelter Operations

There was significant interest in understanding how the shelter would operate, who would maintain shelter cleanliness in the neighbourhood, how shelter clients were selected and more. Participants said:

- The new shelter might affect the cleanliness and maintenance of the neighbourhood. Several noted that the neighbourhood already suffers from visible litter and poor upkeep. For example, garbage is regularly seen outside the nearby Shoppers Drug Mart. The shelter operator, Fred Victor, and the City should both

ensure they are responsible for the cleanliness of the shelter.

Shelter operator answer: Fred Victor (the operator) will maintain its property and any shelter-related litter in front of its property. It will also have a clear contact person that community members can call if they see any litter on or in front of the shelter property that hasn't been addressed.

City answer: All City-funded shelters are required to maintain the outdoor space around the shelter, removing debris, waste and snow and ice in the winter. Contact information that community members can use to discuss shelter-specific concerns will be provided once each site opens.

- Individuals with complex needs require specialized facilities with dedicated teams to care for them. It is concerning that "all types of homeless individuals" will be housed under one roof.
- Some participants said they felt relieved to learn that this would be a 24/7 shelter where clients would not be forced to leave during the day, and that wraparound health services would be provided on-site. However, the participants were still concerned over the uncertainty of how those services would be delivered and how reliable they would be over time.

City answer: The new shelter sites to be developed through the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy will be pet-friendly, so pets and owners can stay together, and feature an enclosed outdoor area to provide clients with a private, open-air gathering space.

- Specific questions asked at the community drop-in included:
 - Q: What mechanisms does the City have to ensure that the shelter operator is being a good neighbour, maintaining its property, and adhering to the City's requirements? And what incentives does the operator have to meet these requirements?

City answer: The City knows that successful shelters have strong community engagement and are good neighbours. City staff in quality assurance attend shelter sites to assess compliance with over 460 shelter standards that support high-quality, safe, and welcoming shelter sites. City staff are

keen to work together with local communities to support the successful integration of the shelter into the neighbourhood.

- Q: Is the City able to be selective in terms of who can stay at the shelter? For example, could the City limit the number of people with mental health or addictions issues that stay in the shelter? Will this shelter have a greater-than-normal number of clients with these types of issues?

City answer: The City offers beds to people on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot screen people out.

- Q: Are the shelter clients being brought in from outside the neighbourhood?

City answer: Clients are referred to shelters and other overnight accommodations through Central Intake, a City-operated, 24/7 telephone-based service. Central Intake staff track vacancies and work to refer new clients to shelter system spaces that meet their needs as they become available. Staff also provide information on other homelessness and housing stability services.

- Q: How many staff will be on site during a 24-hour period?

City answer: Shelters are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provide emergency accommodation, meals, laundry, and case managers to help individuals develop housing plans. There are many staff on site at all times. Operators will determine staffing based on approved staff-to-client ratios, often add programming, and bring in additional partners based on the needs of shelter residents.

- Q: How will residents be screened for serious criminal offences or sex offender status?

City answer: Central Intake caseworkers provide callers with referrals to shelters across the city by learning about (or assessing) the caller's needs and using a centralized information system to identify shelter spaces that are available at that time that can meet the client's needs. Shelter residents also complete an intake process when coming into a shelter. Shelters work closely with Toronto Police to address any issues of safety related to shelter residents.

4. Community Safety

Many participants were concerned with community safety and how the City and the shelter operator would address existing and future safety concerns. Participants said:

- Residents shared that they believe the current neighbourhood is already experiencing trespassing, theft, and attempted break-ins. One person shared that when they reported a crime, the police never responded. Others described stolen goods and theft attempts on vehicles. One participant said they pass the site daily and are concerned they will feel unsafe.
- Some residents said they were particularly worried about safety for vulnerable people — both shelter clients and community members — especially in situations where police involvement wasn't warranted but distressing behaviour (such as harassment or shouting) still occurred. Relying on police to manage mental health crises could escalate rather than resolve issues. Ensure there is proactive safety planning to include de-escalation teams or mental health workers.
- Although City states that the shelter will have 24/7 staffing, there is doubt and concern that they will be able to attend to mental health crises and substance use crises at all times of the day.
- Specific questions asked at the community drop-in included:
 - Q: What will the City or the shelter operator do to ensure the safety of vulnerable people in the community if they experience a crisis?

City answer: The City is committed to the safety and security of clients, staff and the broader community, and working together to ensure the success of each 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 staffed 24/7 by individuals who are trained in de-escalation, conflict resolution, crisis prevention, 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.

- Q: What kind of support could someone expect from the City or operator if they are repeatedly harassed near the shelter, but it doesn't warrant police involvement?

City answer: The City will work closely with shelter operators and community stakeholders, including Toronto Police, to share information, discuss issues, and develop ongoing safety measures.

Residents are encouraged to reach out to the shelter if they have concerns about a shelter resident. A "Who to Call Sheet" will be developed to inform community members on the points of contact for assistance with concerns or questions for various situations pertaining to the site. Situations may include dealing with emergencies, non-emergencies, community safety, shelter operations, individual distress/crisis, persons sleeping outdoors or general inquiries.

- Q: Will shelter clients be permitted to use drugs on-site?

City answer: The shelters being developed under the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy will not be safe consumption sites or offer safe consumption services. All shelters provide harm reduction supports, as outlined in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#), which are aimed at reducing substance-related harms. Staff are trained in harm reduction, overdose prevention, recognition and response, and work with clients who use drugs to make positive and sustainable changes, without judgment. This is done by working together to better understand their needs and connect them to community and clinical resources.

5. Community Engagement

There were significant concerns about why the Eglinton site was selected without community consultation beforehand. Shared feedback includes:

- Residents shared that they felt the current community engagement felt performative and disrespectful, as the shelter site decision had already been made without community consultation. Many wanted to understand why community consultation came after the decision had already been made. Additionally, some said the change from parking lot to seniors home to shelter felt like a "bait and switch".

- Some said it was comforting to know that the City has worked with communities in other neighbourhoods to identify and respond to issues as the community identifies them, including increasing garbage pickup, adding lighting, and more.
- A few expressed Interest in understanding how the new shelter would benefit the community as a whole.
- Specific questions asked at the community drop-in included:

- Q: Why did the City engage only after finalizing the shelter location?

City answer: City staff have [Delegated Authority](#) from Council to site new shelters in locations that meet zoning by-laws and do not consult on shelter location. Once a location is secured, community engagement focuses on working with the community to support the successful integration of the shelter into the neighbourhood. This is done by providing information about the shelter development process and ongoing updates, responding to community inquiries, and working together to address community concerns.

- Q: How have shelters worked with communities?

City answer: In other communities, the City has worked with community members to identify and address issues — both proactively and reactively — through the creation of Community Liaison Committees and other engagement forms. City has responded to community feedback and priorities by doing things like adjusting waste collection service, installing lighting in dark areas perceived as unsafe, and more. The City's experience is that Community Liaison Committees are most active right before and after a shelter opens, but once issues are identified and addressed, they tend to meet less frequently since the shelters generally operate with few issues.

- Q: Why wasn't I notified about the community drop-in meeting if I live nearby?
City answer: The community was invited to the drop-in session via an E-Update and a mail drop within a 120m radius from the site.

6. Other feedback

Other questions and feedback participants had for the City staff included:

- Q: How will the City address concerns about existing garbage and cleanliness issues near the site (e.g., near the Shoppers Drug Mart)?

City answer: All City of Toronto-funded shelters are required to maintain the outdoor space around the shelter, removing debris, waste and snow and ice in the winter. If the community has concerns about cleanliness around a shelter, they should contact the shelter directly with the number provided on the “Who-to-Call” sheet.

- Q: How will the shelter affect neighbouring property values?

City answer: No research in Toronto or other cities has shown a consistent or direct link between the presence of a homeless shelter and declining property values. Property values in Toronto are driven by much larger factors such as market demand, housing supply, interest rates, and neighbourhood amenities.

Advice on how to best integrate the shelter into the community

There was some support for the proposed shelter and the process of working together to find ways to better integrate the shelter into the community.

- Few participants said they’re supportive of the shelter coming to the neighbourhood, as there is a need for shelters in Toronto. One participant expressed interest in volunteering.
- Some community members shared ideas to help the shelter integrate more smoothly with the community. These included:
 - Provide a private outdoor space for clients to reduce sidewalk congestion and improve dignity.
 - Install an accessible green roof or partner with local landowners to give clients access to green space (one potential partnership for green space can happen with the old Canada Goose Factory).
 - Ensure regular and responsive garbage pickup both in front of the shelter and along busy corridors like Eglinton.
 - Improve lighting in areas perceived as unsafe to increase visibility at night.
 - Establish a clear point of contact for residents to raise complaints or concerns directly with the shelter operator.
 - Consider non-police safety supports such as de-escalation or mental health crisis teams.

Attachment A. Participant Guide

New Shelter 2204 Eglinton Ave. W. Community Drop-In Session

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Fairbank Public School (Gymnasium), 2335 Dufferin St.

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Participant Guide

The City of Toronto will be locating a shelter at 2204 Eglinton Ave. W. The purpose of tonight's Drop-In is to:

- Provide more information about the new shelter, including how the site was selected, what kind of shelter is being planned, how local communities will continue to be engaged, and more
- Answer questions and understand perspectives from the community.
- Discuss how to best integrate the new shelter successfully into the community.

City of Toronto staff, the shelter operator, and Deputy Mayor Mike Colle are here to share information, answer questions, and take feedback. We have set up the room with different stations focused on topics we have heard are priorities for the community through our engagement to date. You can visit the stations in any order.



Turn this Participant Guide
over for a detailed floor plan.

Our questions for you

Engaging with the community to determine how to best integrate the shelter into the neighbourhood is a priority for the City of Toronto. We'd like to hear your thoughts on:

1. What needs to be in place for this shelter to be successful in this community?
2. What (if anything) are you or the groups you work with interested in doing to support the successful integration of the shelter in this community?
3. Do you have any other feedback?

You can share written feedback on the feedback form you received when you arrived. To share feedback after the meeting:



Leave a voicemail
647-699-2772

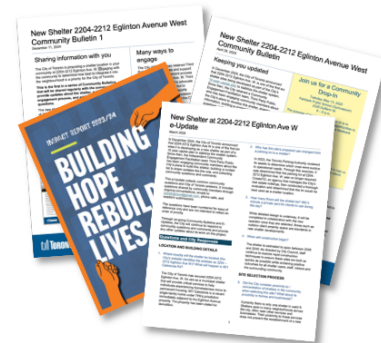


Send an email
2204Eglinton@gmail.com

Resources available to you

Since December 2024, when the City announced 2204 Eglinton Ave. W. is one of the first six shelter sites it is developing as part of its 10-year capital plan, the project team has distributed three updates to share information and respond to community questions and comments. These documents are available at the sign-in table and on the project website.

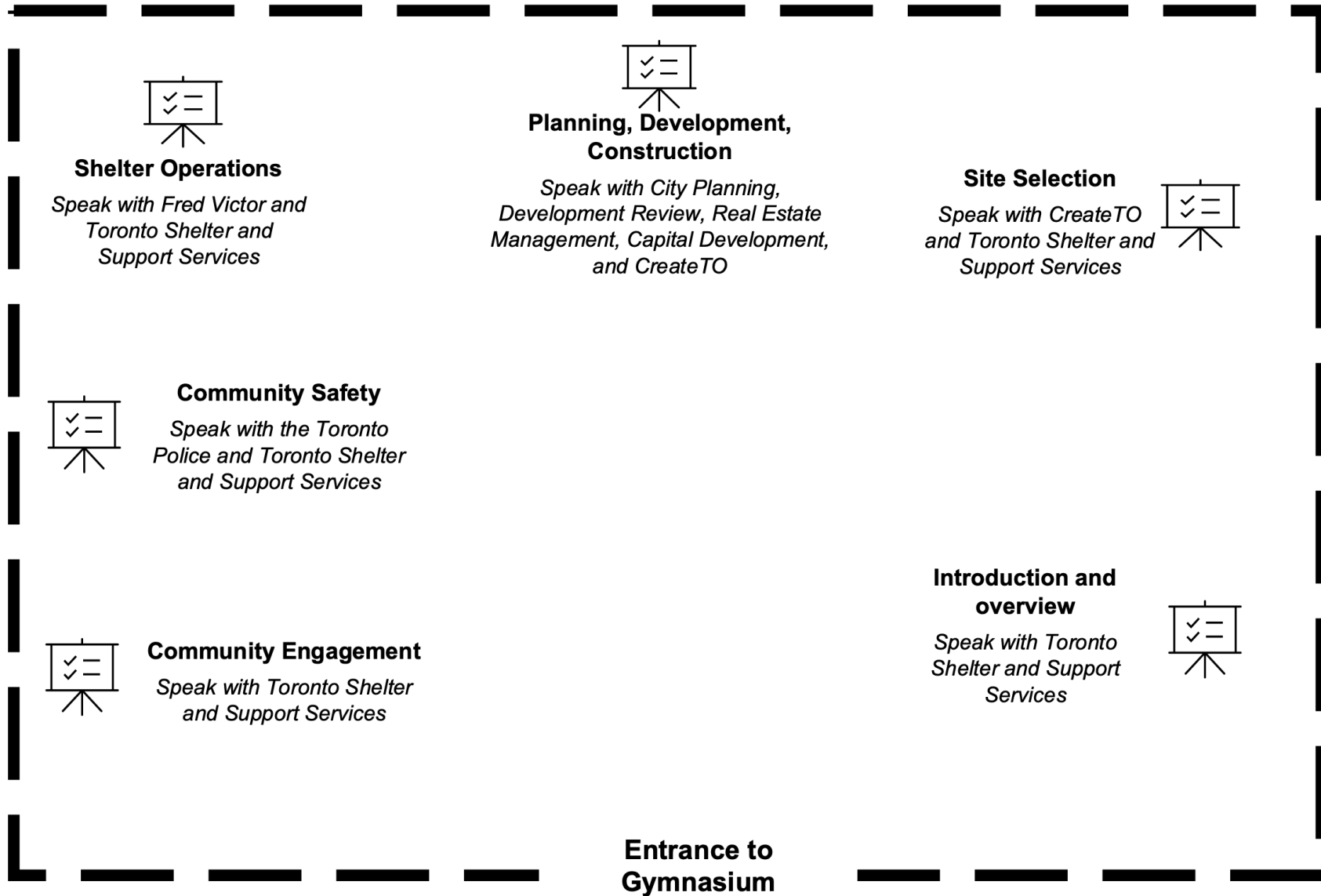
There are also resources available from Fred Victor, the selected shelter operator.



For more information and resources about the new shelter — and to sign up for updates — visit the project website at www.toronto.ca/2204eglinton or scan the QR code below.



Drop-In Floor Plan



New shelter at 2204 Eglinton Avenue West

Join us for a Community Drop-In

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

6 – 8 p.m.

Fairbank Public School (Gymnasium) - 2335 Dufferin St.

Please register at toronto.ca/2204Eglinton

Registration is encouraged (but not required) to help us understand how many people are planning to attend.

In December 2024, the City of Toronto announced that 2204-2212 Eglinton Ave. W. is one of the first six shelter sites it is developing as part of the city's 10-year capital plan to stabilize the shelter system. The new shelter, expected to open in 2028, will provide critical services for people experiencing homelessness.

Engaging with the community to determine how best to integrate the shelter into the neighbourhood is a priority for the City of Toronto. This Community Drop-In will provide community members with opportunities to learn more, ask questions, and share feedback with the City. In attendance will be:

- Deputy Mayor Mike Colle
- City of Toronto staff
- The shelter operator

Learn More and Get Involved

For more information about the new shelter or to contact the Community Engagement Facilitation team:



Visit the project website www.toronto.ca/2204eglinton



Leave a voicemail: 647-699-2772



Send an email: 2204Eglinton@gmail.com

