

Temporary **Homelessness** Services

IN LAKESHORE WEST AREA



In response to high occupancy in the permanent shelter system and the growing need for homelessness services, the City of Toronto is creating new temporary services at 545 Lakeshore Blvd West and Gore Park (across from the Fort York Armoury).

Find out more at these Open House Meetings

When:

Tuesday, 21 August,
5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

and

Monday, 17 September,
5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Where:

Fort York Visitor Centre
250 Fort York Blvd

What is being planned?

- Work is underway to erect a temporary structure at Gore Park, across from the Fort York Armoury on Fleet St, for use by November as a 24-hour respite site for up to 100 people.
- The City has leased 545 Lakeshore Blvd W, at the SE corner of Bathurst and Lakeshore Blvd W for use as a temporary 24-hour respite site starting in September and remaining open until the Gore Park structure is completed in November.
- 24-hour respite site services will be transferred to the new temporary structure at Gore Park in November. The Lakeshore Blvd W property will then be used as a temporary shelter program for women and couples for up to a year while planned new permanent shelters come on-stream.

Why are these services needed?

The City of Toronto is facing an unprecedented increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness over the last few years. Our existing shelter system is at capacity and more service is required to make sure that there is sufficient space for everyone who needs it. The City must act now to ensure we can provide all people who need it with a warm/cool, dry place to sleep and programs to help them out of poverty. The City has a plan to add 1,000 new shelter beds by 2020. The temporary shelter program, to be located at 545 Lakeshore W starting in November, will provide short-term relief while permanent shelters are being built.

What is a 24-hour respite site?

Available 24/7, sites accept pets, provide a safe place to rest, get a meal, and find service referrals. All sites welcome people who are transgender or gender non-binary. Lower barriers to service make respite sites more accessible, especially to those who are vulnerable and who may not otherwise access conventional shelter services.



The City of Toronto is installing temporary structures as 24-hour respite sites to accommodate a growing demand for homelessness services across the city.

What is the difference between a respite site and a shelter?

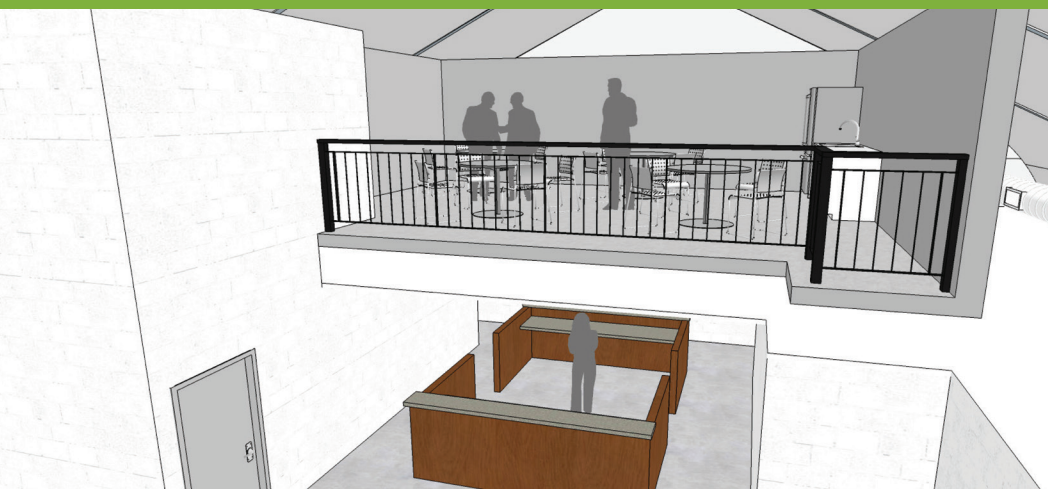
Shelters require commitments from clients, such as obligations to work with a case manager on a housing plan, or employment strategy. Some people experiencing homelessness aren't ready to make such commitments and may find shelter rules too restrictive.

When will the building at Gore Park be removed ?

Temporary structures, such as the one being installed at Gore Park, are in use across Canada and the world as churches, Arctic stations, aquatic centres, gyms, classrooms, fire stations, housing, emergency shelters—anything a community wants. One of the benefits of temporary structures is that they can be scaled up and down according to demand. If demand for services offered by 24-hour respite sites declines, we will decommission the structure or repurpose it for other community uses.

Who will operate these sites?

The City partners with community agencies that have expertise and experience in providing services to vulnerable populations. Operators are currently being selected through a competitive process.



Why are they needed in our neighbourhood?

Respite sites and shelters are being added in many communities throughout the city, not just the downtown west.

Why were these sites chosen?

The Gore Park site was chosen after several city-owned properties were assessed in the Fort York area. The 545 Lakeshore W site was selected as this property is vacant pending a development process by the owner. Both sites are in an area where additional services for vulnerable people are needed.

Project Timelines

August/September Open House meetings on August 21 and September 17 at the Fort York Visitor Centre.

September 24-hours respite site services will be offered at 545 Lakeshore W while the temporary structure at Gore Park is being installed.

November 24-hour respite site service will move to Gore Park and a shelter will be introduced on a temporary basis at 545 Lakeshore W. The shelter will provide service to women and couples experiencing homelessness.

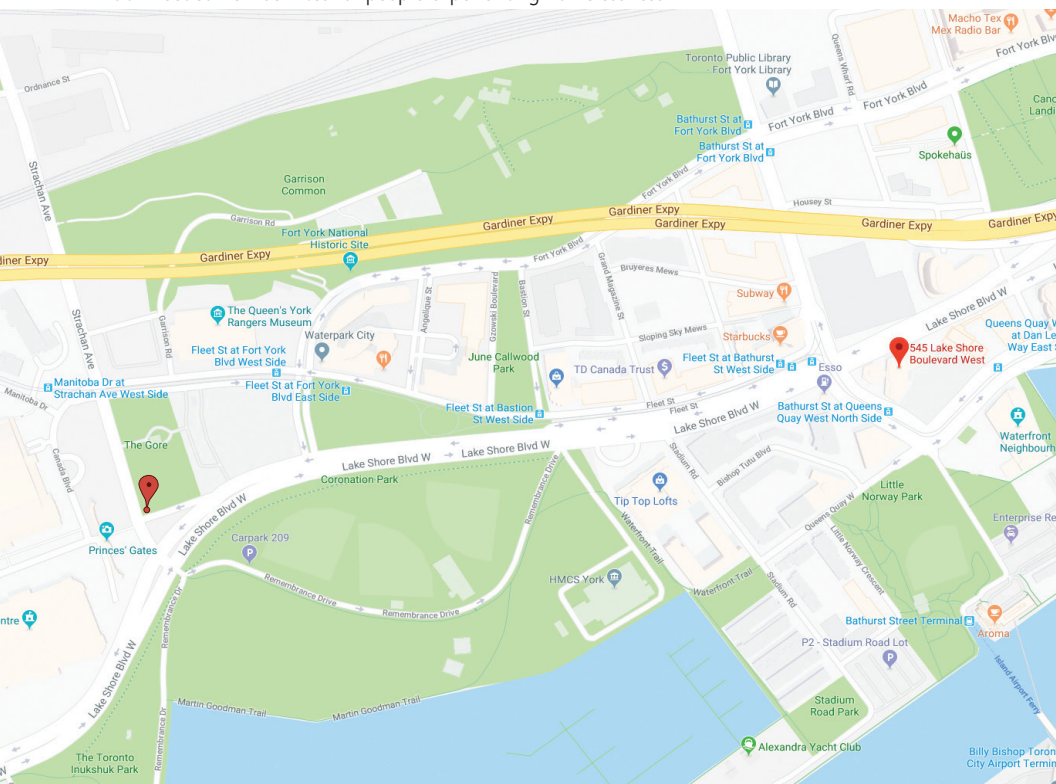
Who decides where these services go?

Both locations are designated “as-of-right” for municipal shelter use under municipal zoning and City by-law requirements. City Council has approved the overall plan for new shelters and 24-hour respite sites. Identification of specific locations is done by knowledgeable City staff based on the needs of an often hidden and vulnerable population and of the local community.

Do I get a say?

City staff want to hear from you. Scheduled information sessions are being held to share information, hear from local residents and business, and to build support in the community for these needed services. Residents can also email questions and comments to ssha@toronto.ca.

The City's Shelter Support and Housing Administration Division has selected two sites for much-needed new services for people experiencing homelessness.



Myths and Facts about Homelessness

Myth Homeless people are different from me.

In fact, anyone who is living paycheck to paycheck could become homeless, and would need a place to stay while they get back on their feet. Most people who use the shelter system are there for economic reasons, and use it for a short period.

Myth People are homeless by choice.

94% of people who are homeless say they want permanent housing. Most say that having help to meet Toronto's expensive rents would be the best way to end their homelessness.

Myth Property values will go down if we let a homeless shelter or respite site into the neighbourhood.

Have you checked out Toronto real estate prices lately, in particular in the downtown core where homelessness services are most concentrated? There is no evidence to support the myth that homeless service facilities drive down property values in Toronto.

Myth Shelter users will congregate in the local park, leave garbage and needles around, and squeeze out the local kids and anyone else who wants to enjoy the space.

Like every member of the community, people staying at a local shelter/respite are entitled to use public space provided they do so in a manner that respects others. Operators are required to have a process in place to address community concerns, so if you experience any problems, contact the agency that runs the shelter/respite.

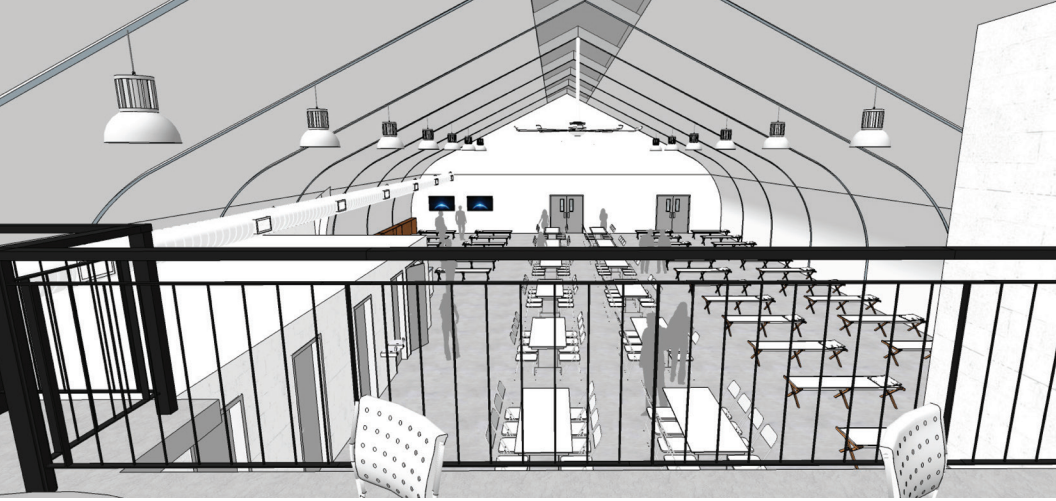
Myth Homeless shelters are poorly maintained and operated.

Shelters/respite in Toronto are operated by professionally managed not-for-profit organizations that are selected through a competitive process. Their staff are experts in addressing concerns from local neighbours as they arise.

Facts on homelessness in Toronto

- Every night there are 8,000 + homeless people in Toronto's shelters, respite sites, health and correctional facilities
- The City's housing first approach resulted in more than 2,000 chronically homeless people being housed from shelters and the streets since 2016
- 11.3% of people experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ2S
- 38% of those sleeping rough identify as Indigenous





Open House Meetings

Find out more about plans for these sites.

When Tuesday, 21 August, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Monday, 17 September, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Where: Fort York Visitor Centre
250 Fort York Blvd

"We know Torontonians support our commitment to ensuring there are safe and welcoming places for all who are experiencing homelessness," says Paul Raftis, General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the City division responsible for homelessness services and housing. "Temporary structures allow us to make this happen while increasing the quality of service we are able to provide as we go into the winter season."

For more information on these temporary structures visit
<https://bit.ly/2M4NVa6>

updated Aug 8