

City of Edmonton Recommendations for the Herb Jamieson Redevelopment

As a result of the re-visioning process that began in January 2019, Administration, in partnership with Homeward Trust and OrgCode Inc., produced a series of recommendations to support the Herb Jamieson Centre in becoming a low-barrier, trauma-informed, and housing-focused emergency shelter.

Across Canada, emergency shelters are undergoing transformations to embrace a housing-focused model. A housing-focused emergency shelter ensures that from the moment a person accesses shelter, there are efforts to provide a safe and appropriate exit from a shelter into housing. To support ending homelessness, the main purpose of a shelter should be to ensure that shelter-stays are brief and non-recurring. OrgCode identified through its research that emergency shelters should work towards being housing-focused by evaluating the effectiveness of its operations through three metrics:

1. The average length of stay with a goal to decrease this result over time.
2. The number of exits from shelter to housing with a goal to increase this result over time.
3. The number of people who return to shelter after exiting to housing with a goal to decrease this result over time.

To support this model, OrgCode presented the following high-level recommendations to the Hope Mission Redevelopment Committee on August 22, 2019:

- That office space be located along the centre of the floor instead of along the perimeter to improve visibility.
- That the front entrance and reception area should be larger.
- That foot lockers be included at the end of each bed and storage for shopping carts be considered.
- That a bicycle lock-up be provided.
- That lighting options have variable levels of brightness to be used in the morning and nighttime hours for wake up and sleep times.
- That hospital-grade HVAC equipment be used to reduce the potential for disease transmission.
- That the medical space provided reflects input from consultation with Alberta Health Services and should not include an “emergency department” model similar to what is in place at the Calgary Drop-In to avoid duplicating the delivery of medical services.
- That a common area for guests to socialize with limited TV hours and housing-focused activities be provided.

- That Hope Mission adopt amnesty totes for guests to store prohibited items that would otherwise prevent them from accessing shelter.
- That laundry facilities be provided for guests.
- That the rooftop garden be eliminated and consideration be made for it to be utilized as a rooftop deck for guests to smoke.
- That the design of spaces include rounded / curved walls to improve sight lines, openness and safety, and that washrooms and all other areas have two exits.

Hope Mission incorporated some of the above recommendations into the design through updated architectural drawings that were submitted to the City in late 2019. Changes included providing additional storage space throughout the building and the inclusion of a central office space on the second floor that would divide the large room into two smaller sleeping spaces. Following the update, Administration reviewed the plans again to provide a final round of feedback for consideration while Hope Mission waited for its building permit to be issued. Administration made several follow-up recommendations that were similar to the original recommendations as a result of little to no change in the design.

Recommendations made by Administration to Hope Mission in December 2019 include:

- That a secure storage space be provided in the underground parking garage for bikes, shopping carts, and other items that may exceed storage spaces inside.
- That laundry facilities be provided for guests.
- That all washrooms have two exits for safety.
- That beds be used rather than mats on the floor.
- That the design of spaces includes rounded/ curved walls to improve lines of sight, openness, and safety.
- That storage capacity and procedures include amnesty totes and small storage units at the foot of beds.
- That the rooftop vestibule space be expanded as a gathering space with a corresponding decrease in the outside patio space; and
- that the outside patios space be used as a smoking area to avoid the impact of guests congregating outside at street level.

It is important to note that the ability to implement the recommendations above is constrained by Hope Mission's current approved development permit. Implementing all recommendations would require an application for a new development permit.