

NO: R178

COUNCIL DATE: September 13, 2021

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 9, 2021**

FROM: **General Manager, Policing Transition
General Manager, Corporate Services
General Manager, Engineering
Acting General Manager, Planning &
Development**

FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Enhancing Homelessness Supports in the City Centre**

RECOMMENDATION

The Policing Transition Department, Corporate Services Department and Planning & Development Departments recommend that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide Council with an overview of actions currently underway, and proposed by the City with respect to enhancing the service delivery model for vulnerable people in the City Centre, including works proposed under the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant (the "Grant") to which the City has recently been granted \$14,246,792 from the BC Government and Government of Canada through the Safe Restart Agreement.

BACKGROUND

The City currently either directly provides, or supports as a partner/stakeholder, several services in the City Centre for vulnerable populations. The City also addresses the impacts of unsheltered populations located within Surrey but outside the City Centre boundaries. City funded or delivered services include bylaw enforcement (including COVID-19 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, 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.

As well, 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 address the needs of the community as a whole.

In April 2021, the City applied for and was granted \$14.2M under the Safe Restart Funding (Strengthening Communities' Services Grant) for programs that support enhancements to services for unsheltered and vulnerable people in the City Centre, most especially to address impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

The number of vulnerable persons within Surrey was steadily increasing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic significantly impacted the most vulnerable in the community as those at the borders of housing and income insecurity were further marginalized through loss of income, illness and other factors. Social services and public safety providers responded proactively to keep pace with growing need. Compounding these issues, the opioid crisis continued to escalate during the pandemic further increasing the trauma and impacts on marginalized and vulnerable people. The City Centre has experienced the greatest impact of this situation which has resulted in increased concerns related to public safety and street cleanliness.

Demands for services in the City Centre continue to expand and the nature of issues continue to evolve. It is a priority for the City to ensure that the service delivery model is appropriately designed and has sufficient capacity to keep pace with these changes. To support necessary responses the City applied for and received the Strengthening Communities grant.

This report summarizes key actions already in place and those planned for the future to address the needs of the community in Surrey with respect to the most vulnerable populations. It further proposes additional actions to ensure the service delivery model is responsive to changing conditions and is enhanced to anticipate and prevent future escalation of issues in the City Centre.

This report outlines the following key areas of work underway or planned.

- Current Service Delivery Approaches
- Enhanced Service Delivery Model
- Housing and Shelter Capacity
- Health, Outreach and Other Support Services
- Bylaw Compliance and Engagement

Effective coordination ensures that a systems approach is taken to emerging issues in the City Centre. Leveraging investments made by other partners will help to build greater resiliency and a more strategic approach to persistent social issues in the City Centre.

Current Service Delivery Approaches

Each agency that delivers services within the City Centre operate independently, consistent with their mandate, and often in parallel to other agencies. For example, several not-for-profit groups deliver shelter and supportive housing solutions through contracts with BC Housing and support from other funding sources, while Fraser Health operates Integrated Response Teams, and Intensive Case Management teams focused on specific health needs of vulnerable populations.

Surrey has developed multi-sectoral approaches to address the enduring social challenges. There are some examples of these services intersecting and being coordinated more deliberately such as the case of the Emergency Response Centre (“ERC”) that was established in 2020 to provide temporary additional shelter space in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ERC delivers shelter services through BC Housing contract with Surrey Urban Mission Society (“SUMS”) and health services are integrated on site in partnership with SUMS by Fraser Health who have located an Integrated Response Team within the ERC.

There are several existing tables and committees that meet on a regular or periodic basis to support delivery of services to unsheltered people in the City Centre. This includes a Housing Stakeholder Group which has weekly calls to coordinate activities and escalate issues as they arise to problem solve emerging challenges. City staff participates on these calls as does staff from BC Housing, the Fraser Health Authority, and the Surrey RCMP. Another example is the Surrey Mobilization and Resiliency Table (“SMART”) which also meets weekly to escalate action for vulnerable people at acutely elevated risk of harm to themselves or others. This table is made up of social service providers, police and government agencies and the City convenes the table.

An existing Coordinated Access Committee is convened by BC Housing brings together non-profit supportive housing providers to collectively decide on the tenanting of vacant supportive housing units (i.e., to prioritize the individuals to be offered vacant suites). In addition there is an existing Community Advisory Committee that is convened by the City in relation to the new shelters and temporary modular housing projects in the City Centre. This Committee specifically provides an opportunity for the non-profit housing provider to provide updates on the operation of the shelter and housing projects and for the community representatives and the City to provide feedback on any neighbourhood impacts specific to the housing projects and/or their residents.

While there are various Committees in place that coordinate specific services or convene on specific issues there currently is a need for a group with the mandate and resources to analyse and respond to the issues of homelessness in the City Centre on a wholistic and systems based level. ‘

The City has a unique opportunity, funded through the grant, to set up a new multi-stakeholder network of key decision-makers and stakeholders to advise and guide the new initiatives being introduced through the Grant funding and to assess and analyse the issues/situation in the City Centre and propose changes that would address these issues from a best practices, systems-based approach. This will be called the Safety and Community Services Network.

The current approach to service delivery in the City Centre tends to entrench a reactive stance on the persistent social issues impacting vulnerable populations and the communities in which they live where each individual supporting agency deals with their mandates (mostly) independent of one another. The principal objective for implementing an enhanced model, as reflected in this report, is to enhance strategic coordination across services. In effect, this approach will unify the various independent support systems. In turn, the unified support systems will prioritize strategic interventions as a whole. This approach will aid in anticipating and preventing future social disorder and marginalization of vulnerable people.

Safety and Community Services Network

The City has a unique opportunity, through the Grant, to enhance the service delivery model in the City Centre and bring a more innovative and strategic approach to bear on persistent social issues. The model attached as Appendix “1” highlights proposed new services. One of the programs funded through the Grant is the establishment of a Safety and Community Services Network (the “Network”) to accelerate and enhance coordination of service delivery in the City Centre.

This Network will help the City coordinate the resources that are currently invested and by planning for future strategic needs that will anticipate and address further social issues in the City Centre. The Network will be made up of senior decision makers from the City, BC Housing and the Fraser Health Authority and will also include the participation of not-for-profit service providers and other key stakeholders.

The mandate of the Network will be to drive innovation and facilitate enhanced coordination and collaboration between organizations delivering services that support community safety and well-being in Surrey, focusing especially on services for unsheltered and vulnerable individuals in order to improve existing service delivery and identify opportunities for new services. As well, it will provide governance and oversight by the funders to ensure that service providers are incentivized to collaborate to reduce service gaps and anticipate issues before they require action.

As well as improving coordination of existing services across external agencies and service providers, the Network will strengthen coordination of City activities. This work will, at the right levels, streamline the interface between the City and external parties.

Housing and Shelter Capacity

In recent years, the City has seen increased investment by BC Housing and other funders into additional shelter capacity and supportive housing. This has helped to alleviate capacity gaps to a degree however, the COVID-19 pandemic caused further capacity constraints due to the need to reduce existing site capacity to allow for social distancing.

Table 1 outlines the mix of permanent and temporary shelters currently in place across Surrey. There are currently temporary shelters, permanent shelters supportive housing in place in the City Centre. In addition, there are modular supportive housing sites under construction or planned.

Table 1: List of Shelters and Supportive Housing in Surrey

Name	Address	Number of spaces
Permanent Shelters		
Bill Reid Memorial Shelter	17752 Colebrook Rd	16
Cynthia's Place (Women only)	confidential	14
Hyland House	6595 King George Blvd	35
Sheena's Place (Women and Children)	confidential	12
Gateway Shelter	10667 135A St	40
Temporary Shelters		
Guildford Shelter	14716 104 Ave	40
Parkway Shelter	10660 City Parkway	40
SUMS Shelter	10775 King George Blvd	50
The Cove Shelter	10607 King George Blvd	42
The Olive Branch	10732 City Parkway	46
Temporary COVID- 19 Response Spaces		
ERC	North Surrey Recreation Centre	96
Linda Vista * Shelter thinning	6498 King George Blvd	
Canadian Inn * Shelter thinning	6528 King George Blvd	
Supportive Housing		
Steve Cobon Phase 1 Modular - scheduled closure Sept 2021	13425 107A Ave	60
Bill Reid - Transitional Units	17752 Colebrook Rd	12
Hyland House - Transitional Units	6595, 6593 King George Blvd	20
Peterson Place	13245 King George Blvd	56
Little's Place (Women only)	9155 King George Blvd	23
Ted Kuhn Towers I and II	13350 - 13352 Old Yale Rd	423
Peterson Place Modular	13245 King George Blvd	38
Upcoming Modular Supportive Housing		
Guildford modular (opens Sept 6, 2021)	14706 104 Ave	61
The Nest (Newton modular) (open July, 2021)	13620 80 Ave	40
Atira modular (estimated occupancy January, 2022)	9145 King George Blvd	44

Upcoming Supportive Housing		
Foxglove (estimated occupancy December 2021)	9810 Foxglove Drive	99 apartments and 30 single-bedrooms
The Rosewood (estimated occupancy May 2022)	9671 137 Street	40 beds for women and children; 42 apartments for women and their children; 15 apartments for young Indigenous females
Former Travelodge Hotel (estimated occupancy to be determined)	13939 104 Ave	28

Temporary COVID-19 response spaces are closing on different schedules as the Fraser Health Authority and BC Housing move to a post-pandemic stance and anticipate changes to capacity limits due to social distancing. The last of the temporary modular supportive housing sites – Steve Cobon, was scheduled to close on September 30, 2021 and BC Housing and its contractor have been moving tenants out to other facilities as more supportive housing units are completed.

The Safe Sleep initiative, funded through the Grant, will address the need for additional shelter spaces to accommodate people who are currently unhoused in the City Centre area. During the COVID-19 pandemic, unhoused people have been particularly marginalized as access to shelters and supportive housing has been restricted to residents only (i.e., no visitors), and public places such as libraries and fast-food restaurants have also limited access. Unfortunately, all the current shelters and supportive housing projects are operating at full capacity, so there is no accommodation that can be offered to people who are sleeping outside.

It is challenging to estimate the number of unhoused people. In March 2020, the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count found 644 homeless people in Surrey; 471 people were sheltered and 173 were unsheltered. While the Homeless Count does not provide a breakdown by community, it is estimated that the majority of the unsheltered homeless population is found in the City Centre. Researchers agree that “point-in-time” homeless counts, such as the Metro Vancouver Count, represent an undercount of the homeless population so this count likely underestimates the current number of unsheltered people in Surrey. The data on the use of overnight Extreme Weather Response (“EWR”) shelters that open overnight during extreme winter weather events, provides further evidence of significant numbers of unsheltered people in Surrey.

In recent years, Surrey has had increased investment by BC Housing and other funders into additional shelter and supportive housing. For example, so far in 2021, three modular housing projects have opened to replace the Phase 1 temporary modular housing projects that were opened in 2018 in the City Centre. Over the next six months, additional permanent shelter beds and supportive housing units will be opening. These new projects will accommodate people who are currently living in ERC in the former North Surrey Recreation Centre, which is scheduled to close in the coming months.

The Grant funding provides an opportunity to add shelter capacity and provide temporary beds for people who are unhoused in the City Centre area via the “Safe Sleep” initiative. The last of the temporary modular supportive housing sites – Steve Cobon, located on privately-owned land at 13425 107A Street - was scheduled to be demolished by September 30, 2021. By early September, BC Housing and Lookout Housing + Health Society will have moved all of the Steve Cobon

tenants out of the building, primarily to the new modular housing projects in Guildford and Newton, leaving the building vacant. As a result of the pandemic response Grant funding, the City has secured an extension to the lease of the Steve Cobon site and will be bringing forward a Corporate Report to Council on this in October seeking approval of this lease as well as an application to extend the Temporary Use Permit for the site. Grant funding will be used to renovate/upgrade the building and to operate it as a temporary shelter. The Safe Sleep initiative will provide 24/7 accommodation and supports for approximately 60 people who are currently unhoused in the City Centre. This will reduce street homelessness in the area, as well as reduce the need for overnight EWR spaces over the coming winter.

Health Outreach and Other Support Services

Fraser Health has made significant investments in Surrey to provide supports for vulnerable people these include physical infrastructure and operational investments in support services.

- Integrated Response Team (“IRT”) a multidisciplinary team based at ERC.
- Intensive Case Management Team (“ICM”) also a multidisciplinary team focused on substance use, mental health and populations experiencing homelessness.
- Assertive Community Treatment (“ACT”) teams focus on recovery oriented mental health supports.

Beyond these existing investments, Fraser Health supported the City’s Strengthening Grant application and indicated they are anticipating continued funding and support for the IRT team to be located within a new temporary shelter site (Safe Sleep) and support for participation in the Network. Many of the Fraser Health funded services outlined above also undertake outreach with vulnerable populations and coordinate referrals from City departments and other service providers through the existing Housing Stakeholder Group and other existing groups.

Not for profit services providers also undertake outreach most commonly connected to a shelter or supportive housing unit that they operate. Many of the shelter and supportive housing sites have outreach staff connected with them to support unsheltered and vulnerable people with services. They also work with Fraser Health staff connected to their locations to provide outreach and referrals for health services.

The Pandemic Response Package, funded through the Grant, includes funds for expanded IRT health services at a new temporary shelter facility in the City Centre (Safe Sleep) and for health support services to be included in the Nourish Surrey program proposed to deliver meal services, respite space during the day, and outreach services from a new site in the City Centre. Nourish Surrey will plug existing service gaps for healthy, nutrition for unsheltered individuals and include wrap around health and outreach supports.

Other support services currently provided by the City and set to be expanded through the Grant includes the clean team and healthy living programs. These expand on neighbourhood hygiene initiatives in place to fund expanded hours and contracts for street and encampment clean ups (“Clean Team”), and for temporary mobile washrooms and showers located off main corridors to support hygiene for unsheltered individuals (“Healthy Living”).

Bylaw Compliance and Engagement

Individuals in crisis need urgent support. The City works within the social services network to lead the Surrey Mobilization and Resilience Table (“SMART”). This project will augment the SMART model by providing 7am – 11pm mobile outreach services that will provide referrals into SMART as well as into specific service providers and into the existing BC Housing coordinated access referral system. The SMART CART will involve purchase or lease of two mini-vans and staffing by a new term positions - City community services worker and Bylaw Community Patrol Officers (“CPO”). In addition, foot patrols will continue to be deployed along the main corridors of the City Centre area where unsheltered individuals are most visible. This team will patrol the City Centre and other areas and be advised when unsheltered individuals are located in tent encampments or other locations and need immediate referrals to coordinated access housing services or need to referral to SMART. This program also contributes to mobile outreach services for women at night to provide them health and sanitation supplies and to augment existing outreach services per the recommendations of the Vulnerable Women and Girls Group in Surrey.

The SMART Cart will build on existing work completed by CPOs in the City Centre to provide more tools and a more coordinated approach to enable direct referrals into housing and other supports when CPOs encounter unsheltered individuals in the City Centre.

Next Steps

The actions to enhance homelessness supports outlined in this report are being collaboratively advanced as a priority by the Policing Transition, Corporate Services, Engineering and Planning and Development departments. Immediate next steps include:

- Corporate Reports on the Lease and Temporary Use Permit for the Safe Sleep site at the former “Steve Cobon” facility;
- Retrofit and renovation of the Steve Cobon site;
- Closure of the ERC facility (old North Surrey Arena) as soon as tenants can be moved to supportive housing that are readied for occupancy (Foxglove and Guildford modular sites);
- Confirming the Terms of Reference and participants in the Safety and Community Services Network;
- Implementation of the Clean Team and Healthy Living programs under the Grant by the Engineering Department;
- Confirmation of the site(s) for the Nourish Surrey site to provide meal services and other supports and appointment of a provider;
- Confirmation of responsibilities for implementation and provision of funding by BC Housing and Fraser Health to collaboratively support the pandemic response package programs, per their previous letters of support; and
- Scoping and implementation of the SMART Cart program by the Corporate Services Department.

Further implementation of the enhancements noted in this report will continue over the coming months.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report supports the Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Public Safety, Inclusion, Health and Wellness and Infrastructure. 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.
- Inclusion DO2: Surrey is a caring and compassionate city that supports its residents of all backgrounds, demographics, and life experiences.
- Inclusion DO12: Everyone in Surrey has a place to call home.
- Inclusion DO24: Surrey has a strong social infrastructure that supports the needs of its diverse and growing population.
- Health and Wellness DO1: Surrey has a full range of high quality, community-based health and social services and programs that address health and wellness.
- Health and Wellness DO3: Surrey has the health services and programs to meet the current and changing needs of its diverse and growing population.
- Health and Wellness DO10: Fresh, healthy and culturally appropriate food is affordable and readily available.
- Infrastructure DO1: City facilities and infrastructure systems are well managed, adaptable and long lasting, and are effectively integrated into regional systems.

CONCLUSION

The City is prioritizing work to address the impacts of homelessness in the City Centre and to enhance the service delivery model for supports delivered to unsheltered and vulnerable residents of Surrey. This work builds on the excellent progress made to date and existing coordination between City departments and external partners and stakeholders. Continuing to improve the strategic coordination of investments into housing and health supports in the City Centre, implementing a strategic Safety and Community Services Network, and expanding investments through the Grant will have the dual benefits of reducing the impacts to the community of unsheltered people, and expanding the supports available to the City’s most vulnerable residents.

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Safety and Community Services in the City Centre

SERVICE DELIVERY

	OUTREACH	RESPIRE	SHELTERS	SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	HEALTH SUPPORTS
Vulnerable Person Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not-for-profit via shelters FHA health outreach SMART Cart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nourish Surrey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 existing shelters Safe Sleep (formerly Steve Cobon mod) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 existing modular housing sites under construction 2 planned but not yet approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Response Team (currently located at ERC moving to Safe Sleep) 2 specialist teams (ICM, ACT)
Neighbourhood Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily street cleans & Encampment clean ups Clean Team (increased contracted cleaning) & Healthy Living (temporary shower/washroom units) 				

NEW STRUCTURE

- Safety and Community Services Network**
- Address ↑ needs of vulnerable people
 - Close service gaps
 - Enhance service delivery
 - Strategic collaboration
 - Governance and oversight
 - Proactivity and coordination

PRECURSOR ACTIVITIES

- Housing Stakeholder Group (Friday mtgs)
- SMART Table
- Community Advisory Committees
- Rapid Response Housing – Coordinated Access Table
- Planning and Development Projects

ISSUES / SCOPE

- Drug Poisoning Crisis
- Housing
- Health
- Post Pandemic Services
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Hygiene & Street Cleaning