

Hope Mission Project Update

Recommendation

That the February 17, 2021, Citizen Services report CR_7839, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 4, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

2. That Administration bring back a report summarizing the work done by Administration with Hope Mission around its project and public engagement.

Executive Summary

The Herb Jamieson Centre was an emergency shelter, located at 10014 105A Ave, that provided 250 beds for single adult men experiencing homelessness. In spring 2017, Hope Mission applied for a permit to demolish and reconstruct the shelter to accommodate up to 400 people on a 24/7 basis.

The Herb Jamieson Centre redevelopment project represents a significant investment in new emergency shelter capacity in Edmonton and presents an opportunity to improve the experience of shelter users in Edmonton. Administration has undertaken research to understand why some emergency shelter beds in Edmonton are consistently underutilized and the physical and operational barriers people experiencing homelessness face when trying to access emergency shelter. This research and other stakeholder consultation has been shared with the project team for consideration in the design and development of the new Herb Jamieson facility.

Report

Through Homeward Trust and homeless-serving agencies, more than 11,833 people have been housed through the Housing First program since 2009. This includes housing an average of 162 people a month during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this progress, in December 2020, nearly 2,000 Edmontonians were still experiencing chronic homelessness. A key long-term solution to ending chronic homelessness is increasing the supply of affordable housing, including supportive housing for people with a history of chronic homelessness, as identified in the City of Edmonton's Affordable Housing Investment Plan (2019-2022).

In the interim, improving access to emergency shelter and housing services for people experiencing homelessness is critical for reducing unsheltered homelessness. Improved access to these services can be achieved by adopting low-barrier, trauma-informed, and housing-focused emergency shelter practices and policies.

Edmonton's Emergency Shelter System

Emergency shelters typically provide immediate, same day access to overnight shelter. These shelters are a gateway to programs and services, including access to sustainable, appropriate housing options.

The Government of Alberta is the primary funder of emergency shelters in Edmonton. Prior to the pandemic, there were 714 overnight emergency shelter beds in Edmonton funded by the Government of Alberta. Hope Mission provided 650 of those beds. Alberta Health Services also funded specialized shelter services at the George Spady Centre for individuals experiencing homelessness who have a combination of complex physical and mental health needs, which has since changed its operating model and no longer functions as an emergency shelter. The City of Edmonton does not typically fund emergency shelter services, however, in response to sheltering pressures, including the growing presence of encampments, in October 2020, the City opened Tipinawâw (at Edmonton Convention Centre), a 24/7 temporary accommodation that supports up to 300 people overnight until March 31, 2021.

While many other Canadian cities struggle with a lack of available emergency shelter capacity, in Edmonton a significant number of people sleep outside despite available beds in emergency shelters. There are many reasons individuals sleeping outdoors do not access emergency shelter, including:

- fear for their personal health and safety
- lack of privacy and secure storage for personal belongings
- lack of autonomy due to policies and practices like set intake and discharge times, no or time-limited re-entry policies, and inconsistent/arbitrary banning practices
- rules preventing accommodation of partners and pets
- lack of Indigenous and trauma-informed services
- overt emphasis on specific religions as a part of service delivery
- a lack of services and supports for people experiencing mental health and/or substance use disorders

The Proposed Herb Jamieson Centre Redevelopment

Hope Mission was founded in 1929 as an inner-city soup kitchen providing meals to the unemployed at the onset of the Great Depression. Today, Hope Mission provides meals and shelter for over 800 individuals each day. In addition to meeting basic needs and providing emergency care, Hope Mission provides specialized care and treatment for men and women through faith-based addiction treatment programs, counselling and referral services, hot meal programs for children, summer camps for

inner-city children and youth and runs an inner-city community church. Hope Mission also operates a 24/7 rescue van and is a key partner in 24/7 Crisis Diversion. Hope Mission also provides affordable and transitional housing for participants and graduates of its recovery programs.

Hope Mission is Edmonton's primary emergency shelter provider for people experiencing homelessness. Of the 716 overnight shelter beds in Edmonton, Hope Mission provides 650 of those at its two sites - its main building and the Herb Jamieson Centre. The Herb Jamieson Centre is located in the McCauley neighbourhood and was a men's emergency shelter operated by Hope Mission. In 2016, Hope Mission created a Herb Jamieson Redevelopment Committee to create a plan for redeveloping the aging provincially-owned facility. Hope Mission's leadership identified the need for redevelopment to address the building's age and infrastructure issues, particularly the lack of clear sightlines that made supervising clients challenging and impede access to the building for people with limited mobility. The building also lacked a drop-off zone to accommodate vehicles transporting people to the shelter. The building officially closed on December 31, 2019.

In 2017, Hope Mission submitted a major development permit application to demolish the existing Herb Jamieson Centre building and construct and operate a new building. The McCauley Community League, impacted property owners, and local businesses, including the Chinatown and Area Business Association, appealed the application. In August 2017, the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board supported the issuance of a development permit. The final permit for the demolition of the Herb Jamieson was issued in December 2019.

The redevelopment will allow the facility to accommodate 400 people with varying physical, mental, and addiction health needs. It will have increased accessibility features, a sobering centre for emergency services such as police or medical to refer intoxicated individuals, and an ambulance bay.

According to the Government of Alberta, the total cost of the Herb Jamieson Centre redevelopment is \$16 million. Hope Mission has raised \$6.1 million for the project. On February 14, 2020, the governments of Canada and Alberta each contributed \$4 million to the project. Construction of the new facility began in spring 2020 and is expected to be completed in fall 2021. Hope Mission is fundraising for the remaining funding required.

Administration's Engagement with Hope Mission

Administration has engaged with Hope Mission regarding the Herb Jamieson Centre redevelopment project and has supported it to incorporate evidence-based best practices and Edmonton-specific research into its redesign.

In January 2019, Administration invited Hope Mission to participate in a proposed re-visioning process for the Herb Jamieson Centre redevelopment project. This process included considering changes to the physical design and modernizing operating procedures.

In February 2019, Administration, Hope Mission, Homeward Trust and the Government of Alberta met to discuss the re-visioning process. Homeward Trust contracted a consultant to evaluate the proposed redevelopment using best practices research in shelter design and operations across North America.

In May 2019, Administration provided Community and Public Services Committee with an update to explain some of the reasons unsheltered people sleep outside instead of accessing emergency shelters (May 8, 2019, Citizen Services report CR_6674). Subsequently, Committee directed Administration to engage with the Government of Alberta on modernized shelter standards.

In April 2019, the Government of Alberta pledged to fund the Herb Jamieson Centre Redevelopment. Homeward Trust and OrgCode Inc. facilitated stakeholder conversations with emergency shelter providers, homeless serving organizations, City representatives, and interested community members to discuss improving the broader Edmonton's shelter system. Hope Mission agreed to receive feedback from the re-visioning process and to consider changing its shelter redesign as long as they could manage any changes within the constraints of their approved development permit.

In August 2019, Administration, the Herb Jamieson Redevelopment Committee and Homeward Trust visited the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre to learn about its recent transformation into a housing-focused, low-barrier emergency shelter. The tour offered lessons about infrastructure and operational considerations that improved housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and reduced barriers to access shelter services in Calgary. These findings contributed to the best practices review and recommendations for the Herb Jamieson Centre Redevelopment, presented to Hope Mission, Administration and Homeward Trust.

Following the presentation of these findings, Hope Mission submitted updated redevelopment drawings that incorporated some of the recommendations. Administration reviewed the changes and provided further recommendations for Hope Mission to consider to support the Herb Jamieson Centre in becoming a low-barrier, trauma-informed, and housing-focused emergency shelter (Attachment 1). Several of the follow-up recommendations were repeated as a result of little to no change in the design. To implement some of these recommendations, like an alteration to the roof-top deck, a new development permit would need to be issued.

Next Steps

The added layers of public health risk and guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the homeless population has impacted shelter operations and the provision of day services, limiting the number of people that could be served in available spaces due to inadequate square footage and operating models. This required the homeless serving sector to collaborate and integrate to generate creative solutions to complex problems. As a result, shelter providers and funders acknowledged the importance of providing safe and dignified continuous night and day shelter for individuals that provide meaningful opportunities to engage with housing, health, and support services.

The Government of Alberta has committed to assembling a service delivery design committee, which will include the City of Edmonton and Homeward Trust, to provide input to inform service delivery within the Herb Jamieson Centre Redevelopment. This group will test concepts and facilitate input to inform the service delivery design concept for the new Herb Jamieson Centre. This committee planned to assemble in spring 2020, but the pandemic has delayed this to 2021.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmontonians have safe and adequate housing	Number of unsheltered individuals	December 2020: 564	Decrease annually

Attachments

1. City of Edmonton Recommendations for the Herb Jamieson Redevelopment

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor, Office of the City Manager