

Terms of Reference for
Shelter Integration and Partnership Table for
Buttonwood Family Shelter Community Liaison Committee

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Background

The City of Toronto will own and operate 2 Buttonwood Avenue as a family shelter to help women experiencing homelessness and their children gain stability and work toward permanent housing. It is tentatively anticipated that the program will open gradually, beginning in late 2026.

The new 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.

2 Buttonwood will feature:

- up to 96 family suites, designed to be flexible to accommodate different family structures and sizes
- kitchenettes on each floor for family use
- a commercial kitchen and dining area
- a family resource centre/playroom and outdoor playground so that families and the children can connect

The shelter program will be staffed 24 hours a day and provide wrap-around supports, including:

- Meals and laundry
- Case managers who work with clients to develop housing plans, access income supports, and provide referrals to other community services
- Health care supports
- Specialized programming and recreational activities for women, children and youth

Once the site opens, additional resources may be added over time and as the program model evolves to address the unique needs of families on-site. This includes building partnerships with community agencies that provide services to support women, children and youth.

SIP Table Mandate

The proposed **Shelter Integration & Partnership Table (SIP Table)** offers a flexible engagement framework that can be tailored to each shelter initiative, providing a clear structure for involving community partners and residents and capturing feedback aspects of design, programming and partnerships where community input can meaningfully inform decisions. The SIP table aligns with and operationalizes City Council's July 2025 direction to strengthen partnerships with local communities and

Councillors through neighbourhood-specific planning and community-level working groups.

The Buttonwood Family SIP Table is an advisory body to Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) that works collaboratively to support the successful integration of the Buttonwood Family Shelter and its residents into the neighbourhood. The SIP Table supports the well-being of the neighbourhood by providing a structured forum for community members, organizations and the City as the operator to share perspectives and collaborate to identify opportunities and address issues related to the shelter and to strengthen connections with existing community networks. The SIP Table will also have connections with existing partnership tables and networks that meet on broad community needs and opportunities to ensure the SIP Table focus on supporting 2 Buttonwood service delivery.

The mandate of the SIP Table is to:

- Support the shelter's successful integration in the surrounding community.
- Build positive relationships and clear communication channels between TSSS, the City's divisional and agency partners, local organizations, and neighbourhood stakeholders.
- Share, discuss and make recommendations to TSSS regarding potential or emerging matters related to the shelter, including resident wellbeing, community integration, volunteer opportunities, and events.
- Bring forward questions, ideas, concerns, and offers of support from organizations and individuals that are not SIP Table members, and relay SIP Table discussions and outcomes back to those groups or individuals.
- Provide input to TSSS in the delivery of a Shelter Integration Plan prior to shelter opening.

Scope of Influence

The SIP Table is not a decision-making body. It can make recommendations and offer input to TSSS for its consideration.

TSSS is the operator of 2 Buttonwood and is responsible for service delivery, acting under the authority of City Council and in compliance with Toronto Shelter Standards and applicable by-laws and regulations. On matters that are outside the scope of the SIP Table, TSSS will refer those matters to the appropriate resource for action, as appropriate. TSSS will consider and respond to recommendations and input that are within the scope of the SIP Table, as outlined below.

In Scope

The following matters related to 2 Buttonwood are within the scope of discussion, consideration, and recommendations of the SIP Table, subject to applicable regulations, policies or guidelines:

- Information and orientation that support shelter residents and staff in understanding and engaging with the surrounding community.
- Input on the shelter program naming, subject to applicable City policies.
- Building design elements (e.g., décor, landscaping) still under TSSS consideration, including potential uses of “community space” within the shelter that are not otherwise prescribed by shelter standards or regulations (e.g., client and staff health and safety) or subject to operational need.
- Community-level considerations related to the shelter’s operations, with a focus on communication, coordination, and identifying appropriate pathways for raising and addressing concerns.
- Community interface, relationship-building, and local partnerships (e.g., with BIAs or community agencies).
- Volunteer opportunities, donations, client programming or related supports, and community benefit activities.
- Connections and liaison with non-TSSS-led community or service tables.
- Community safety and well-being matters that are influenced by or influence shelter operations or integration, unless more appropriately explored through existing community tables.
- Anti-stigma education and community awareness initiatives.

The SIP Table is committed to supporting 2 Buttonwood as a good neighbour and provides a space to surface feedback or concerns constructively. Discussions are intended to focus on shared understanding, emerging patterns, and collaborative, community-level solutions, while recognizing that some case-specific matters are more effectively addressed through alternative City or service provider processes.

Out of Scope

The following matters are outside of the scope of the SIP Table:

- Admissions, discharges, or client-specific matters.
- Access to personal information governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), including confidential client information, labour relations matters involving TSSS staff.
- Operational staffing, security matters, or internal shelter management decisions.
- Site operator selection, oversight and contract terms.
- Matters received through the TSSS Complaints and Compliments process, including case-specific issues, disputes, or inquiries related to specific neighbouring properties, individuals, or isolated incidents, will not be presented to the SIP Table in accordance with MFIPPA regulations.

- Matters more appropriately dealt with by another City Division, the Toronto Police Service or other level of government. In this instance, those matters will be directed to the appropriate entity and/or the SIP member will be directed to the right forum in which to share their input.

These boundaries are intended to recognize the legislative and operational responsibilities of TSSS and the mandates of other community tables or working groups, and to ensure the SIP Table remains focused on collaborative, community-level integration of the shelter operation rather than individual issue resolution or operational decision-making. The table below provides examples of matters that would be considered in and out of scope as a point of reference.

In Scope	Example
Supporting resident and staff connection to the surrounding community.	Connecting TSSS Staff with local community representatives.
Input on shelter naming.	Site name (i.e. Junction Place).
Select design elements still under consideration.	Input on shared use of the community space or landscaping where feasible.
Community-level considerations related to operations.	Suggest what communication tools the shelter can provide the community (i.e. newsletter).
Partnerships and volunteer opportunities.	Volunteering within the shelter or co-plan community events.
Connection with other community or service tables.	Community Police Liaison Committee & Local Community Cluster Table.
Community safety and well-being matters that are influenced by or influence shelter operations or integration.	Local youth violence and collaborative initiatives that support clients while promoting overall community well-being.
Anti-stigma and community awareness initiatives.	Input on educational materials to share in the community.
Out Of Scope	Example
Client-specific matters or personal information (MFIPPA protected).	Information on specific incidents or client information.
Operational, security, or internal shelter decisions.	Security camera's location or placement.
Site operator selection, oversight, or contracts.	Selection of the site's operator and agreements signed.
Formal complaints or compliments processes.	Matters raised through the TSSS via the homeless.support@toronto.ca inbox.
Matters under the authority of other City divisions, Toronto Police Service, or other levels of government.	Public realm matters, such as streetlights, for Toronto Hydro's attention.

Operating principles

The SIP Table operates according to the following principles:

- **Purposeful Engagement**
Clear, timely information and meaningful dialogue that respects participants' time and contributions. TSSS will make clear which information is shared for awareness and where SIP Table feedback or input can be meaningfully considered.
- **Trauma- and Violence-Informed Practice**
Engagements that consider safety, language, and facilitation approaches supportive of all participants.
- **Respect & Anti-Discrimination**
Inclusive participation from diverse community members, grounded in antiracist and anti-discriminatory conduct.
- **Evidence-Informed Dialogue & Coproduction**
Discussion and problem-solving supported by data, lived experience, and collaboration with operator leadership.
- **Transparency**
Open communication beyond the SIP Table, including with participants, local Councillors, community tables, and shelter networks to demonstrate progress and share learnings.
- **Privacy & Information-Sharing**
Compliance with Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) / Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) standards to protect personal information and ensure appropriate handling of all meeting materials.

Work Plan and Meetings

TSSS will endeavour to convene the SIP Table within 12 months of planned shelter opening and will support post-opening work for a period advised by the shelter operator. Meetings of the SIP Table will be organized to support the following work planning outline:

Work Planning

- **Pre-opening:** 2-3 months of meetings that focus on orientation and relationship building, followed by meetings from 8-months to opening to identify partnerships, share information and support neighbourhood preparation and integration planning.
- **Post-opening:** Regular meetings, as decided by the SIP Table members, to address issues and opportunities and monitor progress, to continue based on the needs and direction of SIP Table members and the approval of the co-chairs.

Meeting Schedule

SIP Table meetings will be convened as determined by the SIP Table co-chairs in consultation with members. TSSS will monitor the committee's progress and may adjust the meeting frequency in consultation with SIP Table members and TSSS staff.

Meeting Logistics

The first meeting will be called by TSSS with invitations sent with a pre-determined date and time. Subsequent meeting times will be decided by the membership based on their availability.

Membership

The SIP Table is established by the City. It is a non-political advisory committee composed of residents and representatives from local organizations and community sectors. Members are expected to be community-minded and are in attendance to represent the interests of their organizations or sectors. Members are expected to consult with their organizations or sectors prior to each SIP Table meeting and come prepared to provide feedback and solutions on behalf of their respective organizations or sectors. Members are also responsible for fulfilling any action items for which they are assigned and reporting back to the SIP on those outcomes.

The SIP Table is not a forum for individual concerns, specific resident issues, or for sharing and discussing confidential client information. There is a [TSSS Compliments, Complaints and Appeals process](#) that can be utilized by individual residents, including members of the SIP when they are acting in their personal capacity. Inquiries made through this process will not be shared at the SIP and will be handled in accordance with MFIPPA and the TSSS Compliments, Complaints and Appeals process.

Membership Composition

The SIP Table is composed of:

- up to 15 public members
- the shelter operator (TSSS)
- the local councillor or their staff/designate.

Public members can include representation from:

- **Local residents** – Up to 3 individuals living near the shelter and/or active in the community
- **Resident associations** – representatives of local resident associations or condo/co-op boards
- **Businesses** – representatives of local businesses and Business Improvement Associations (BIA)

- **Schools or school boards** – staff representatives from local schools or representatives of the school boards (Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde, Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir)
- **Community organizations** – representatives from organizations such as non-profits, places of worship, social and health agencies.

Subject Matter Experts

Staff from TSSS, the Toronto Police Service and other City Divisions and Agencies may act as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as needed and act as non-member participants in SIP Table meetings or contribute to considerations at the invitation of the SIP Table co-chairs.

The SIP Table co-chairs may also invite people with lived/living experience of homelessness or shelter residency to participate as SMEs. These SMEs may be eligible to receive an honorarium of \$125 per meeting, subject to applicable City honoraria policies.

Member Recruitment and Selection

TSSS will promote the opportunity to join the SIP Table through an outreach to lists of interested/potential individuals and organizations compiled through previous HSCIS engagement activities.

Organizations will be encouraged to nominate representatives who identify as Indigenous or as being from an equity-deserving group, including women, young adults (18–30), Black and racialized persons, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQ+ residents.

TSSS will select the members of the Buttonwood Family Shelter SIP Table from among interested and eligible individuals, in consultation with the local councillor and external Community Engagement Facilitator. At any time, if recommended or requested by the SIP Table co-chairs, TSSS will solicit new members for the SIP Table to reflect a reduction in the number of public members, such as through leaving the committee or lack of regular attendance.

TSSS will maintain a webpage ([Toronto.ca/2Buttonwood](https://toronto.ca/2Buttonwood)) about the shelter until approximately one year after it has opened. TSSS will publish the list of organizations and the number of residents who are members of the SIP Table on this website for transparency, but will not include individual member names or other identifying information.

Membership Adjustments

If a member must withdraw due to illness or unexpected circumstances, their position

may be filled, at the discretion of TSSS, by another representative from the same organization or community sector.

Roles and Responsibilities

All SIP Table communications must remain respectful. The City of Toronto is committed to antiracist, anti-discriminatory, and inclusive conduct. Racist, prejudicial, discriminatory, derogatory, or aggressive behaviour, including name-calling, will not be tolerated. Members who engage in such conduct may be removed from the committee at the discretion of TSSS. Members who demonstrate behaviours that are not supportive of the SIP Table mandate to successfully integrate the shelter into the community may be removed from the committee at the discretion of TSSS.

Member Responsibilities

All SIP Table members will endeavour to bring neighbourhood perspectives and a constructive mindset to the SIP Table, and will:

- Review and agree to the Terms of Reference.
- Be invited to shape meeting agendas and review meeting minutes.
- Attend meetings and participate constructively and in a manner that is solutions-focused. Organizational representatives may identify one person as their alternate at the time they join the SIP Table. The alternate may attend a meeting in place of a member, and is required to adhere to the Terms of Reference.
- Treat all participants with respect.
- Contribute information, concerns, and opportunities related to community benefits, events, and neighbourhood issues.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information that is identified as confidential
- Review and confirm the accuracy of meeting action items, and ensure distribution of meeting action items back to their organizations and broader constituencies.
- Notify the co-chairs if they are no longer able to participate as a member.

Subject Matter Experts & City Staff

These individuals will support the considerations of the SIP Table by providing operational transparency, clarifying policies, channelling input and supporting informed input or recommendations. They will:

- Clearly outline what is open to SIP Table input and what is not, and explain why.
- Provide accurate, accessible information to support understanding, effective dialogue and recommendations.
- Address issues raised by the SIP Table and offer possible solutions.
- Ensure appropriate staff or SMEs attend meetings.
- Consider SIP Table advice and explain how feedback was used or why it could not be implemented.

- Support all SIP Table communications, including providing meeting materials and minutes to members in advance when possible.
- Refer out of scope items to other community tables or partners as appropriate and report back to the SIP on completion of those referrals.

Community Engagement Facilitator

A Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF) is a third-party consultant working under contract with TSSS to conduct and support public engagement. The CEF's role to support the SIP Table may include:

- Assisting with member recruitment and onboarding.
- Supporting Co-Chairs to facilitate initial SIP Table meetings prior to site opening.
- Supporting public reporting and engagement on SIP Table activities.

Co-Chairs

The 2 Buttonwood Site Manager (or Program Coordinator as their designate) will act as one SIP co-chair, and a TSSS staff representative from the Infrastructure Planning and Development Unit will act as the other co-chair in advance of site opening. Following site opening, the Site Manager or designate will be the Chair. The co-chairs will collaborate to:

- Schedule and chair all meetings
- Draft meeting agendas with input from members and TSSS
- Circulate to members all meeting agendas, materials and action items of meeting discussions
- Support effective dialogue and considerations by ensuring all members can participate, by outlining what is open to SIP Table input and what is for information, and by ensuring information and SMEs are available as needed for meetings and to follow up on requests and advice
- Determine when issues or opportunities raised are best suited for consideration through channels outside of the SIP Table, and relay this information to the appropriate TSSS staff for follow-up
- Act as liaison to site leadership to communicate any SIP Table recommendations or advice.
- Refer out of scope items to other community tables or partners as appropriate and report back to the SIP on completion of those referrals.
- Ensure staff compliance with all applicable municipal by-laws and policies.

Resources

TSSS will provide necessary resources for the SIP Table, including facilitation, administrative support, and meeting materials.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Information shared through the SIP Table is subject to MFIPPA. Personal information will be protected. Non-personal information, including organization and association names, will form part of the public record.

Amendments

Amendments to the Terms of Reference must be approved by TSSS to ensure alignment with SIP Table structure and format, as well as consistency across all emergency shelter operations. Any member of the SIP Table may propose amendments, and the Co-Chairs will communicate any requests for amendments to site leadership for consideration.