

NO: R220

COUNCIL DATE: December 12, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **December 6, 2022**

FROM: **General Manager, Community Services**

FILE: **1855-03**

SUBJECT: **Update on Provision of Services for Vulnerable Populations in Surrey**

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Services Department recommends that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with an overview of actions currently underway with respect to enhancing the service delivery model for vulnerable populations in the City of Surrey.

BACKGROUND

The City currently either directly provides, or supports as a partner/stakeholder, several services for vulnerable populations. City funded or delivered services include bylaw enforcement; policing services; street cleaning and encampment clean ups; and planning and development services including social planning.

The City also partners actively with BC Housing, the Fraser Health Authority ("Fraser Health"), Ministry of Children and Family Development ("MCFD") and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction ("MSDPR") on programs that are delivered in Surrey under those agencies' respective Provincial mandates.

Additionally, the City engages actively on various tables and committees with not-for-profit service providers, charitable organizations and stakeholder organizations (e.g., Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association, Surrey Urban Mission Society, Lookout Housing + Health Society, Community Advisory Committees etc.) to support coordination of services in the City Centre that addresses the needs of the community as a whole.

In July 2021, the City received \$14.2 million in the first intake of the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant (the "Grant"). In August 2022, the City received an additional \$1.19 million in the second intake of the Grant. The goal of this funding was to support local governments in providing programs to improve the health and safety of unsheltered individuals.

In February 2022, the City also received a grant from Fraser Health in the amount of \$800,000 to install a two washrooms in City Centre.

DISCUSSION

Homelessness in Surrey

Surrey has considerable and increasing demands for services from people experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. Surrey has the second highest number of unsheltered people in the region and is one of the few communities that saw an increase in the 2020 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count. Many people are living in temporary accommodation and have limited spacing and amenities. This results in reduced quality of life for people experiencing homelessness and impacts residents and businesses.

The City has been actively investing, along with partners such as BC Housing and Fraser Health, to keep pace with demand for services. New supportive housing projects opened in 2021 and 2022, however demand continues to outstrip supply such that between 340 and 520 individuals may be unsheltered or precariously housed in Surrey. Data over the period 2005 - 2020 for the homeless count, average monthly rental rates, and average annual vacancy rates in Surrey show that there is a strong correlation between rising costs, falling availability of housing and the number of unsheltered people in Surrey.

This data along with analysis of Bylaw data on tent encampments and incidents reported in the City with regard to vagrancy, loitering, panhandling etc. suggest that the total number of currently unsheltered people could be as high as 520 individuals. While there may be a perception that many of the people experiencing homelessness have come to Surrey from other cities, there is no quantitative data to support this and qualitative data suggests that the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey have been resident here for several years. There are even individual cases of people who have experienced virtually continuous street entrenched homelessness in Surrey for upwards of ten years.

Update on Provision of Services for Priority Populations in City Centre

Utilizing strong partnerships and funding with Fraser Health and BC Housing as well as grant funding, six initiatives have been implemented, primarily focused on service delivery in City Centre. In addition, funds have been provided to social service organizations serving women and children to target supports in underserved areas. The City is also implementing enhancements to respite support provided in City facilities during the day.

Services provided encompass temporary housing, meals and respite services, connections to support services and hygiene and health services, as outlined below.

Figure 1 summarizes the services provided by the aforementioned grant funding by type. Further detail on each is provided in the following section.

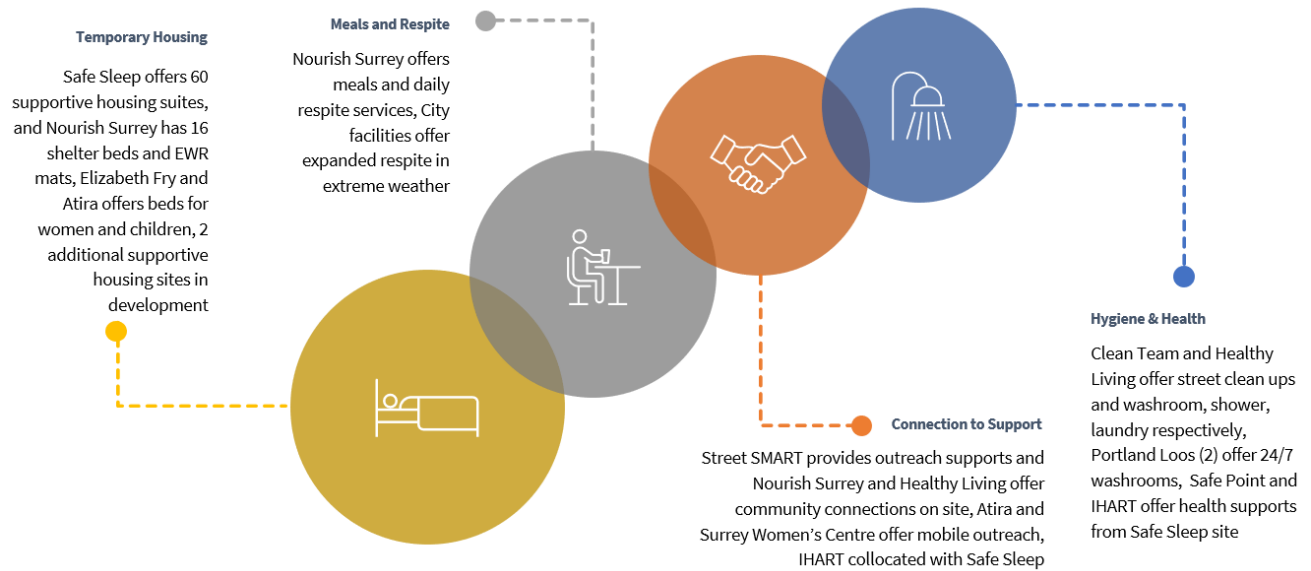


Figure 1. Enhanced Service Landscape

The City has implemented the following service delivery initiatives for priority populations in City Centre. Additional information on each program is provided in Appendix “1”.

- **Safety and Community Services Network** – serves as a strategic planning table with senior partner agency representatives to enhance cross-agency coordination and service delivery.
- **Safe Sleep Campus of Care** – the location at 13425/13455 107A Avenue will provide for a 60-bed supportive housing facility, relocation of the SafePoint safe consumption site, and the Fraser Health Integrated Homeless Action Response Team. The facility will be fully operational by mid-2023.
- **Nourish Surrey Welcome Hub** – the location at 13539 – 13545 King George Boulevard will offer meal services, 16 co-ed shelter beds, washrooms, laundry, respite spaces, health and outreach services, and Extreme Weather Response (“EWR”) mats.
- **Healthy Living Services** - provides a location, 10607 King George Boulevard, at which people can access modular washrooms, shower facilities, laundry and a lounge space with computer workstations.
- **Street SMART Pilot Program** - is an innovative one-year pilot project pairing Bylaw officers with Community Service Workers to provide daily supports and services to unsheltered people in the City Centre area. The teams also provide daily outreach services at City Centre library.
- **Clean Team** - involves augmented cleaning services of public areas in Surrey City Centre through contracted waste removal and litter clean up services.
- **REST Program** - consists of four projects delivered by the City and three community agencies that focus on supporting and enhancing services for women and children experiencing homelessness and other vulnerabilities and expands the resources available

to respond to both extreme weather events and regular respite services available through civic facilities.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This work supports the Sustainability Charter 2.0 theme of Public Safety. Specifically, this work supports the following Desired Outcome (“DO”) and Strategic Direction (“SD”):

- Public Safety DO4: Local residents and businesses are connected and engaged within their neighbourhoods and with the broader community – including police, public safety partners and social service agencies – to enhance safety.
- Public Safety SD3: Ensure programs, policies and initiatives exist along the public safety continuum, and support the entire community.

CONCLUSION

Funded through the Strengthening Communities’ Services Grants supported by the Federal and Provincial Governments, and administered by UBCM, and delivered through collaboration with BC Housing and Fraser Health the programs outlined in this report are focused on strengthening community services for people experiencing homelessness. They enhance services for those experiencing homelessness and other vulnerabilities both within the City Centre and for women and their children across Surrey. The REST program will also enhance the City’s response to extreme weather events and regular respite services in civic facilities.

Terry Waterhouse
General Manager, Community Services

Appendix “I” – Additional program information

[https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/community.services.hub/gm admin/corporate reports/2022/final/13 dec 12/update on provision of services for priority populations in surrey.docx](https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/community.services.hub/gm%20admin/corporate%20reports/2022/final/13%20dec%2012/update%20on%20provision%20of%20services%20for%20priority%20populations%20in%20surrey.docx)
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Additional Program Information

Safety and Community Services Network

The Safety and Community Services Network (the “Network”) serves as a strategic planning table that aims to leverage existing partnerships between the City and the social services sector to enhance cross-agency coordination and service delivery, as well as identify new opportunities for promoting community health and well-being. Representatives from senior leadership of the City, BC Housing and Fraser Health comprise the founding members of the Network. Network meetings are convened by an independent facilitator, Ideaspace.

The Network also facilitated the Dignity Project in 2022. This involved convening a youth assembly to develop a public awareness campaign to promote dignity for people experiencing homelessness. These campaigns are focused on raising awareness and promoting the dignity of people experiencing homelessness and other challenges. The youth have designed two primary campaign briefs that incorporate website and social media content as well as public art and public installations of interactive displays to attract attention and encourage engagement of the public around the concept of the dignity of unsheltered people.

Safe Sleep Campus of Care

The Safe Sleep Campus of Care involves three projects to be located at 13425/13455 107A Avenue including a 60-bed temporary supportive housing building, the SafePoint safe consumption site, and the administrative offices of the Fraser Health Integrated Homelessness Action Response Team (“IHART”) staff. The Safe Sleep Campus of Care is projected to open in mid 2023.

The first project involves the renovation of the temporary modular housing site to enable use of the site for a 60-bed temporary supportive housing facility. The Safe Sleep initiative applies an integrated and collaborative approach between the City, BC Housing, and Fraser Health to provide tenants with the necessary social and health supports to promote their wellbeing and success.

The second project will see Fraser Health relocate Safepoint Supervised Consumption Site from its existing location on 135A Street to the Safe Sleep site. The co-location of services will allow for better management of services and ensure provision of critical services in a centralized location in the City Centre.

The third project involves Fraser Health installing a modular structure to serve as the main administrative space for its Integrated Homelessness Action Response Team (“IHART”) staff. The IHART teams will provide health supports to guests in shelter facilities across Surrey.

Nourish Surrey Welcome Hub

The Nourish Surrey Welcome Hub is a facility offering multi-layered services that will provide meal services, 16 co-ed shelter beds, washrooms, laundry, respite spaces, health and outreach services, and Extreme Weather Response (“EWR”) mats. The Nourish Surrey facility will serve as a key community resource providing essential supports and immediate relief for community members experiencing homelessness and complex challenges in the City Centre. The City has

been able to secure the facility located at 13539 – 13545 King George Boulevard through a three-year lease. BC Housing will manage a contract with Surrey Urban Mission Society (“SUMS”) who will operate the facility.

The Nourish Surrey facility will offer safe and dignified access to essential respite and outreach services for community members who often have nowhere to seek refuge during the day and evening. In addition to providing two meals a day, the facility will serve as an extended respite space offering an indoor and outdoor (fenced) space for guests to rest and access outreach services. The facility will also provide guests access to refreshments, washrooms, and laundry during respite hours. Daily health and outreach programming will also be offered to connect guests with critical supports and services for their health and well-being. The conversion of the meal service facility into an EWR space during extreme weather alerts will further meet the need for emergency beds during inclement weather. The addition of 16 shelter beds available 24 hours at this facility will add on to existing social infrastructure in Surrey. The facility will open in late December 2022.

Healthy Living Services

There are two streams of work on this aspect of the program.

1. The Healthy Living Complex of Care is a temporary modular washroom and shower facility located on the existing Cove Shelter site at 10607 King George Boulevard that offers safe and dignified access to hygiene services for community members experiencing complex challenges. Guests to the facility can also use the laundry services to wash their belongings. A lounge space is also available at the facility to serve as a respite space for guests that will provide access to a computer workstation and a phone. Toiletries and snacks will be available for facility guests.

The Healthy Living facility opened to the community on November 29, 2022 and operates seven days a week, including public holidays, from 6 AM to 12 AM. The facility is operated by Surrey Urban Mission Society (“SUMS”) who provide two Community Connection Workers at the facility during hours of operations to provide support to guests in accessing the facility and outreach programming. The Community Connection Workers support individuals in connecting with key social supports and resources.

Access to free and safe washrooms and showers for community members is essential in supporting the health and well-being of community members. The addition of the Healthy Living facility in the City Centre will provide an essential service for community members who lack access to such hygiene services in their day-to-day lives. The Healthy Living facility opened on November 21, 2022.

2. The Portland Loos initiative involves the installation of two low-barrier washroom facilities, called the Portland Loo, in impacted areas in Surrey. One site selected for the Portland Loo is in the City Centre at 13633 Grosvenor Road and other Portland Loo will be installed at Surrey Memorial Hospital. The Portland Loos will be permanent facilities that further address the need for public washrooms for community members experiencing complex challenges. The provision of these units will promote health and safety in the community.

The Portland Loos have specialized design features to ensure durability of the structure, promote easy maintenance, and support safety for the users. City staff have been working to install services and prepare the sites for the installation of the prefabricated Portland Loo units. The Portland Loos are anticipated to be delivered in Spring 2023.

Street SMART Pilot Program

The Street SMART Program is a one-year pilot project to create pathways for care, support, and connections for people experiencing homelessness and other complex challenges who may otherwise be victimized through conventional enforcement approaches. The Street SMART Program is implemented through the deployment of paired teams of Bylaw Enforcement Officers and contracted Community Service Workers through Lookout Housing and Health Society. These integrated teams apply a trauma informed approach to interactions with community members who exhibit heightened needs during routine bylaw patrols and incident response.

The Street SMART teams patrol in the City Centre area daily from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm meeting people where they are to facilitate connection to services and support them to meet compliance with bylaws. Through collaboration with Surrey Libraries, the Community Service Workers also provide daily outreach services in the City Centre library from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm to offer connections and resources to people seeking support on a walk-in basis.

Clean Team

The Clean Team initiative involves augmented cleaning services of public areas in Surrey City Centre through contracted waste removal and litter clean up services. Between January 2022 to November 2022, the City has been able to contract 2,200 hours of waste removal services and 8,500 hours of litter pickup services to augment clean up of public areas in the City Centre. 20 temporary solar-powered garbage compactors have also been procured to add to the infrastructure in the City Centre to promote cleanliness and community health.

Under the Clean Team initiative, funding was also provided to the Rig Dig Program operated by Lookout Housing and Health Society. The Rig Dig Program provides safe removal and disposal of needles through a peer led initiative that offers employment to people with lived and living experience of homelessness. The City has been able to support the Rig Dig Program to expand services to three daily four-hour shifts respectively in City Centre, Whalley, and Guildford areas.

Next Steps

Each of the projects are at different stages of development. Figure 2 shows the timeline for opening of the first six initiatives delivered through the Safety and Community Services Network.



Figure 2. Service Timeline

REST Program Update

The Respite & Shelter for Targeted Support (“REST”) Program consists of four projects that focus on supporting and enhancing services for women and children experiencing homelessness and other vulnerabilities and expands the resources available to respond to both extreme weather events and regular respite services available through civic facilities.

The four projects that support and enhance services for women and children are delivered by external partners: Surrey Women’s Centre (“SWC”), Atira Women’s Resource Society (“Atira”) and the Elizabeth Fry Society (“Efy”). A mid term report outlining the number of individuals receiving supports through these services will be received in the first quarter of 2023.

Atira’s Shimai Drop-In and Mobile Outreach Services

The Shimai Drop-In program fills a critical gap in services for marginalized women across Surrey. The program provides a women-only drop-in site for harm reduction supplies and support, hygiene supplies, snacks, referrals to services, and a safe, non-judgemental, and stigma-free space for women who are experiencing homelessness or are precariously housed. The Shimai Drop-In program takes an innovative approach to harm reduction, effectively preventing and reducing overdoses, blood borne infections, and homelessness among women living in Surrey. The Drop-In program currently operates daily from 12:00pm to 8:30pm.

The Mobile Outreach Program delivers similar supports and services directly to women who are experiencing homelessness using an outreach van, providing one-on-one and tailored supports to each woman encountered, and a safe ride to an emergency shelter or drop-in program upon request. The program staff apply women-centred, non-judgemental, stigma-free and tailored approaches to address the unique needs of each woman they encounter. The Outreach Van also provides work experience and peer outreach opportunities for women with lived experience who have barriers to traditional employment and who are looking to give back to their communities. The program currently operates daily from 6:30pm to 2:30am.

Atira's Shimai Drop-In and Mobile Outreach Services are currently in operation. The one-year grant funding commencing in September 2022 supports program continuity and service delivery.

Elizabeth Fry Stabilizing Families Project

Elizabeth Fry provides gender-responsive homeless outreach, supporting women, girls and children at risk, involved in or affected by the justice system. In response to the pandemic, Efray expanded shelters for women and children, many of whom have had difficulty attaching to their housing due to stigma, racism, the high cost of housing, and housing that suits their family size. The Stabilizing Families Project engages 1.5 specialized outreach workers to provide intensive outreach with women and their children currently living in shelters or unstable housing across Surrey through weekly visits and pragmatic supports to assist them with the return to school, neighbourhoods, and to remain attached to their housing. Supports provided include transportation assistance, storage of belongings, and short-term financial assistance.

This one-year grant funding supports program delivery and operations, including staff wages, and various supports to assist clients in securing market or below-market housing, and administrative costs. The grant funding commenced in August 2022.

Surrey Women Centre's Mobile Outreach Services

Surrey Women Centre (the "SWC") provides mobile outreach and crisis support services to women, LGBTQIA+ and indigenous people in Surrey through its Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team ("SMART") van. The van provides crisis support, harm reduction supplies, food/beverages, clothing, hygiene supplies, and small medical packs. It also provides referrals to the police or for immediate medical care when needed, housing referrals and transportation to safe accommodation, and tracks bad date reports from those involved in sex work. The service is provided through a partnership between SWC, Surrey Memorial Hospital, and VictimLINK BC.

The one-year grant funding supports extension of the program and helps meet SWC's urgent need to staff service delivery and purchase supplies to be provided for women from the van. As part of the funding agreement, the City is also facilitating linkages between the SWC outreach and the Fraser Health Embrace for Violence and Sexual Assault Support program to expand resources available for unsheltered women. The grant funding commenced in August 2022.

Respite Spaces in City Facilities during Extreme Weather

The final project of the REST program aims to increase and improve the City's response for people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather events (hot, cold, and extreme wildfire smoke events) and regular respite services through the provision of additional supplies, equipment, and staffing for civic facilities to provide direct support to individuals and their pets. These enhancements are being developed through the City's Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, in collaboration with Emergency Management BC and the Surrey Fire Services. Through this funding, the City will be able to accommodate individuals seeking respite in air conditioned/heated lobby spaces in recreation centres and ensure front counter staff are trained to support these people and their pets. Supplies will be provided to enable snacks and warm or cool refreshments. The City's enhanced responses are in development and are expected to launch in Winter 2022/2023.