

Executive Summary

On March 18, 2019, the Emergency Shelter Review was presented to the Community Services Committee with recommendations towards establishing a modernized shelter system with equitable funding models and core service levels that fit within a Housing First integrated system approach to addressing homelessness. Staff have met with shelter service providers and identified some immediate next steps in re-profiling the shelter system towards a low barrier, housing focused, and outcome-based model.

This report provides an update on the establishment of a temporary Men's Emergency Shelter program and outlines next steps towards re-profiling the shelter system as outlined in the Emergency Shelter Review. This includes the issuance of a Request for Proposal for youth shelter services.

Background

The City of Greater Sudbury (City) has a service manager mandate from the Province of Ontario to coordinate and/or deliver programming to reduce or prevent homelessness. Funding is provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). The City also contributes additional municipal funds to the annualized allocation and further receives federal funding aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness. The City works with community service providers to provide programs that support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including emergency shelter programs for men, women and families and youth.

In 2018, an evaluation of the emergency shelter system in Greater Sudbury was completed with a goal to receive recommendations towards establishing a modernized shelter system with equitable funding models and core service levels that fit well with other community services within a Housing First integrated system approach to addressing homelessness. On March 18, 2019, a report was presented to the Community Services Committee with recommendations for right sizing the shelter system with options for re-profiling based on various scenarios, implementing an equitable funding model, and developing core shelter standards with a low barrier and housing focused approach.

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=2&id=1351>

Men's Emergency Shelter Program

On March 9, 2019, the Salvation Army provided notice to the City that they would be discontinuing the operation of the Men's Emergency Shelter program effective May 10, 2019, as a result of a number of challenges they are experiencing in relation to the aging facility, operating costs, staffing issues, and financial constraints. Under a funding agreement with the City, the Salvation Army had been providing up to 22 beds for homeless men aged 20 and older and had a 75% occupancy rate in 2018. The Salvation Army confirmed that they would continue the operation of the Women and Families Emergency Shelter program at Cedar Place.

In response, staff approached the two other shelter service providers within Greater Sudbury: L'association des jeunes de la rue (AJR) and the Canadian Mental Health Association Sudbury - Manitoulin (CMHA), to look for an alternative solution to meet this gap. While AJR was not able to provide this service, the CMHA are willing to work with staff to develop a temporary solution.

CMHA has proposed to open a temporary low barrier shelter that provides services for up to 20 individuals aged 18 and older who identify as male, and to individuals who identify without a gender (non-binary) who feel comfortable staying in a men's shelter. The program would be open nightly from 10:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m., and will offer a safe environment, warm cots for sleeping, light snacks, and refreshments. Final arrangements are being made for a suitable location in the community.

This program will operate from early June until October 31, 2019. On November 1, 2019, the Off the Street Low Barrier Shelter will re-open at its new permanent location at 200 Larch Street. In line with the shelter review recommendations, the Off the Street Low Barrier Shelter will move to a year round model of operation, and will provide a low barrier, housing focused approach to all genders.

Youth Emergency Shelter Program

Following the release of the emergency shelter review recommendations, AJR has advised the City that they intend to discontinue the Youth Emergency Shelter program effective September 1, 2019, as they have decided to concentrate on prevention and support programs. The Youth Emergency Shelter program provides 16 beds for all gender youth aged 16 to 19 years and has been operating at approximately 30% capacity.

AJR has made arrangements to transfer the board and Foyer Notre Dame facility to Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury (CSC) for continued operation of homelessness services, including the Community Outreach Program and Extreme Cold Weather Alert services. AJR are willing to continue to provide up to 5 emergency shelter beds for youth aged 16 and 17 from September 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 in order to provide time for the City to secure another Youth Emergency Shelter program.

A Request for Proposal will be prepared to seek a service provider to operate a 16 bed Low Barrier Emergency Shelter program for all gender youth aged 16 to 24 years.

Future Emergency Shelter System

In line with the recommendations from the emergency shelter review, over the next year the intention would be to move to a well coordinated, housing focused, and outcome based shelter system. This would be accomplished by implementing:

- a diversion program which will divert people away from shelters and to other housing solutions at their first contact with the homelessness service system
- a low barrier year round youth shelter for people of any gender aged 16 to 24 years
- a low barrier year round adult shelter for people of any gender aged 25 and over, at the Off The Street Shelter at 200 Larch Street
- a safe, housing focused year round shelter for families at Cedar Place
- shelter standards which include housing focused, outcome based practices
- a coordinated access system with key data and outcome measures
- immediate access to housing supports based on the person's need

Next Steps

Staff will continue to work with the CMHA to open up a temporary Men's Emergency Shelter program. A Request for Proposal will be developed and released for the operation of a Youth Emergency Shelter program, and a report will be brought back in the fall of 2019 with an update on the shelter transition.