

The Regional Municipality of Durham
Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness

COVID-19 Homelessness Response Network

October 27th, 2020

In Attendance:

Alan Robins	Region of Durham
Alyxandra Riddell	Region of Durham
Cindy McCreight	Region of Durham
Erin Valant	Region of Durham
Jocelyn Sicilliano	Region of Durham
John Henry	Region of Durham
Rileigh Bint	Region of Durham
Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou	Region of Durham
Stephanie Ross	Region of Durham
Wendy Gobin	Region of Durham
Adrianna Vanderneut	Durham Youth Services
Alison Heron	LHIN
Alyssa Skan	Cornerstone
Ashley McDonald	CDCD
Atiya Siddiquei	Muslim Welfare Centre
Barb Fanin	United Way Durham
Billie Dobereiner	ESDC Reaching Home
Bob Chapman	Councillor
Christine Robinson	Community Living Durham North
Clarence Keesman	The Refuge
Doreen Hume-McKenna	Regional Housing Coordinator
Rev David Moore	Simcoe St. United Church
Fredrica Walters	CFOC – DOC, Ajax
Heather McMillan	VHA
Jessica Hanson	United Way Durham
Jessica Robinson	Community Living Durham North
Marla Walters	CFOC
Maureen Bandola	John Howard Society
Mona Emond	North House
Nathan Gardner	CDCD
Rev Roy Graves	First Light Foundation of Hope
Rob Brglez	Cornerstone Community Association
Shirleen Weekes	CFOC
Theresa McLeod-Treadwell	Salvation Army

Durham Achieves a Quality By-Name List

In October 2020, Built for Zero declared that Durham has achieved a Quality By-Name List (QBNL). Having a QBNL means that our community has the real-time, reliable data needed to monitor our progress to ending chronic homelessness and make system improvements. Durham's baseline for actively chronic homeless people is 52. This means that we average 52 people experiencing chronic homelessness every month.

Durham has now progressed to the Reduce to Zero cohort. The Reduce to Zero cohort tracks monthly reductions in chronic homelessness using our Coordinated Access System. Durham is the 23rd community to achieve this goal in Canada.

Durham's next goal is to achieve and sustain a 10% reduction in our chronic homelessness baseline.

Working Together to End Homelessness in Durham

Call for Expressions of Interest 2020

- Erin Valant provided an overview of the changes coming forward to 2021 funding. The process will be more transparent and standardized. Strategic decisions will be made on base funding as the extra funding received in 2020 due to COVID-19 will not continue past March 2021. There will be an application process to ensure all programs receiving funding have documented program plans with expected deliverables. The call for expressions of interest (EOI) will open at the end of November, in December there will be a Q&A and in January 2021 the EOI will close and funding will commence in March 2021.

Beaverton Supportive Housing Development Update

Alan Robins provided an update on the supportive housing development planned for Beaverton. The project is progressing with a 16-month timeline. An information session is being held on Thursday (virtually) for residents. Our website is updated regularly with Q&A's, so the community is aware of the importance of this project and to keep everyone informed.

Additional Provincial Funding Announcement

The province announced SSRF Funding (Phase 2) and Durham is getting more than \$3.63 million from the province to protect vulnerable people. Of this funding, \$2 million will be specifically for the modular development in Beaverton.

Transitional Housing

10 Unit Property For Sale in Oshawa

Recently we were approached by a developer about a property at 178 Athol St. Oshawa. The developer can convert this to transitional housing. The second floor will have 5 units, the third floor will have 4 units. There would be two full kitchens, two communal areas, two staff/community office areas and a front reception area. There would be 24/7 supports available on-site.

Action:

We are seeking feedback from DACH to use Reaching Home funding in lieu of the additional micro-homes as this will provide a purpose-built building with staff/community office space.

The micro homes can be added in future years as they can be purchased individually. The issue of accessibility (elevators) was raised. This building could be modified down the road for accessibility. It can be purchased quickly to help the Region achieve the goal of ending chronic homelessness.

A survey monkey will be sent out to DACH to solicit formal feedback on changing the direction of the capital funds. If approved, the next step will be to have the new business case reviewed by ESDC for approval.

Short-Term Rent Benefits

It would cost between \$42,000-\$50,000 to target 10 clients from the low/moderate acuity from the By-Name List (BNL) for short-term rent benefits. Clients would have a dedicated case manager and a 5-month rent benefit of \$500. If 10-20% are successful in maintaining permanent housing it would be a successful outcome. The amount spent on an out of the cold program would be \$100,000. This model is similar to Rapid Rehousing Programs.

COVID-19 – Second Wave Planning

Expanding Shelter Supports

Capacity has been added through a 24/7 Shelter in Ajax through Christian Faith Outreach Centre (CFOC). This provides 20, 24/7beds and follows the same housing-focused programming as the other housing-focused shelters. This program opens on November 1st. We will also be proceeding with a warming center program at the New Life Centre with capacity for 15 spaces. Hours will be from 6-10 pm. This program will open Nov. 15th.

Street Outreach Strategy

Through our partnership with the Built for Zero initiative, OrgCode has been retained to develop a housing-focused street outreach strategy for Durham. OrgCode Consulting, Inc. will be working with the Street Outreach Working Group under the Durham Homeless Advisory Network (DHAN). The full presentation will be available the second week of January to be rolled out in 2021. DACH may want to consider targeting a specific problem area and asking OrgCode to assist for future years.

Increasing Supports at the Isolation and Recovery Program

To increase capacity, we are adding additional overnight staff at the DRIP Program. The Salvation Army will be adding overnight staffing and security. An application was submitted through the Health, Homelessness and Housing (H3) Committee to LHIN to get onsite mental health and addiction supports for this program.

Outbreak Planning

If an outbreak is declared by Public Health, that means one person (staff or client) is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the shelter facility. During the outbreak no more intakes are allowed, and staff cannot work elsewhere. We need to determine ways of discussing how we handle multiple outbreaks. We are reaching out to Service Managers to see how they will handle this. There is a need to speak to the Health Dept. with regards to having shelters remain in an outbreak if one client has any symptoms even if they've tested negative.

Action:

Speak to the Health Department to clarify the definition of an Outbreak and get more information for DACH to help make planning decisions.

Increasing Active Screening Points – Backdoor Mission

Public Health approved a Homelessness Support System Screening Questionnaire. Feedback on having a standardized screening tool was requested for COVID-19. Erin will follow up with Public Health on omitting the 3rd question and changing the wording of question 2.

Action:

The revised questionnaire will be forwarded to DACH.

CityStudio Durham

We have a partnership with CityStudio Durham, a full evaluation will be done on the health side of the Mission United HUB. Helping to collaborate, resource opportunity to partner with a post-secondary institution. Great opportunity to get Durham specific research done. www.durham.ca/citystudio

New Members

We are seeing increases in the number of people and organizations wanting to join; feedback was requested on how DACH wants to handle these requests? For consideration, DACH membership should vote on new member requests. They could also decide if an organization would be a better fit for another committee such as DHAN. As organizations reach out to us, we will bring them forward to the following meeting.

Action:

Forward a current listing of committee organizations and members.

DHAN Update

Doreen spoke about a communications strategy, through the relationship with OrgCode Consulting, Inc. they are going to look at communications processes with the broader community (Durham Alliance to End Homelessness and how we are organizing our committees). This will commence shortly and wrap up in December. The homelessness sponsorship program is ramping up (from the Spirit of Service) it is looking at the refugee model for housing people. OrgCode will look at the structure of the various committees and identify how to streamline and avoid duplication.

Deliverables for the communication strategy will be ready for the end of December.

Bright Spots

- BackDoor Mission has a phone for clients to connect with the CRA.
- Durham Community Legal Clinic has been very responsive and helped to avoid eviction and strategize with landlords.
- Collaboration between organizations to get people on the BNL, Gate 316 and the Salvation Army have been great at getting the hard to reach people.
- Looking at revamping our webpage and there is a spot for Bright Spots
- Federal Government sent out Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)
- Ministry of Health has released funding called Back to Home to target their Alternate Level of Care (ALC) beds we are trying to secure 3-5 spaces to target the homeless clients
- Mona updated that the tax program for North Durham residents, over 335 tax returns were completed that put \$1.3 million in benefits back into the pockets of people from North Durham.
- The Ajax Library is hiring a social worker.

Next Meeting:

- Tuesday November 24th, 2020
- Meetings will be scheduled monthly on Tuesday from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

- Send any agenda items and/ or Good News Stories to Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca by end of day Thursday to be added to the following Tuesday's agenda.