

# Supportive Housing Strategy

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**Recommendation:**

That the July 4, 2017, Sustainable Development report CR\_4219, be received for information.

**Report Summary**

**This report presents an interim response to a Community and Public Services Committee motion directing Administration to develop a City of Edmonton Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy.**

**Previous Council/Committee Action**

At the October 31, 2016, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare a report and strategy around permanent supportive housing, involving provincial and federal government funding, local partners, (including but not limited to End Poverty Edmonton, unions, and the Urban Development Institute) and potential sites around Edmonton, and that the report include:

- strategies around public information and consultation that details the true causes of homelessness
- the financial cost with full cost accounting to the community
- an accurate record of permanent supportive housing facilities in Edmonton.

**Report**

Permanent Supportive Housing is one of four types of non-market affordable housing described in the City's Affordable Housing Strategy, approved by Council in 2015. As such, decisions related to locations of Permanent Supportive Housing would be consistent with the city-wide non-market affordable housing framework as described in the July 4, 2017, Sustainable Development report CR\_4625 "Housing Affordability in Supporting Diverse, Inclusive and Complete Communities".

Preparation of this report and the draft City of Edmonton Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy (Attachment 1) were informed by a full-day consultation event that was hosted by Homeward Trust Edmonton on April 11, 2017, to generate information for the Update on Edmonton's Plan to End Homelessness. Consultation participants included 75 housing agency leaders and staff, service providers, government leaders, developers, architects and neighbourhood representatives to identify gaps, best practices in Canada and internationally, and opportunities to increase Edmonton's

permanent supportive housing efforts.

Attachment 2 is the *Permanent Supportive Housing: Essential for Ending Homelessness* document that was prepared by Homeward Trust based on that consultation and related research. That report:

- Identifies opportunities and gaps in Edmonton's permanent supportive housing sector identified through the Update to Edmonton's Plan to End Homelessness
- Establishes a definition of Permanent Supportive Housing and three 'models' or types of such housing based on support services provided
- Provides an overview of the 201 Permanent Supportive Housing units/beds funded by Homeward Trust Edmonton since 2009
- Reviews location and site selection criteria in other cities
- Outlines the costs of various models of such housing and the cost avoidance (Social Return On Investment) in the health and criminal justice systems
- Includes reference to supportive housing best practices in the areas of support models/clinical interventions, system collaboration, design and built form, and property management.

For the purposes of this report and the attached draft Strategy (Attachment 1), Permanent Supportive Housing is defined as follows:

- Housing that:
  - Is targeted to persons who are homeless and facing complex and concurrent challenges, including trauma, cognitive disabilities, acquired brain injuries, mental health issues and/or addictions or have a history of housing instability or are otherwise at risk of homelessness
  - Includes on-site staffed support services to assist with tenant stabilization, housing retention and independent living
  - Is "place-based" (located on a single site, not on scattered sites)
  - Has no length of stay (tenancy) limitations
  - Includes independent living units with common spaces.

There is no universal permanent supportive housing type - in fact, every such development is unique, with a distinct program mandate and support service model designed to meet the needs of its intended resident population.

#### Other Requested Information:

In addition to requesting a City Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy, the motion requested information in the following areas:

- Strategies Around Public Information and Consultation that Detail the True Causes of Homelessness:
  - As is the case for all types of non-market affordable housing, public information and consultation are important aspects of the Permanent

Supportive Housing project development process. Development of these public information and consultation strategies will be guided by:

- Council Policy C593 “Public Engagement Policy”
  - Administration efforts to develop a social marketing approach for non-market affordable housing in all areas of the city
  - The future affordable housing public engagement charter proposed for development in 2018, with the Office of Public Engagement as described in the June 20, 2017, Sustainable Development report CR\_4108 “Public Engagement Process in the Affordable Housing Siting and Development Process”
- These strategies will include information on the true causes of homelessness based on the recognition that few people “choose” to be homeless, and that homelessness stems more from a combination of factors including a lack of natural supports, mental illness, discrimination, alcohol and drug addictions, and an insufficient supply of low-income affordable housing.
  - The City will continue its coordinating role in planning permanent supportive housing by bringing together stakeholders (such as funders, service providers, housing agencies) to discuss proposed developments before they receive funding and development commitments. To support greater understanding and awareness, future public engagement for all types of non-market affordable housing will focus on education about the importance of these types of housing in all areas of the city to meet local housing and homeless needs and achieve more diverse, inclusive and complete communities.
- The Financial Cost with Full Cost Accounting to the Community:
    - There is a significant and ongoing “cost avoidance” associated with Permanent Supportive Housing project development. For example, residents have their support service needs met through their housing instead of through emergency services. Research conducted over a one-year period by *DiverseCity Housing* on 40 of its formerly chronically-homeless residents identified the following cost avoidance findings:
      - Reduction of days incarcerated from 3,696 to 294 days - \$884,520 (\$1,842 per person per month)
      - Reduction of psychiatric hospital admissions from 1,386 to 95 days - \$678,201 (\$1,413 per person per month)
      - Reduction of emergency room visits from 70 to 11 days - \$13,629 (\$28 per person per month)
      - Based on an average cost avoidance of \$3,283 per person per month in this report, the 10 Year Plan Update’s target of an additional 135 units of “High Intensity Supports” Permanent

Supportive Housing would achieve a potential total cost avoidance of \$5.3 million per year.

- Another study of 236 intensive need individuals placed in Permanent Supportive Housing found a 56 percent decrease in Emergency Room visits and an 8 percent decrease in hospital stays.
- Utilizing the data collected with the Heavy Users Of Service project, Administration has engaged consultants to conduct a 'full cost accounting' and a Social Return on Investment calculation based on the clients supported and housed through that collaborative.

- An Accurate Record of Permanent Supportive Housing Facilities in Edmonton:

- The Capital Region Board lists 3,289 units of Permanent Supportive Housing in Edmonton. As this list includes facilities such as seniors' lodges, assisted living, and group homes, Administration was not able to confidently compile an 'accurate record of permanent supportive housing facilities in Edmonton'. There are also issues related to privacy and security, where reporting the location could potentially jeopardize the safety of the occupants.
- It is also important to note that while the context of the inquiry was with respect to homelessness, permanent supportive housing is an effective strategy for serving many other needs. An example of this is an individual discharged from an institution who is not capable of living independently and who needs on-site supports. Consequently, Administration has focused on supportive housing projects that are targeted for the homeless, as outlined below.
- Listed below are the total of nine existing Permanent Supportive Housing facilities in Edmonton, comprising 201 units/beds, developed since Council endorsement in 2009 of *A Place to Call Home, Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*, and supported by Homeward Trust Edmonton through provision of capital and/or operating funding:

1. Edwardson Place, Hope Mission - 16 units
2. Canora Place, Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre - 30 units
3. Westwood Manor, Mustard Seed - 21 units
4. Iris Court, Schizophrenia Society of Alberta - 21 units
5. Ambrose Place, NiGiNan Housing Ventures - 42 units
6. Morning Fire Protector, Homeward Trust Edmonton - 15 units
7. Hope Terrace, Bissell Centre - 24 units
8. Christopher's Place - George Spady Centre - 26 units
9. Place of Dignity - George Spady Centre - 6 units.

- In addition to these 9 developments, other similar projects and units have been provided by multiple service providers across the city through agencies, including People In Need Shelter Society, Excel Society,

Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Health Services, Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, Greater Edmonton Foundation and Urban Manor Housing Society. However, as these developments do not meet all aspects of this report’s Permanent Supportive Housing definition, the accommodation and support services provided by those agencies have not been included in this listing of Edmonton’s existing Permanent Supportive Housing supply.

### Next Steps Towards a City Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy

Administration plans to engage with key stakeholders, including the provincial and federal governments, local partners, including but not limited to End Poverty Edmonton, unions, and the Urban Development Institute to review and provide feedback on the attached draft City of Edmonton Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy.

### Policy

In 2015, Council approved its *Affordable Housing Strategy* with the major goal to increase the supply of non-market affordable housing in all areas of the city. Direction for Permanent Supportive Housing provided by the *Affordable Housing Strategy* includes:

- 1.2.2: “Advocate for the provision of adequate, appropriate support services for supportive and supported housing”; and
- 3.1.4: “Coordinate action to implement Goal 3 of Edmonton’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness: transitioning people quickly into permanent housing”.

### Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	Targets	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total number of persons identified as homeless in biennial homeless count (1,752 in 2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduce total homeless and chronic homeless persons counted in biennial homeless counts since 2008</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formerly chronically-homeless persons are living healthy lives in new Permanent Supportive Housing developments</li> <li>● The City of Edmonton strives to support the social well-being and economic prosperity of all citizens, as a pillar of a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total supply of Permanent Supportive Housing developments in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase Permanent Supportive Housing throughout the city as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All areas in the City are more diverse, inclusive and complete through an</li> </ul>

Edmonton with a mandate to end homelessness (201 units developed since 2009)	part of the target of 10% of total non-market affordable housing units in all areas	accommodation of a mix of market and non-market affordable housing types, including Permanent Supportive Housing developments
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**Corporate Outcomes**

This report supports the Corporate Outcome: "The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure" to guide the City's involvement in meeting the need for Permanent Supportive Housing in Edmonton..

**Public Engagement**

Public engagement relating to the Supportive Housing Strategy will be developed and implemented consistent with the Council Policy C593 "Public Engagement Policy" and Administration report CR\_4108 "Public Engagement Process in the Affordable Housing Siting and Development Process".

**Attachments**

1. Draft City of Edmonton Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy
2. "Permanent Supportive Housing: Essential for Ending Homelessness", prepared by Homeward Trust Edmonton

**Others Reviewing this Report**

- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- C. Campbell, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement