

## Draft City of Edmonton Permanent Supportive Housing Strategy

### Introduction

Homeward Trust Edmonton and the City are collaborating to update *A Place to Call Home, Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*. The Plan, endorsed by Council in 2009, recommended a range of actions including a need for 1,000 permanent supportive housing units in the city by 2014. As of 2017, only 201 units with a specific homelessness mandate have been provided – approximately one-fifth of the Plan target.

In the most recent Homeless Count in 2016, 59% of individuals surveyed were identified as having “chronic” homeless needs – an indicator that the services provided by permanent supportive housing would be needed to support their housing retention. Applying that percentage to the total 1,752 homeless persons counted in 2016 suggests the need for such housing remains around the same (1,000 units) as was identified in 2009.

Increasing the supply of Permanent Supportive Housing continues to be a high priority for Edmonton in the consultation feedback from community and service providers for the Update to the Plan to End Homelessness. Progress on implementing the Plan Update's strategic directions will depend significantly on an increased supply of such units in the short-term future. Early indications are that to meet current needs and to re-profile existing funded supports to better meet those needs, an additional 600 Permanent Supportive Housing units/beds will have to be provided. Assuming each of these new developments comprises 20 to 30 units, this means between 20 and 30 additional 20-30 unit-sized developments will be needed in Edmonton in the short-term future.

In this context, increasing the Permanent Supportive Housing supply to meet homeless needs in Edmonton has become major City goal.

### Definition of Permanent Supportive Housing

For the purposes of this Strategy, Permanent Supportive Housing is 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; and
- Includes independent living units with common spaces.

Locational Guidelines for Permanent Supportive Housing Developments

Essential to the success of Permanent Supportive Housing developments is their location in proximity to public transit and community amenities to enable their residents to connect to community services, and in safe communities to promote healthy lifestyles.

The following guidelines are proposed to be used when planning future sites for Permanent Supportive Housing developments to ensure those developments are well located in terms of proximity to transit, shopping, recreational and educational facilities and that there is physical integration of these developments in existing neighbourhoods.

1. Permanent Supportive Housing sites should be comparable in size to the existing scale of multiple-dwelling developments in the neighbourhood;
2. Permanent Supportive Housing should be provided in a distributed model throughout the city, consistent with the Affordable Housing Framework (See CR\_4625);
3. Permanent Supportive Housing sites should offer:
  - a. Pedestrian access within 100 metres of regular public transit service;
  - b. Pedestrian access to convenience retail outlets such as grocery stores, pharmacies and banks;
  - c. Pedestrian access or direct access by transit to community and support services, and community facilities that will benefit tenants;
  - d. Pedestrian access or direct access by transit to positive opportunities for tenants (e.g. employment, community-building); and,
  - e. A safe and secure social and physical environment with a relatively low crime rate.
4. Permanent Supportive Housing sites may also be required to meet other guidelines as Council deems necessary from time to time.