

Report to Council



Date: February 24, 2020
File: 0000-00-00
To: City Manager
From: Community Safety Director, Human Resources and Community Safety
Subject: Community Inclusion Team: Update & Samuel Place (McIntosh) Strategy

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the staff report dated February 24, 2020 regarding the Community Inclusion Team designed to create the conditions necessary to ensure the successful introduction of supportive housing across the community;

AND THAT Council direct staff to continue to implement the plans outlined in the report and update Council on the progress.

Purpose:

To provide Council with information on, and an opportunity to provide input to, the ongoing implementation of the Community Inclusion Model focused on the successful integration of supportive housing, particularly Samuel Place (McIntosh) in March 2020.

Background:

On June 25, 2018 Council endorsed the Journey Home Strategy which included detailed implementation and funding plans for addressing homelessness in our community. A key component of the Strategy is the development of 300 units of supportive housing for those living without homes. Since the Strategy was endorsed, 86 units of supportive housing have opened and another 151 units are in varied stages with Samuel Place (McIntosh) opening late-March 2020, Stephen Village (Agassiz) opening summer 2020, and McCurdy opening spring 2021.

The City and the primary project partners of BC Housing, Interior Health, Central Okanagan Journey Home Society (COJHS) inclusive of the Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH) and site operators, specifically the John Howard Society of the Okanagan and Kootenay (JHSOK) and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) have always taken a cooperative approach to address supportive housing needs. In summer 2019, the opportunity and value for a more formalized, structured and coordinated approach to this work was recognized, resulting in City Council's endorsement of the Community Integration Model on July 29, 2019.

Subsequently renamed the “Community *Inclusion* Model” (“Model”), it is designed to better align resources to create the conditions necessary for a more seamless inclusion of supportive housing into neighbourhoods. In particular, the Model seeks to:

- Enable and ensure a coordinated and strategic approach among partnering agencies;
- Enhance community engagement, accessibility and transparency;
- Ensure an intentional approach to assess, remediate and respond to community safety issues.

The Model is comprised of two substantial components:

- A formalized committee (“Team”) of senior representatives from the partnering organizations, working toward a deliberate and coordinated approach when introducing housing with supports; and
- Implementation of a methodical five-step process comprised of assessment, planning, mobilization, engagement and evaluation.

Since Council endorsement of the Model, the City constituted the “Community Inclusion Team” with terms of reference developed and approved. Chaired by the Community Safety Director, the City is also represented by managers of Social Development and Community Communications. Commencing January, meeting frequency ranges from a bi-weekly to monthly to align with upcoming housing with supports timelines and preparation for advance planning and evaluation. To date, two sub-committees have formed:

- *Community Safety*. Comprised, primarily, of RCMP and Bylaw Services with liaison to Fire Services, this sub-committee employs Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) at the site and neighbourhood (500m radius) and enacts a responsive security plan pre and post opening of a site.
- *Communications & Public Engagement*. Comprised of communications representatives from the partnering agencies and the City’s Strong Neighbourhoods Branch, this sub-committee is mandated to research, develop and implement communications and engagement strategies. The group is employing a generalized communications strategy respecting supportive housing, along with specific, tactical approaches tailored for each new site.

Work Completed and Underway:

The **Communications & Public Engagement Sub-Committee** has completed research to uncover best practices and lessons learned from other areas and jurisdictions.

Looking ahead to the next few projects, there is an opportunity to implement key elements of the Model, including coordinating with partner agencies, identifying agencies roles and responsibilities related to communications and community outreach, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring an intentional and responsive approach to addressing community concerns related to safety.

The **Community Safety Sub-Committee** is midstream in its application of an abridged Model for the Fuller Bridge-Housing Project. Given the short-term nature of this operation, a CPTED audit was conducted, several modifications were implemented at the site and in the surrounding area to reduce

the opportunity for crime, and a plan was implemented to ensure appropriate monitoring and enforcement since the site's opening.

Next Steps:

Create broader community awareness

There continues to be a gap in awareness and empathy related to the pathways that lead to living without a home, what a housing first model means and what housing with supports offers to address individual needs.

In anticipation of the opening of Samuel Place and Stephen Village, there will be several opportunities for the City to share information with the broader community about the continued need for housing in Kelowna through all partners. In the six weeks leading to the opening of the first homes, the following public awareness activities are expected to take place in partnership with the Journey Home Society and other partners:

- Working with partners, a collaborative campaign is being built that will help create more awareness around the work being done in Kelowna to support those living without homes and increase understanding in the community. Work is underway to secure funding for the campaign through grants in addition to cash and in-kind support from partners. Elements of the campaign will start to go into market later this spring.
- Rutland Resident Association Community Meeting with the Community Safety Director.
- Interior Health to launch [Toward the Heart](#), an [anti-stigma campaign](#) this spring to help reduce the stigma faced by people who use drugs. A [new site](#) has also been launched to share stories and information about several health and wellness topics including the programs and supports offered by [Interior Health](#).

Define the Community Inclusion Model for New Housing Initiatives

Based on best practices, the Community Inclusion Model will support project-specific communication and engagement through a standardized approach and appropriate implementation by lead agency.

This will help build understanding of the complexity of housing-related issues and provide for continued community input into the current and future-oriented work that is planned or underway. It will also build tools and capacity for meaningful and respectful engagement on specific *Housing with Supports* projects.

The partners will also initiate project-specific engagement early in the planning process and will work to incorporate engagement design standards based on the stage and timelines of the project. These proposed standards to include the following:

- Outline and define roles and responsibilities for each partner
- Coordinated communications primarily through Journey Home Society and responsible agencies
- Pre-announcement activities with Community Inclusion Team, e.g. information sharing and media protocols

- Development Permit Application public notification process (radius of properties notified, online and print advertising when required and targeted stakeholder update)
- Development Permit Approvals kick-off the formalization of Community Advisory Committee in advance

Journey Home Society, together with the responsible agency and operator, outline activities leading up to opening and first six months of operations:

- Monitor activities with partners to evaluate standards for notification;
- Bolster neighbourhood connection (e.g. CAC guidelines, reduce barriers for participation and improve access to information and establish neighbourhood building opportunities through Strong Neighbourhoods);
- Identify areas for community input for each project related to form and character, community connection/community building capacity and safety audit;
- Follow a standard checklist and closing the loop on how input was used; and
- Coordinate in advance subject experts and practitioners for active engagement activities as required, e.g. professional facilitation of CAC activities

With the development of the Community Inclusion Model, an opportunity to test this approach will occur through neighbourhood dialogues with the North End planned for February 25. The North-End Downtown, an area that has experienced change with the addition of temporary overnight outdoor sites, temporary bridge housing and a winter sheltering program, was identified as a key area to help further inform and shape the community inclusion model and approach.

The format is small group dialogues that will include information sharing, short presentations and collaborative discussion about ways to build an inclusive community where everyone has a safe and healthy place to live. Summary of results will be shared with the Community Inclusion Team partners so that the Model can undergo further refinement and follow up.

Prepare for Samuel Place and Stephen Village Openings - Specific activities for Samuel Place and Stephen Village will be introduced through standard practices of community outreach led by BC Housing and the operator, John Howard Society. Ongoing one-on-one outreach by John Howard Society and BC Housing has been occurring and they will continue the appropriate community outreach to support successful transition into the neighbourhood as these projects open.

Outreach includes:

- Media tour of the new site pre-opening;
- Opportunity for Mayor and Council to tour the site;
- Neighbourhood and stakeholder outreach to let them know the site is opening, how to connect with the operator and opportunity to tour the site;
- Community Advisory Committee's (CAC) call for participation; and
- Establishment of a professionally facilitated CAC during start-up.

The purpose of the operator's CAC is to provide a cross-section of the community with a mechanism to:

- Build and maintain positive relationships amongst the community, the building operators and the program partners;
- Facilitate information sharing and dialogue;
- Identify and resolve any issues, opportunities and concerns related to building operations;
- Support the success of the housing with supports building in the neighbourhood; and
- Identify community building opportunities through the established Strong Neighbourhoods Program.

Community Safety Sub-Committee - A comprehensive Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Audit was completed early-February for Samuel Place the surrounding (500m) McIntosh area. This included consideration of the neighbourhood composition including assets (i.e., 37 volunteers and Community Policing Coordinator at Rutland Community Policing Office), crime and bylaw service data analysis and benchmarking, as well as physical on-site review of the area and engagement of known stakeholders locally. As a result, 19 recommendations emerged including the need for improved lighting, fencing, wayfinding signage and beautification in identified locations. The recommendations have been assessed and prioritized and while not all are immediately viable, the majority will be implemented in the coming weeks.

Further, a plan is being finalized to ensure an appropriate level of proactive presence among private security / bylaw / police along with responsive intervention, as matters arise. Central to this plan is the establishment of a Community Safety Department Liaison who will communicate regularly with the Samuel Place Operator and the security / enforcement agencies to identify and address issues early, to vigilantly monitor police and bylaw calls for service, and to responsively adapt as required.

Prepared by: D. Caul, Community Safety Director / K. O'Rourke, Community Communications Manager

Approved for inclusion: S. Leatherdale, Divisional Director, Human Resources and Community Safety
C. Weaden, Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services

Attachments: n/a