

COMMUNITY Bulletin #1

New Indigenous Men's Shelter at 720 Bathurst St.

April 2026

The City of Toronto has purchased 720 Bathurst St., to provide essential services and culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness as they work toward permanent housing.

The shelter is part of the City's Council-approved Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy, which aims to open up to 20 new shelters citywide by 2033. These sites will help respond to demand and stabilize the shelter system.

The shelter is expected to serve **up to 80 adults** with their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs by providing 24/7 care. At present, the shelter is anticipated to open in **2028-2029**.

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 720Bathurst@toronto.ca.

To learn more about the City's plans to develop new shelter sites, visit www.toronto.ca/720Bathurst

Shelter Operator

The shelter at 720 Bathurst St. will be operated by Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence), an Indigenous-led organization that has served Indigenous men experiencing homelessness and the broader Indigenous community in Toronto since 1985.

Guided by a culturally responsive, strengths-based approach to care, Na-Me-Res operates a range of services across the city that successfully support clients to stabilize, heal, and move toward housing.

Na-Me-Res brings extensive experience supporting clients through a multidisciplinary team that includes Traditional Elders and Teachers, case management and outreach staff, housing and aftercare workers, and health professionals.

The shelter at 720 Bathurst St. will be staffed 24 hours a day, and services will include:



- Fully accessible, pet-friendly accommodations
- Nutritious meals and laundry facilities
- On-site health supports
- Culturally based programming and services
- Housing workers to support residents in developing housing plans and connecting to health, employment and other community resources



The shelter at **720 Bathurst St.** was selected through this process as an appropriate location to help expand the City’s shelter system and respond to demand for Indigenous shelter spaces.

Shelter Location and Services

Need for Indigenous Services

Demand for Indigenous shelters offering culturally appropriate services continues to rise, with Indigenous people disproportionately affected by homelessness in Toronto. According to a 2024 Street Needs Assessment, a point-in-time count and survey of people experiencing homelessness, Indigenous people represent 3% of the City’s population, but account for 9% of people experiencing homelessness.

While there are multiple City-funded Indigenous shelter programs throughout Toronto, there are no shelters that provide Indigenous-specific services for adults in University-Rosedale.

Shelter Search in University-Rosedale

Homelessness is experienced in communities across Toronto, and shelters are needed across the City to support people facing immediate housing crises. To identify suitable locations for new shelters, at the time this site was secured, the City had conducted a comprehensive review of **more than 200 properties**, including 15 sites University-Rosedale area, to ensure they met zoning, size, and operational requirements.

Community Drop-In Session

The City of Toronto, along with Na-Me-Res, hosted a Community Drop-in Information Session on Thursday, February 12, 2026, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the 720 Bathurst St. site.

The event was designed as an informal drop-in format, allowing residents and community members to move through different information stations, speak directly with City staff, connect with representatives from Na-Me-Res, and ask questions about the proposed shelter.

Through the participation of City staff from Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) and several other City divisions, as well as Na-Me-Res leadership and staff, attendees were able to better understand information about programming and supports that will be made available to shelter residents.

Information tables included representatives from:

- TSSS – Engagement, Policy, Safety, Capital Development & Encampment Office
- Create TO & Corporate Real Estate
- Na-Me-Res
- Toronto Police Services Neighbourhood Community Officer & Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit
- Trinity St Paul's Church
- Palmerston Library

These tables allowed residents to learn about shelter operations, family supports, community safety measures, broader neighbourhood services, and the planning and design process for the site.



Upcoming Community Engagements

Successful shelters are supported by strong relationships with the surrounding community. The City of Toronto is committed to ongoing engagement with residents, businesses, and local organizations as planning for the shelter at 720 Bathurst St. moves forward.

To support this work, the City has retained **Optimus SBR**, a third-party consultant to facilitate and support community engagement for 720 Bathurst St. The lead **Community Engagement Facilitator** will be **Mike Bugeja** for the project. Mike will work with City staff, Na-Me-Res, the local Councillor's office, and community stakeholders to help facilitate dialogue, share project updates, and ensure community feedback is heard throughout the planning process.

If you are part of the local community or a network/organization wanting to learn more, Mike Bugeja can be contacted at 720Bathurst@toronto.ca or 416.619.2082. Please reach out with any questions or comments, or to request meetings or discussion by phone, virtually, or in person. Also, please visit www.toronto.ca/720Bathurst for upcoming events and important updates on this project.

Additionally, **Na-Me-Res invites the community to join its annual Summer Pow Wow**, which will be held on Saturday June 13, 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM at Dufferin Grove Park.

What We Heard from the Community

Below are the most frequently asked questions we have received to date and at the drop-in event.

How can community members support the shelter and get involved?

Several community members expressed support for the shelter and the clients who will be staying there. Community members also asked how they could help once the shelter opens, including volunteering, donating, or partnering with local organizations to support families. More information about this will be made available as the shelter development process moves forward.

How will substance use be managed at the shelter?

The shelters being developed under the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) will not include supervised consumption services or provide unregulated substances. The shelters will apply a harm reduction approach to offering health 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 to housing and [Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#).

All shelters take a holistic approach and provide additional wrap-around supports, such as recreational and social engagement programming, access to primary and mental health and employment and income supports, as outlined in the [Toronto Shelter Standards](#). This approach aims to reduce deaths associated with drug toxicity and other substance-related harms such as infectious disease transmission. Staff are trained in overdose prevention, recognition and response, and work with clients who use drugs to make positive and

sustainable changes, without judgement. Staff work together with clients to better understand their needs and connect clients to community and health services.

What type of programming will be on hand and how might it impact the neighbouring community?

The shelter will serve up to 80 Indigenous men. The shelter will be staffed 24 hours a day and provide critical shelter and wrap-around supports, including case managers who will work closely with the shelter residents to better understand their needs, develop personalized housing plans, and connect them to community services as they transition to permanent housing. The shelter will focus on supporting the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of Indigenous men by providing wrap-around supports. This includes food, laundry, on-site medical care, cultural-based programming, and case managers who will help connect residents to local community services.

Additional resources may be added once the site opens to address the needs of clients onsite.

Will there be more opportunities to engage with the site and its operator?

If you have questions or want to be engaged further, reach out to 720Bathurst@toronto.ca.