



COMMUNITY UPDATE

New Shelter at 3838 Bloor St. W.

The City of Toronto has secured **3838 Bloor St. W.** for use as a municipal shelter that will provide critical services to help women experiencing homelessness gain stability and work toward permanent housing. The program is expected to support approximately 65 women ages 18 and older.

You are receiving this bulletin because you previously indicated an interest in receiving project updates. If you have any questions about the shelter or no longer wish to receive these updates, please email 3838Bloor@toronto.ca. You can also email us at this new address for more information. As of September 12, 2025, the previous email address for this project, 3838Bloor@gmail.com, will no longer be used.

To learn more about the City's plans to develop new shelter sites, visit toronto.ca/NewShelters.

Shelter Operator Selected



The City has selected **Street Haven** as the shelter operator for 3838 Bloor St. W.

[Street Haven at the Crossroads](#) is a Toronto-based non-profit organization that has supported women since 1965 through shelter services, supportive housing, addictions treatment, and training programs. With sixty years of proven experience, Street Haven is recognized for its trauma-informed, women-centred approach and for building lasting,

respectful relationships with both clients and neighbourhood partners. Guided by its mission, vision, and values of dignity, equity, and community, Street Haven has consistently demonstrated the ability to help women move from crisis toward stability and independence.

Street Haven was selected as the operator through a comprehensive [Expression of Interest](#) (EOI) process that was evaluated by a committee made up of City staff who are subject matter experts in different aspects of shelter operations, service delivery, financing and budgeting.

Street Haven will be required to follow [Toronto Shelter Standards](#) that clearly outline expectations and guidelines for shelter operations, safety, and accountability.

Community Drop-In Session

The City held a Community Drop-in Information Session on August 11, 2025, from 6 – 8 p.m. for residents and community members to learn more about the upcoming shelter at 3838 Bloor St. W. Approximately 70 community members attended, including Ward 2 Councillor Stephen Holyday. The session was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 3819 Bloor St. W. and was facilitated by **Community Engagement Facilitator Joe Mihevc**. Staff from various divisions and units from across the City, as well as CreateTO and the Toronto Police Service, provided information and answered questions from community members.



This bulletin provides responses to the most common questions raised at the Drop-In Session. City staff are also following up on suggestions from participants that can support the integration and operation of the shelter in the community, including connecting with a network of local businesses and linking to other City services that will be available with the opening of the nearby Etobicoke Civic Centre.

Upcoming Community Engagement

The City of Toronto knows that successful shelters have strong community engagement and are good neighbours. 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.

To support community integration, the City and Joe Mihevc will continue to meet with local stakeholders on a regular basis. This includes both large information-sharing gatherings and smaller, focused stakeholder meetings with community members and organizations for open, solution-focused dialogue and discussion. As the shelter starts operations, information will be shared on volunteer opportunities, donations needed, and other ways community organizations can help support Street Haven and the shelter's residents.

Joe Mihevc can be reached at 3838Bloor@toronto.ca. Please visit toronto.ca/3838Bloor for upcoming events and important updates on this project.

Shelter Construction

When will the shelter open?

As with any infrastructure project, building a new shelter takes time and planning. The City will be working with architects, Street Haven, and designers on detailed design to determine what changes or renovations are needed.

At the preliminary stages of a project, a conservative schedule is provided due to unforeseen delays that can occur during construction. The design process can take about 12 months, followed by construction and renovation, which can take an additional 12-15 months. Where possible, the City will look to expediate work. Updates will be shared with the community and posted online at toronto.ca/3838Bloor.

What renovations does the existing site need?

3838 Bloor Street West was previously used as a retirement home and already contains many features that are well-suited for use as a shelter. Renovations at the existing site will focus on updates required to meet the Toronto Shelter Design Guidelines, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and operational and programming needs. These improvements will enhance the functionality, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of the facility. The City is currently reviewing design options and will ensure that the building complies with all applicable zoning bylaws.

Shelter Operations and Programming

How did the City determine there is a need for a women's shelter?

Demand for shelters to support women continues to rise. According to the [2024 Street Needs Assessment](#), a point-in-time count and survey of people experiencing homelessness, the percentage of women experiencing homelessness in Toronto has grown from 34% in 2021 to 41% in 2024. During the same timeframe, the share of women staying outdoors has increased from 17% to 30%. The shelter at 3838 Bloor St. W. will be the first Municipal shelter in Etobicoke Centre to support women in need.

What type of programming will be offered at this shelter?

The shelter at 3838 Bloor St. W. will serve approximately 65 women, offering outcome-focused supports to help improve their well-being and find and keep stable housing as quickly as possible.

The shelter will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and will provide emergency accommodation, meals, laundry, and Case Managers to help women develop housing plans with the ultimate goal of exiting homelessness. It

will also feature important wrap-around supports, such as employment services, physical and mental health care supports and referrals, and recreational and social programming. Once the site opens, additional partnerships and programs may be established to meet the needs of women staying in the program.

New shelters being developed through the City's Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy will be pet-friendly, so pets and owners can stay together. The site will also feature an outdoor area for shelter residents to use.

What will residents do during the day? Will they be required to leave in the morning and come back at the end of the day?

There are no requirements for clients to leave at any time of day. During the day, staff at Street Haven, including Counsellors and Case Managers, will provide programming to help meet the needs of residents staying at the site.

Shelter residents may leave the shelter throughout the day for a variety of reasons, including seeing family/loved ones, for employment and education, and to access community services. It is important to remember that people using shelter services are equal residents of the city. They can travel through communities and use amenities such as parks. And like all residents, shelter residents are expected to conduct themselves according to the rules/laws and by-laws.

Will people need to line up to access the shelter?

Referrals to the shelter will be made through [Central Intake](#), the City's 24-hour telephone-based service that offers referrals to emergency shelter, as well as information about other homelessness and housing stability services. Central Intake will track vacancies and work to refer individuals into the shelter as space becomes available. In addition, Street Haven will work with Streets to

Homes and outreach services to engage with women who are experiencing homelessness in the neighbourhood to access the shelter.

How will this shelter be integrated with services offered at the Etobicoke Civic Centre?

The new [Etobicoke Civic Centre](#), which is being constructed near the shelter, will offer a range of community focused programming and services. This includes amenities such as a Community Centre, featuring pools, fitness studios, a gymnasium and walking track, and services such as an art gallery, public health clinic, library and childcare centre. Future programming for the shelter may include collaboration with services offered at the Etobicoke Civic Centre.

Community Safety

What safety measures will be in place?

The City is committed to the safety and security of clients and staff, and works with a variety of partners, including the Toronto Police Service, to ensure the safety of the broader community and the success of the site.

The site will be staffed 24/7 by individuals who are trained in case management for housing and support, harm reduction services, de-escalation, conflict resolution, and crisis prevention, intervention and management. The building will be equipped with access control and video surveillance systems and will be thoughtfully designed with safety features in mind.

The City will work closely with Street Haven to develop safety measures and good neighbour policies for this site. This will include working closely with the community and partner agencies to support community safety initiatives.

Should incidents occur outside of the shelter, staff will work collaboratively with Toronto Police,

community organizations, and City divisions to address these appropriately. A “Who to Call” sheet will be made available closer to the site opening with relevant contact information.

Will clients be allowed to use drugs at the new shelter?

This shelter will not include supervised consumption services or provide illicit substances. The shelter will apply a harm reduction approach to offering services. This means that while substance use is not encouraged, all shelter residents, including those who use substances, can access shelter services and are supported to exit homelessness into stable housing. This aligns with a human-rights based approach and the City’s [Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#).

All shelters provide health services, including harm reduction support, as outlined in the Toronto Shelter Standards. The aim is to reduce deaths associated with drug toxicity and other substance-related harms such as infectious disease transmission. Staff at the shelter will be trained in overdose prevention, recognition and response, and will work with women who use substances to make positive and sustainable changes, without judgement. This will be done by working together with them to better understand their needs and connect them to community and health services. This can include a range of harm reduction and treatment programs, including abstinence-based programs.

Shelter Location and Decision-Making Process

What was the process for selecting this site?

The City is working to build up to 20 shelters citywide to help stabilize the shelter system and respond to the growing need for homelessness services. To find these locations, staff completed a

comprehensive due diligence process that involved assessing more than 200 properties to ensure they met the size, budget and zoning requirements needed to be a municipal shelter. This included assessing eight sites in this Ward. Through this process, 3838 Bloor St. W. was deemed to be most suitable.

City Council has delegated authority to City staff to site new shelters in locations that meet municipal shelter zoning by-laws. These steps have been taken to help speed up and depoliticize the shelter development process, which is consistent with a human rights-based approach to housing and related services for vulnerable residents. This approach ensures the City can open or relocate shelter programs quickly to respond to shelter system pressures and ensure as many people as possible can access critical shelter services and support.

The City's community engagement and planning process for shelters invites communities to provide feedback and improve integration of the new service into the community. This process emphasizes communicating project information clearly, responding to community inquiries, and encouraging solution-focused discussion in smaller meeting formats after locations have been secured. Community input is vital as the City works to support vulnerable people in neighbourhoods across Toronto.

How will building new shelters save money?

The City will achieve cost-savings by renovating existing buildings or constructing new facilities that are purpose-built to operate as a shelter. This will allow the City to move out of the more costly temporary shelter hotels established during the COVID-19 pandemic, which are typically not designed for ideal shelter operations. Over a 10-

year period, the City will save \$33.6 million when compared to leased shelter hotels. For each month that a new 80-bed shelter is delayed, the cost to the City is \$280,000 in forgone operating efficiencies. Shelters also help to reduce reliance on other high-cost services (e.g., emergency rooms) and provide an alternative to sleeping in parks, sidewalks, or transit stations.

