

May 29, 2021

Mayor Alar Soever and CAO Shawn Everitt
Town of The Blue Mountains
PO Box 310, 32 Mill Street
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

Dear Mayor Soever and Mr. Everitt:

Re: Shelter Feasibility Study Report and Future Services

I have included a copy of the Shelter Feasibility Study for your review. Please accept my sincere gratitude for your continued support and acknowledgment of our work.

In 2019, with strong financial support from the Town of Collingwood, community partners and a volunteer task force, Community Connection led a successful community mobilization initiative to launch a six-month Out of the Cold Collingwood pilot project to determine the feasibility of permanent emergency shelter services in South Georgian Bay. The overnight winter shelter operated between Dec 2nd, 2019 through April 25th, 2020, serving 53 people, and offering 810 overnight stays with hot meals, showers, and hygiene supplies.

As a result of the pandemic, in March 2020 just before the pilot project ended, emergency declarations and legislation resulted in the County of Simcoe requesting all operating shelters transition into 24/7 operations within a motel model to ensure the safety of the people served. In the early days of the pandemic the motel models were planned to operate for several weeks. Now, more than one year later, the COVID-19 emergency shelter continues to operate on a month-by-month basis and will close when emergency orders and emergency funding end. In September 2020, Community Connection enlisted the support and partnership of the Busby Centre to assume operations of the COVID-19 emergency shelter response for South Georgian Bay. The Busby Centre continues to operate the program today.

In the fall of 2020, Community Connection received financial support for a Shelter Feasibility Study from the Town of Collingwood, Clearview Township, The Town of the Blue Mountains and Grey County, as well as local donors. Despite delays due to the pandemic, the shelter feasibility has been completed and Community Connection is excited to release the results and announce plans for next steps.

The study was completed by OrgCode, a consulting firm specializing in homelessness and housing approaches that are actionable and aligned to best practice across North America. Their local work for our study included an extensive survey with more than 300 respondents, a lived experience survey with 32 respondents, many key informant interviews, and analysis of available data.

The report reveals there is community interest and support in having a shelter, however, the impressions of what a shelter is and what a shelter does is not aligned to current thoughts and practice within the field. Community perceptions of shelter were overwhelmingly focused on seeing shelter as a place to learn life skills and budgeting, get retrained or assisted in finding employment, receiving counselling and assistance with addiction, and supporting people with serious mental illness. Furthermore, survey respondents identify the need for shelter as being directly related to rising costs of housing and changes in employment in the area.

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In the report, OrgCode is very clear, a shelter is not the best place to learn life skills or budgeting, nor is it the place to get ready for employment, nor is it the place to receive assistance with an addiction, nor is it the best location for mental health assistance. And on top of this, a shelter does not solve issues with a lack of affordable housing.

In their conclusions and recommendations, OrgCode does not advise adding a stand alone shelter in South Georgian Bay. It is not feasible from a financial perspective. However, integrating housing and homelessness services, coordinated through a central hub model, should be explored. They specifically recommend:

1. Street outreach activities continue, with an emphasis on helping unsheltered people access housing;
2. Motels be the dominate strategy for providing temporary accommodation with wrap around supports to help people access permanent housing;
3. Portable rent supplements be made available to South Georgian Bay to assist up to 25 people in accessing housing and supports annually; and
4. Efforts be reinvested in the development of permanent housing that is affordable to persons of very low incomes, and/or the development of supportive housing in the community.

The Executive Directors and the Boards of Directors for Community Connection and The Busby Centre, have worked together since September 2020 to plan for the transition of Out of The Cold Collingwood and its assets into permanent services for South Georgian Bay.

Beginning May 1st, 2021, The Busby Centre has officially assumed oversight of Out of The Cold Collingwood and will work with local partners to implement the recommendations in the Feasibility Study. A central hub model will establish The Busby Centre as the primary support to people experiencing homelessness with additional services delivered through collaboration with other organizations in the community.

The Out of the Cold Task Force has been disbanded, and The Busby Centre, with the support of local stakeholders, will continue their mission built upon the strong foundation of community support Task Force Chair Marg Scheben-Edey and Fundraising Chair Tracy O'Neil established over the past two years. Both members will continue their advocacy work within other committees in the community where their leadership and knowledge will be vital.

Community Connection wants to acknowledge other Task Force members, Pam Hawkins who was instrumental in setting up the food and meal program and Jessica Owen who developed the branding and guided the online communications and marketing activities.

To support the transition over the longer term, two other Task Force members, Gail Michalenko and Pamela Hillier will become advisors to The Busby Centre's Board of Directors to represent the voice of the South Georgian Bay community. The Busby Centre plans include a part-time office with Community Connection and establishing a local bank account to ensure local fundraising and funding remains in the community.

Community Connection welcomes The Busby Centre's formal participation in the local network of service organizations, and we are confident our community will continue to support their work in serving people experiencing homelessness in South Georgian Bay.

Sincerely,



Pamela Hillier, Executive Director
Community Connection
705-446-6831

copy:

Sara Peddle, Executive Director
The Busby Centre
705-794-7499

APRIL 6, 2021

SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

SHELTER FEASIBILITY STUDY

A REPORT FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTION



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OrgCode acknowledges the land on which this report has been prepared is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, and is within the lands protected by the “Dish with one Spoon” wampum agreement.

AUTHORSHIP

This report has been prepared by OrgCode Consulting Inc. (“OrgCode”) under contract to Community Connection. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on the professional experience of OrgCode, the review of survey responses, key informant interviews and available data, the addition of permanent, congregate shelter for people experiencing homelessness is not feasible for South Georgian Bay. There is community interest and support in having a shelter. However, the impressions of what a shelter is and what a shelter does is not aligned to the main currents of thought and practice in the field. Efforts are afoot throughout Canada, the United States and Australia to ensure shelters are short-term stays with an unrelenting housing-focus, removing programming and skills development that is focused on housing readiness, but which ultimately reinforce therapeutic incarceration. Community perceptions of shelter are overwhelmingly focused on seeing shelter as a place to learn life skills and budgeting, get retrained or assisted in finding employment, receiving counselling and assistance with addiction, and supporting people with serious mental illness. Furthermore, survey respondents identify the need for shelter as being directly related to rising costs of housing and changes in employment in the area. To be clear, a shelter is not the best place to learn life skills or budgeting, nor is it the place to get ready for employment, nor is it the place to receive assistance with an addiction, nor is it the best location for mental health assistance. And on top of this, a shelter does not solve issues with a lack of affordable housing.

Area of inquiry in feasibility study:	Summary response:
Is a shelter in South Georgian Bay financially prudent?	NO
Do survey respondents support a shelter in South Georgian Bay?	GENERALLY YES, WITH SOME DISSENTING VOICES
Do key informants support a shelter in South Georgian Bay?	ONLY IF NEEDED, WITH SOME DISSENTING VOICES
Is a shelter in South Georgian Bay necessary to resolve homelessness in the area?	NO

Key informants, especially those involved in the direct delivery of assistance to people experiencing homelessness in the community, have different impressions of homelessness in the community than the general respondents to the survey. In a nutshell, key informants generally do not see how a permanent shelter in South Georgian Bay would assist their efforts to end

homelessness. In addition, the operational data and perceptions of key informants suggests homelessness is not as dire in South Georgian Bay as people generally perceive it to be.

Shelter users are very diverse. As such, shelters go to great lengths to be as inclusive as possible in their services. While the community is definitely open and welcoming to people who identify as transgender and same sex couples, there is not as much support for assisting people with a history of criminal offences, especially sex offenders and people that have served time for violent acts. There is not as much support for people being discharged to the shelter from hospital or incarceration.

A better approach to meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness in South Georgian Bay would be a Homelessness and Housing Help Hub, which uses motels with wrap around supports for people needing temporary accommodation, and which uses rent supplements and support assistance to assist homeless people in South Georgian Bay in becoming re-housed rapidly.

INTRODUCTION

South Georgian Bay has people experiencing homelessness, but is without a permanent shelter. Motels and the Out of the Cold program have historically attempted to meet the shelter needs of people that experience homelessness in the community. The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not a permanent shelter in South Georgian Bay would be prudent. The findings for this report are informed by an extensive survey with more than 300 respondents, a lived experience survey with 32 respondents, key informant interviews, and available data. Commentary in the report is informed by the aforementioned methods as well as the professional opinion of OrgCode, whose team has been involved in examining and providing recommendations on sheltering matters since 2001.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Altogether 340 people responded to the community survey, with 96% of respondents residing in South Georgian Bay:

Response	%	#
I reside in South Georgian Bay.	95.87%	325
I work in South Georgian Bay.	67.69%	220
I work for a social services agency that serves people in South Georgian Bay (though does not need to be exclusively South Georgian Bay).	23.69%	77
I have or am experiencing homelessness in South Georgian Bay.	6.46%	21
I have a financial interest in a shelter in South Georgian Bay (I stand to make money personally or for my organization if there is a shelter in South Georgian Bay).	3.07%	10

This is a robust response demonstrating the issue of homelessness and the matter of having a shelter is of strong interest to the community. All opinions and perceptions from the community matter. Nonetheless, as the analysis of findings from the project show, a large number of survey respondents does not guarantee that the respondents are well-versed in homelessness or effective solutions to homelessness.

PERCEPTIONS OF HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

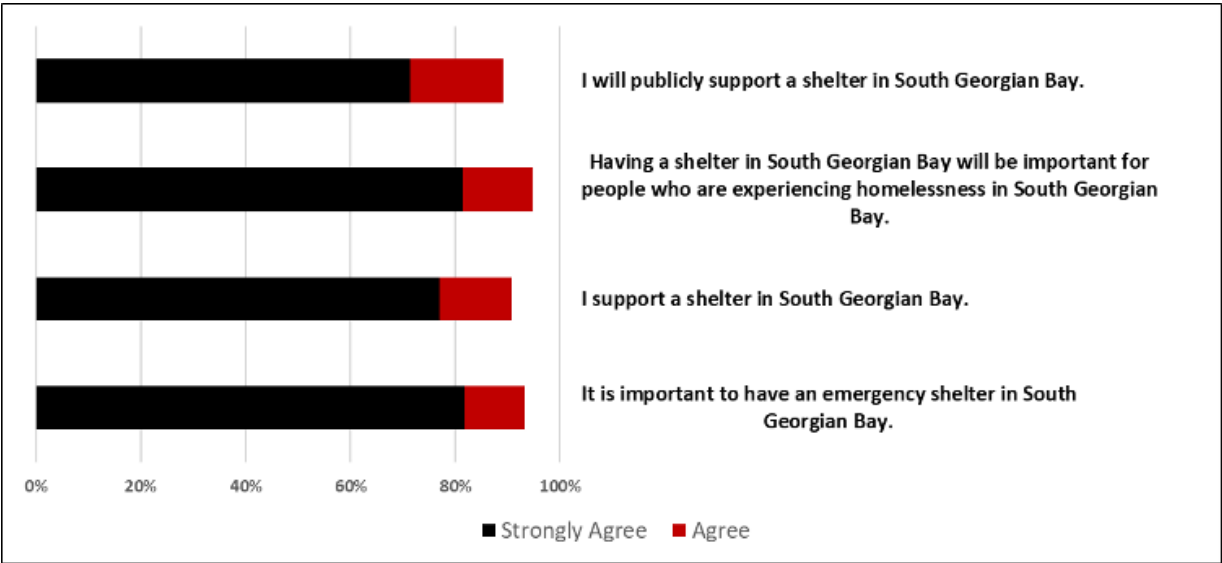
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Homelessness locally seems to be increasing and is beyond what available services can accommodate.	61.76%	210	28.24%	96	6.76%	23	2.06%	7	1.18%	4
Homelessness in South Georgian Bay is increasing but we have enough resources locally to meet demands for assistance.	0.91%	3	3.05%	10	12.20%	40	48.17%	158	35.67%	117
Homelessness in South Georgian Bay is about the same now as it has been in the past. Requests for service have not changed.	21.8%	6	3%	10	15.5%	51	41.4%	136	38.1%	125
Homelessness is decreasing in South Georgian Bay.	0.61%	2	0.61%	2	7.98%	26	34.66%	113	56.13%	183
Homelessness does not exist in South Georgian Bay.	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	2.45%	8	16.51%	54	81.04%	265

When examining the response to these statements from persons who **reside** in South Georgian Bay, the strongest response affirmed that “*Homelessness locally seems to be increasing and is beyond what available services can accommodate*” with nearly identical rates of response as all responders of 60.49% strongly agreeing and 29.01% agreeing. Among respondents that work in the social services field, the response jumped to 74% strongly agreeing that homelessness response was not adequate.

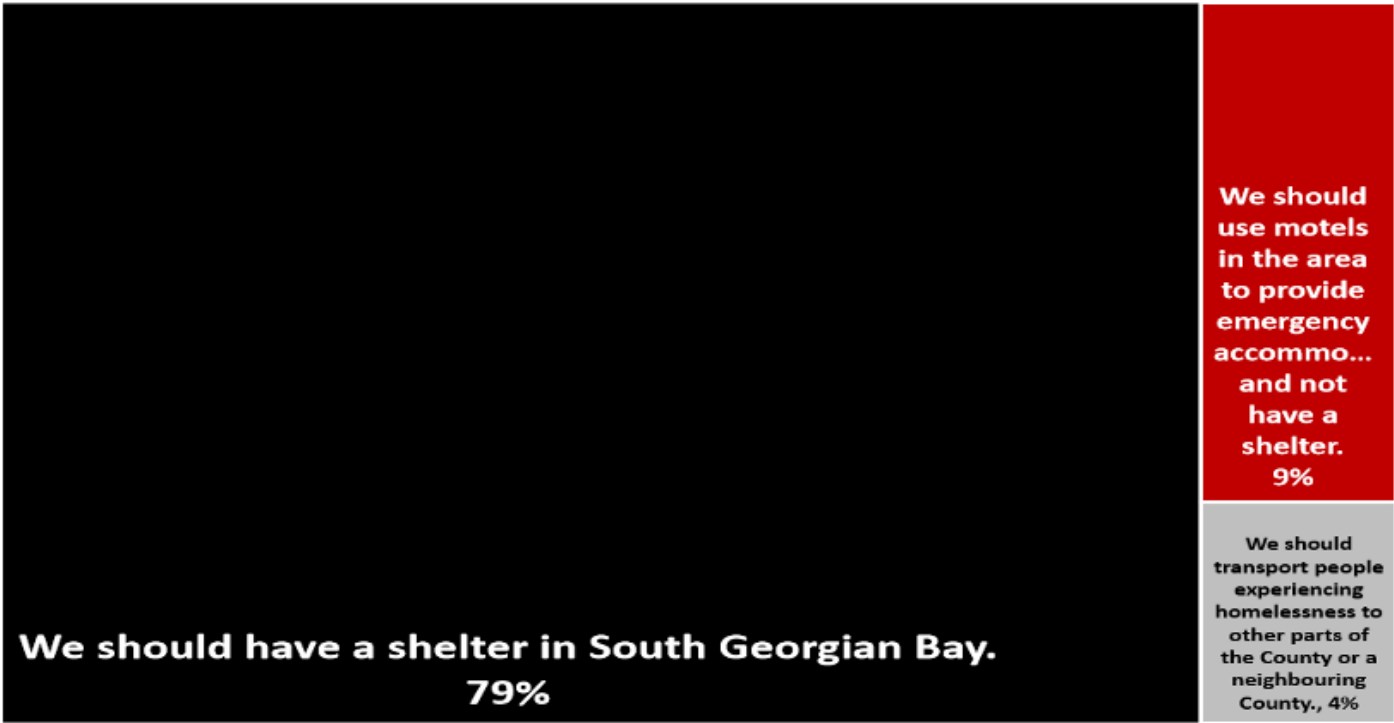
Amongst key informants, the perceptions of homelessness in South Georgian Bay were more mixed. This was especially true amongst service providers. While some reported increases in homelessness, some interviewees were quick to point out the homelessness response system has never been adequate in the community, and that it seems less adequate with an impression of increased homelessness in the community. However, other direct service providers pointed to a growing mythology of increases in homelessness in the community that has not born out when working to serve people experiencing homelessness in the community. It was suggested that adding a shelter to the community will further perpetuate a myth that homelessness is terrible in the community, when in their experience it is not.

SUPPORT FOR A SHELTER IN SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

Only 13 out of 325 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to supporting a shelter in South Georgian Bay. All 13 people in opposition reside in the community.



Obvious is that the overwhelming majority of survey respondents - regardless of whether they reside, work or both reside and work in South Georgian Bay - are in support of a shelter in the community.



CONCERNS ABOUT A SHELTER IN SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY

Survey respondents were not unanimous in their support for a shelter in South Georgian Bay. The main concerns from the survey responses about a shelter in South Georgian Bay, albeit the overwhelming minority opinion, are as follows:

- It will attract people experiencing homelessness to the area;
- It will lead to decline of the area like Toronto or Vancouver;
- It will attract drugs and drugs dealers;
- It will result in increases in crime;
- There are insufficient other services in the South Georgian Bay so people would be better served in Barrie;
- It will have a negative impact on business in South Georgian Bay.

"Shelters bring with it crime, drug use, drug dealers, anti social behaviour, harassment and assaults, and ultimately attract more and more homeless, while tax paying residents are ignored. Think very carefully before unleashing Pandora's Box into a small community. Larger communities like Barrie are much better served with infrastructure and supports for a shelter."
- Survey respondent

HAS THE NEED FOR SHELTER BEEN CONCLUSIVELY DEMONSTRATED?

Based upon the review of survey responses, key informant interviews, and available data, the need for shelter in South Georgian Bay has not been conclusively demonstrated. To be clear, there is a **strong desire** to add a shelter in South Georgian Bay (including 88% of respondents to the Lived Experience survey), but **there is not evidence of a strong need** for a shelter in South Georgian Bay, nor is it the most financially prudent manner with which to respond to homelessness in the community.

The majority of survey respondents pointed to a few recurring themes as a justification for a shelter in South Georgian Bay:

- The increase of housing prices in South Georgian Bay
- The lack of affordable housing in South Georgian Bay
- The lack of appropriate services for people experiencing homelessness in South Georgian Bay

A shelter will not in any way resolve the first two justifications, and will only address the third justification in part. As discussed in the following section, a shelter will not cure housing woes in the community. On the matter of a lack of appropriate services, the service people experiencing homelessness need most are services to help people end homelessness through housing. Clear from the comments, however, is that the shelter envisioned by service respondents is not focused on housing solutions, and instead is focused on rehabilitative services. Even 97% of respondents to the Lived Experience survey identified that a shelter should focus on teaching the skills like budgeting and life skills classes to prepare people for housing, which is out of step with a Housing First approach.

Will there be people dislodged from housing that would benefit from temporary accommodation? Yes. A less costly and more effective approach will be the use of motels in the area with wrap-around services to help the individual, couple or family return to housing as rapidly as possible. Such a motel setting would also provide the self-contained units for individuals to sleep which was identified as important by 89% of the Lived Experience survey respondents.

Some survey respondents were concerned with what they see as an increase in unsheltered homelessness in South Georgian Bay. Compassionate comments were shared about meeting the needs of people sleeping in the woods. Interviews with key informants that provide outreach

services and other forms of engagement in the South Georgian Bay Area point to a different reality: there are not large volumes of people sleeping in the woods and otherwise sleeping rough in South Georgian Bay. It would seem that the volume of people unsheltered is relatively small and have already received outreach services.. Those that are unsheltered are offered assistance with housing and temporary accommodation already. Adding a permanent shelter in South Georgian Bay will not negate the need for street outreach, and will not resolve the current situation of mismatched perceptions and reality on unsheltered homelessness in the area.

Another major theme used to try to justify the shelter is that people experiencing homelessness in South Georgian Bay are living with mental illness and are unattached to health supports, and people experiencing homelessness are living with addiction and need assistance to overcome their addiction. There are two main flaws with this line of argument: 1. It flies in the face of Housing First which espouses no housing readiness requirements; 2. The potential shelter is seen as a place to receive treatment, counselling and supports for addiction and mental illness. On the latter point, that is not the primary purpose of sheltering, and it is something shelters have historically done poorly.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

A 20 bed emergency shelter requires two staff per shift 24/7 to operate safely. That is a minimum of 10 Full Time Equivalent staff to cover the operations, and pushes salary and benefit costs conservatively to \$500,000. Food, linens, hygiene supplies, building maintenance, repairs, insurance, administration, training, etc. are all required on top of staffing, in the range of \$300,000 to \$500,000.

A single shelter bed in that small 20 bed shelter costs \$40,000 - \$50,000 a year to operate.

THE SHELTER WILL NOT CURE HOUSING WOES

The dominant impression is that a shelter is needed in South Georgian Bay because there is an inadequate amount of affordable housing for people with very low income. **A shelter does not solve inadequacies in affordable housing stock.** At best, a shelter is a bandaid in communities that are not concurrently developing affordable housing for very low income people at the same time as it expands emergency services like shelter.

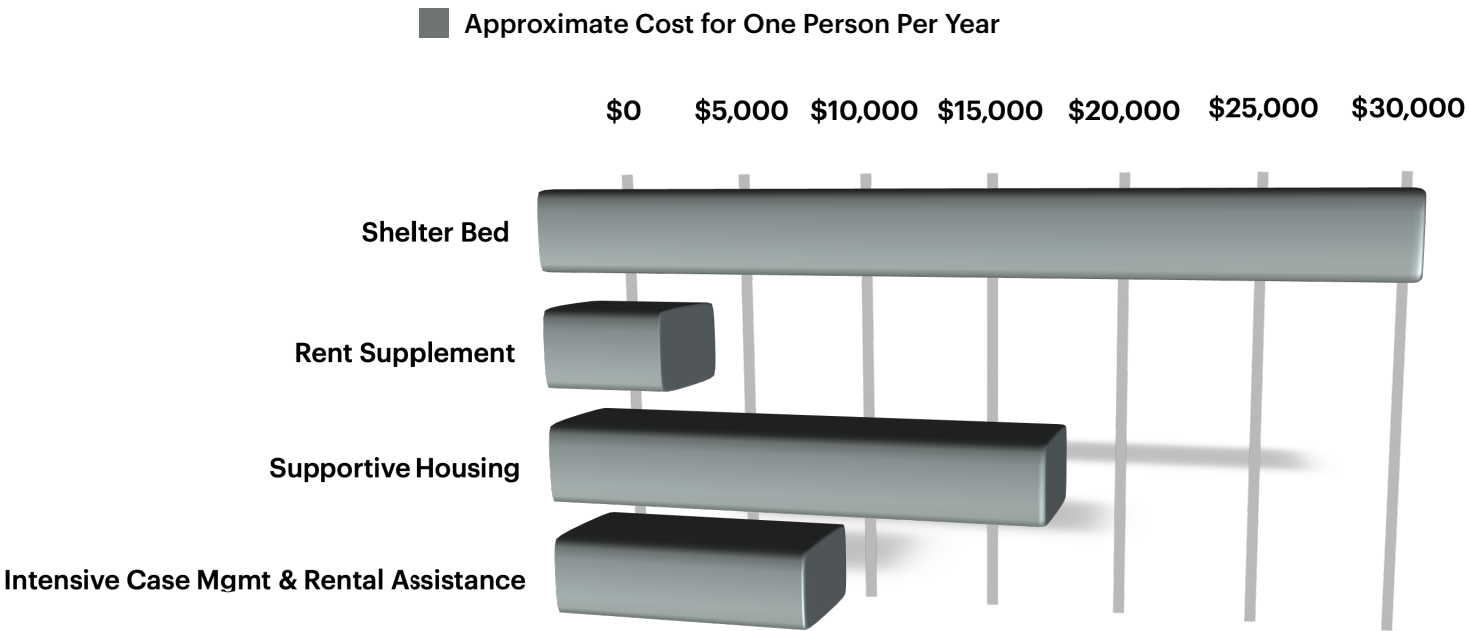
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

A 20 bed emergency shelter requires at least 120 units of housing that is affordable to people of very low income annually. Why? Assume each shelter bed turns over once every two months. That means every two months for each bed in the shelter there must be a place for people to exit. That exit should be safe, appropriate, affordable housing. Building a shelter without concurrently building affordable housing is akin to putting an entrance door onto a building without an exit door.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation data confirms some of the impressions from the survey and key informant interviews: rental accommodation in South Georgian Bay is not affordable. This is especially true for people that rely on Ontario Works as their income, where their monthly shelter allowance of \$390 is far short of the average market rents and median rents in the area. While Collingwood has a vacancy rate that is supposed to favour renters, it is clear that housing remains unaffordable. Nonetheless, the conditions would be advantageous to implementing a form of rent supplement or housing allowance thereby assisting people experiencing homelessness in becoming re-housed.

Community	Vacancy Rate	Average Market Rent	Median Rent	Units
Collingwood	3.5%	\$1,109	\$1,039	562
Midland	1.6%	\$1010	\$931	1,142

Shelters are more expensive to operate than many people realize. From the community survey, 83% of respondents indicated a shelter in South Georgian Bay should be a professional non-profit with paid staff. Generally speaking, the larger the shelter, the greater the economy of scale. A large shelter is not justifiable for South Georgian Bay. In the Ontario context, aside from Toronto and Ottawa, a larger shelter can operate in the mid \$20,000s per bed per year. Smaller shelters can really range in the cost per bed per year based upon many factors, but low to mid \$40,000s per year is a reasonable figure.



From purely a financial perspective, a stand alone shelter is not feasible for South Georgian Bay. However, a shelter integrated with supportive housing, other community amenities, and/or very affordable housing would make a smaller shelter financially feasible. But there is a bigger question: should government invest in a shelter in South Georgian Bay at all? The reality is that homelessness can be ended for people in South Georgian Bay for considerably less money than managing their homelessness through shelter. Money should not be diverted away from housing people for the purpose of having a permanent shelter. The community would be better off, from a financial perspective and perhaps a service perspective as well, to use motels when needed if a person, couple or family really has no safe and appropriate place to be rather than having a shelter.

For the same cost as operating a shelter, it is likely that every person in South Georgian Bay that would need shelter could be housed and supported, thereby ending their homelessness.

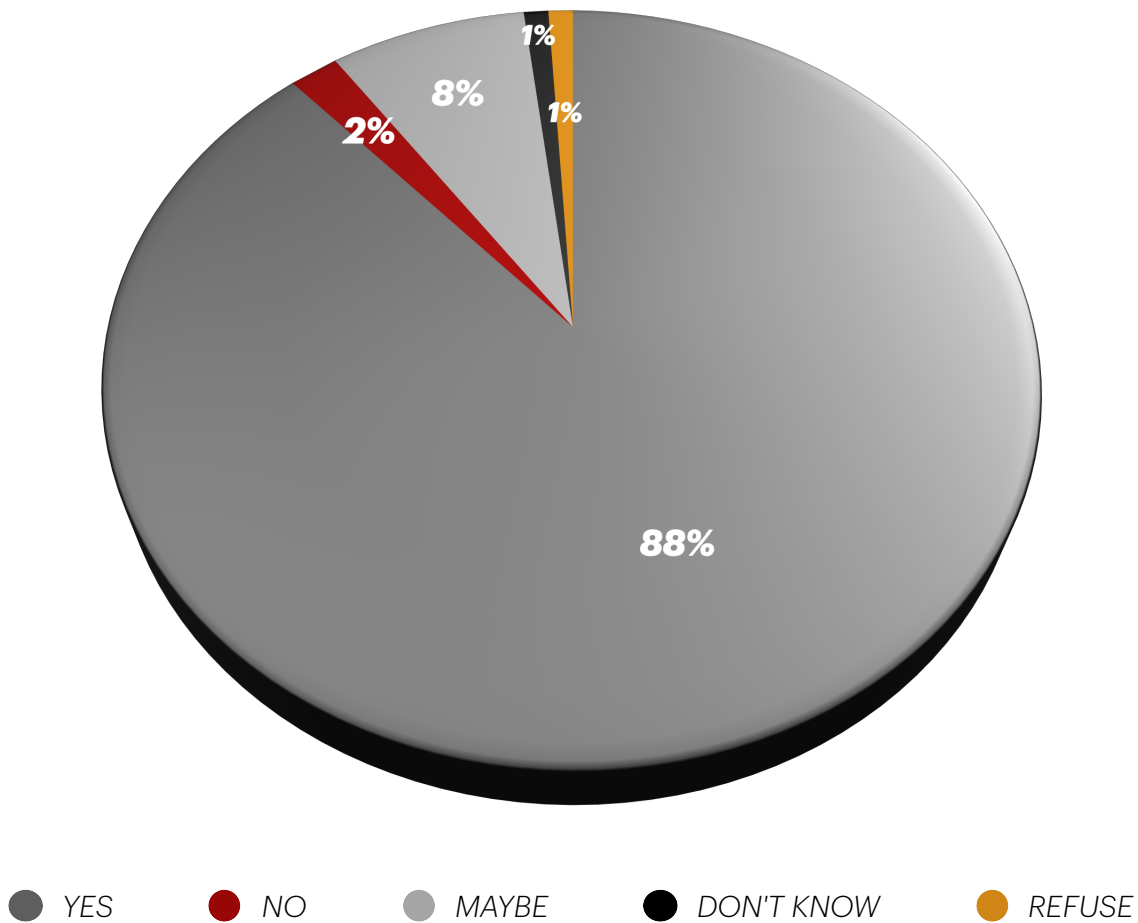
A PLACE FOR REHABILITATION?

*"Ideally there would be a system in **place to help homeless people & families gain employment and housing**. As well as offer classes for bettering their situation. "*
- Survey respondent

For about a decade, the emphasis on what types of services should be offered in shelter and the purpose of shelter has been under increased scrutiny. The National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Canadian Shelter Transformation Network have all promoted and supported seeing shelter as the process by which people achieve housing again, not a place for extensive programming or rehabilitation. Aligned to the service orientation and philosophy of Housing First, the aim is to make shelter stays as short as possible, reconnect people to housing **and then** focus on employment, health, substance use services, social connections, etc. Survey respondents were asked what they thought the primary purpose of shelter should be. Almost 90% of survey respondents thought the primary purpose was rehabilitation and/or increasing skills like budgeting, life skills, parenting classes to prepare people for housing and more independence.

"Shelters are necessary but only support if the individuals who need the shelter are diagnosed and treated for the reasons they are homeless - homelessness is a symptom."
- Survey respondent

**Primary Purpose of Shelter Survey Responses:
Rehabilitation and/or increasing skills like budgeting, life
skills, parenting classes to prepare people for housing**



What the survey respondents identify as the primary purpose of a shelter, is at odds with the main currents of thought and practice in sheltering. Throughout North America, leaders within the shelter sector continue to try to dismantle programs that increase lengths of stay or which do not have a direct bearing on how quickly people are re-housed. It would be a mistake in South

"I believe retraining and providing skills in financing, meal preparation, and mental health services is necessary."
- Survey respondent

Georgian Bay, if a shelter is considered, to add a litany of programs within the facility. It would be better to house people rapidly and then work on this skills.

CO-LOCATION OF OTHER SERVICES

While there was some agreement across survey respondents that other non-profit programs that assist people experiencing homelessness should be co-located at the site, there was less agreement on whether there should be permanent affordable housing co-located at the site, whether there should be community amenities on the site, and whether or not the site should co-locate permanent market rate housing on the same site.



The strongest support was for food related initiatives co-located at the site that may serve people who are not experiencing homelessness. More than 8 out of 10 respondents (86%) were supportive of a community meal program available at the site for people that are not experiencing homelessness, and four out of five (80%) of respondents were supportive of a food bank co-located on site for people not experiencing homelessness.

To make a new shelter viable from a financial perspective, co-location likely needs to occur. To advance solutions to homelessness, it would be a missed opportunity to not co-locate permanent housing on the site, especially permanent housing affordable to people of very low income.

In place of a shelter, the South Georgian Bay may find they can better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness by having a Homelessness and Housing Help Hub. As a multi-service organization, drop in and food services can be provided, but more importantly, intensive assistance can be provided to assist people in exiting homelessness, as well as preventing homelessness for people facing eviction in the community. If this was coupled with motel access and a rent supplement for people experiencing homelessness in the community, it would be less costly and more impactful than a permanent shelter in the community.

NOT ALL POTENTIAL SHELTER GUESTS ARE VIEWED EQUALLY

The survey responses reveal very diverse opinions about the types of people that may be sheltered if a shelter were to exist in South Georgian Bay. On the one hand, matters that can be a lightning rod in other communities like sheltering people who are transgender or in same sex couples were non-issues. On the other hand, sheltering people with a history of conflict with the law, especially sex offenders, were not viewed as favourably. Furthermore, the community was generally not as supportive of people being discharged to the shelter from places of incarceration or from the hospital.

The first table shows support for different types of households that may use a shelter in South Georgian Bay

Household Compositions Served by Shelter		
Unaccompanied youth (16-24 years old)	89.23%	290
Individual adults (25+) without dependents with them	93.23%	303
Couples without dependents with them	76.92%	250
Families (one or more adults with one or more minor children in their care as a parent or legal guardian)	83.69%	272
Adult families (one or more adults with one or more children 18 years of age or older)	68.31%	222
Extended/inter-generational families (a core family unit with one or more adults and one or more children, along with the likes of aunts, uncles, grandparents)	57.54%	187

Respondents to the Lived Experience survey, identified serving single adults as the top priority (94%) with youth identified as the next priority population (77%) and then couples without dependents (58%).

Respondents to the survey indicated a desire to serve anyone that finds themselves homeless in South Georgian Bay:

Access to Shelter Based on Residency		
Exclusively to people from South Georgian Bay (born and raised).	8.98%	30
To people that have been housed at some point in time in South Georgian Bay.	18.86%	63
To any person who finds themselves homeless in South Georgian Bay.	73.95%	247
To any person that is homeless in South Georgian Bay or elsewhere in Simcoe County	46.11%	154
To any person that is homeless in South Georgian Bay or elsewhere in Simcoe or neighbouring counties	35.63%	119
None of the above	1.50%	5
Refuse to answer	0.60%	2
Other (please specify)		20

There is a desire to serve the following populations:

YES, Should be served		
Should it accommodate all genders	94%	316
Should transgender people be served within it	93%	313
Should it serve same sex couples	91%	306
Should seniors (aged 65+) be served within it	87%	294
Should it serve people impacted by domestic or intimate partner violence	69%	232
Should it provide community meals to people who are economically poor who are NOT staying at the shelter but are in need of a meal	65%	220
Should it allow people staying at the shelter to park their vehicle at the shelter	61%	203
Should it provide a food bank to people from the community who are in need of food security, but will NOT stay at the shelter	58%	196
Should hospitals be permitted to discharge people with No Fixed Address to it	53%	178

There was hesitancy/more mixed responses as well:

NO, Should not be served		
Should sex offenders/predators be served within it	53.13%	178
Should prisons/jails be permitted to discharge people with No Fixed Address to it	37.39%	126
Should people with a criminal history , including offences like manslaughter, be permitted to stay at the shelter	32.84%	110
Should it provide storage for all of a person's physical belongings	27.30%	92
Should people living with serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia) be served at the shelter	20.06%	68
Should hospitals be permitted to discharge people with No Fixed Address to it	17.31%	58
Should it allow people staying at the shelter to bring their pets to the shelter with them	16.52%	56
Should it provide a food bank to people from the community who are in need of food security, but will NOT stay at the shelter	13.61%	46
Should it serve people impacted by domestic or intimate partner violence	11.01%	37
Should it provide community meals to people who are economically poor who are NOT staying at the shelter but are in need of a meal	8.26%	28

Examining open-ended responses from the survey, there are concerns about people with a criminal history being served at the shelter, and various types of concerns about people living with serious mental illness being served at the shelter. While it is impossible to know how this would unfold if the community had a desire to move forward with a shelter, these two issues - criminal history and serious mental illness - would likely be points of major concern and debate. In some ways this speaks to a deserving and undeserving population that may be served by the shelter.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OrgCode does not advise adding a stand alone shelter in South Georgian Bay. It is not feasible from a financial perspective. Integrating housing and homelessness services, coordinated through a central hub model, should be explored. It is recommended that:

1. Street outreach continue in South Georgian Bay with an emphasis on helping unsheltered people access housing, and use motels or shelter in a neighbouring community until such time as they can be housed.
2. Motels be the dominant strategy for providing temporary accommodation, and be married with wrap around supports to help the program participant access permanent housing. Efforts by community members to assist people experiencing homelessness can be structured to be of assistance with this population group.
3. Portable rent supplements be made available to South Georgian Bay to assist up to 25 people in accessing housing and supports annually.
4. Efforts and funding that may be made available be reinvested in other initiatives that will have a greater impact on responding to homelessness in the community such as portable rent supplements, the development of permanent housing that is affordable to persons of very low income, and/or the development of supportive housing in the community.