

Background

The City of Greater Sudbury 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 of Greater Sudbury also contributes additional municipal funds to the annualized allocation and further receives federal funding aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness. The City of Greater Sudbury 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 2013, the City of Greater Sudbury was mandated by the Province of Ontario to complete a strategic plan focused on creating a flexible, community centered housing and homelessness system.

City of Greater Sudbury Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan November 2013 - <http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=11106.pdf>

The City of Greater Sudbury's Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan identified six priority areas, including the "need to strengthen approaches to preventing homelessness, increase the diversity of emergency shelter options and support individuals with multiple barriers in obtaining and maintaining their housing".

Some recommended objectives and actions under this priority were:

Objective: Ensure emergency accommodation is available when needed, but focus on transitioning to permanent housing.

Actions: As a ten year goal, with increases in permanent affordable housing stock and monitoring of shelter usage, work over time to gradually retiring some of the capacity of the emergency shelters and re-directing funding to support individuals and families in transitioning to and maintaining permanent housing.

Review eligibility criteria for existing shelters and/or reallocate funding to ensure emergency accommodation meets the diverse range of needs, including emergency accommodation that does not have a zero alcohol tolerance.

Objective: Address the needs of the most vulnerable populations of homeless.

Actions: Prioritize the most vulnerable for rehousing, case management, and homelessness prevention, particularly those who may be chronically homeless and/or with multiple barriers to housing,

including those interacting with health care, Children's Aid Society, and addictions treatment.

Redistributing funding for homelessness services to increase the focus and provide more intensive case management to individuals with multiple barriers to housing.

Objective: Stop discharging people into homelessness from key points of contact like hospitals and corrections.

Action: In collaboration with community stakeholders, develop a structured process that plans for the safe and successful transitioning of individuals from institutions.

In March 2016, the Province released its Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update, which included a commitment to end chronic homelessness by 2025.

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page9181.aspx>

The vision for the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding was updated in January 2017 to have: "A coordinated and holistic service delivery system that is people-centered, evidence informed and outcomes based, and reflects a Housing First approach that focuses on homelessness prevention and reduces reliance on emergency services".

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=15972>

Over the past five years, focus has been placed on developing homelessness services in the City of Greater Sudbury that prioritize the most vulnerable for rehousing, case management, and homelessness prevention, particularly those who may be chronically homeless and/or with multiple barriers to housing. This includes the development of a low barrier emergency shelter and a Housing First program.

In a report to Council on January 15, 2018 a recommendation was approved which stated: "As additional CHPI funding is directed towards the Housing First program and Homelessness Prevention, it is recommended that an independent consultant complete a review of the current emergency shelter system, with a report back to the Community Services Committee by December 2018".

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1258&itemid=14238&lang=en>

Emergency Shelter System Review

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in May 2018. The objective of this RFP was to receive and evaluate proposals to conduct a complete program review of the emergency shelter system within the City of Greater Sudbury. The goal of the program review was to receive recommendations towards establishing a modernized shelter system with equitable funding models and core service levels that fits well with other

community services within a Housing First integrated system approach to addressing homelessness. As a system, supports should be in place to prevent homelessness first, provide emergency shelter when required, and connect people to permanent, appropriate, stable housing as quickly as possible.

The review was to include an understanding of current and future community needs, a comparative analysis with best practices from other municipalities and a look at emerging models to indicate future direction for services. The successful proponent was Vink Consulting.

Following a detailed evaluation plan, Vink Consulting completed the review using a range of data collection methods including:

- Data and background document review
- Interviews with City staff, shelter operators, and other community partners involved in the homelessness service system
- Focus groups with shelter system consumers from each of the shelters
- Review of published information on best practices and interviews with jurisdictions with leading practices
- Interviews with comparator Service Managers about their service level capacity and funding levels and models
- Workshops with shelter operators and community partners to obtain their input on what model and strategies should be put in place so that emergency shelters function effectively as part of an integrated homelessness service system.

A final report was submitted by Vink Consulting with recommendations for improving the emergency shelter system including:

- Right sizing the shelter system with options for re-profiling based on various scenarios
- Implementing an equitable funding model
- Developing a diversion program
- Developing shelter standards to fully define core services
- Implementing a coordinated access system and HIFIS 4.0
- Determining targets for performance management

Attached as Appendix A is the Review of Emergency Shelter System within the City of Greater Sudbury.

Funding to Support the Transition to a Modernized Shelter System

In 2013, Council approved \$194,000 from the municipal contribution for 2013 Emergency Shelter Top Up be transferred to the Ontario Works Reserve and be committed for funding emergency shelters in future years. This funding can be used towards the transition of the shelter system and has been included in the 2019 Budget. Any amounts not used in 2019 will be returned to the Ontario Works Reserve and be committed for use in future years.

Next Steps

On approval of the recommendations, staff will move forward with:

- Undertaking consultation with emergency shelter providers to decide on preferred option for re-profiling the shelter system
- Implementation of diversion services
- Development of system wide shelter service standards
- Implementation of a Coordinated Access System and HIFIS 4.0
- Development of targets and performance measurements aligned with Provincial and Federal funding partners
- A report to be brought back to the Community Services Committee by December 2019 detailing the transition plan for approval.