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**Date** December 2, 2020 **Report No.** 2020-476

**To** Chair and Members  
Social Services Committee

**From** Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager  
Community Services & Social Development

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## 1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [ ]  
Item For Consideration [X]

## 2.0 Topic **Housing Site Safety (Financial Impact – None)**

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## 3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2020-476 Housing Site Safety BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to implement the safety options outlined in this report with any expenses not included in current budgets subject to 2021 and 2022 budget approvals, and;
- C. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include affordable housing sites in the review and development of the corporate security program
- D. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to conduct a review of the Keyholder position, with a potential to incorporate the current security requirements into the corporate security program.

## 4.0 Purpose and Overview

This report is provided in response to the Resolution approved at the September 22, 2020 meeting of Council regarding safety around affordable housing and

emergency shelter sites. The report summarizes actions that are in progress, and options to further enhance safety and quality of life within, and around affordable housing sites and emergency shelters.

## **5.0 Background**

At the September 22, 2020 meeting of Council the following resolution was approved:

### **Housing Sites - Safety**

WHEREAS the City of Brantford and County of Brant are committed to increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing units in accordance with the Municipal Master Housing Plan; and

WHEREAS the establishment and operation of affordable housing and emergency shelters must consider the safety, dignity and quality of life for tenants, clients and neighbours; and

WHEREAS enhancing security, social supports and access to health care in affordable housing communities creates positive individual and neighbourhood outcomes; and

WHEREAS proactive approaches to safety and well-being within and around affordable housing communities and emergency shelters can reduce crime, social disorder and stigmatization;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Staff BE DIRECTED to provide a report to Social Services Committee by December 2020 outlining the following:

- i) Best practices to ensure safety and quality of life within and around affordable housing sites and emergency shelters; and
- ii) The feasibility of applying these approaches to City of Brantford and County of Brant housing and emergency sheltering locations;
- iii) Any costs associated with implementing these approaches.

This report is provided in response to the resolution approved by Council and will speak to the best practices, feasibility and potential costs associated with enhancing safety in and around affordable housing and emergency shelter locations.

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## 6.0 Corporate Policy Context

Council Priorities 2019-2020: Housing Continuum – Increase the supply and access to social and affordable housing options for Brantford residents.

Council priorities approved for 2021 (implementation plan going forward December 2020)

#1 Desired Outcome “All neighbourhoods in the City are safe, vibrant, attractive, and inclusive”

Tier 1:

b) Improve municipal capacity for by-law enforcement, including extended hours and expanded scope, to address concerns related to property standards, noise, nuisance, and compliance with COVID-19 regulations.

Tier 2:

b) Mandate the City to lead by example in property standards and maintenance, ensuring municipal assets contribute to civic pride.

f) Work with Brantford Police Service and other community partners to address short-term needs associated with community safety, including CCTV cameras, increased police presence and solutions to petty crime

## 7.0 Input From Other Sources

Facilities Management & Security Department

Property Standards & Bylaws Department

Social Assistance & Homelessness Program Departments

## 8.0 Analysis

Council’s Resolution from the September 22, 2020 meeting requests information on the best practices to ensure safety and quality of life inside and on affordable housing site properties and around emergency shelters. The Resolution directed staff to outline potential improvements and associated costs.

The spaces inside the emergency shelters are monitored 24/7 by contracted third party agencies. These agencies are responsible to maintain appropriate security policies and procedures. Accordingly, this report will examine the

options for increased security inside or on community housing locations (affordable housing safety), the safety outside housing properties and emergency shelter locations (public space safety), and potential new solutions (options to enhance safety).

## **8.1 Affordable Housing Safety - Current State**

### **Family Affordable Housing Sites**

The City-owned affordable housing communities in the City of Brantford and in the County of Brant are comprised primarily of apartment buildings and row housing (townhouse) units. There are additional single and semi-detached units however these are typically market rent units and are not a source of significant complaints or compliance issues. This report focuses on high density sites however staff continues to explore the enhanced use of security cameras and patrols to monitor safety in these family communities.

Over the past four years preventive measures have been implemented including: 1) converting common space lighting to LED and 2) landscape and design modifications based on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Future options for family, row housing communities may include participating in a wider security camera and security patrol program as detailed below.

### **Brant and Lorne Towers, Brantford (High Density Affordable Housing)**

Lorne and Brant Towers are the largest and highest density buildings in the community housing portfolio with over 380 tenants. Housing staff have been reviewing existing building safety systems investigating the ease of accessibility onto private property and into these buildings and reviewing protocols. Current security and in progress security measures include the following:

- a. Existing security and safety measures for these high density apartment locations include security cameras, which are not regularly monitored. Video footage will be reviewed when there is a report of an incident. Video footage is saved for 30 days, and if required, staff will attend the buildings to copy footage for review and/or Police investigations. Security system in these locations are scheduled to be enhanced and increased in Q1 2021 to provide for

better quality footage and improve public area surveillance. This work will increase the quality of the resolution to provide for easier identification of inappropriate behavior and criminal activity with additional cameras installed to widen the perimeter view. The costs for this system will be included in the 2021 capital budget, subject to Council approval.

- b. As a deterrent for unwanted/uninvited visitors, signs are posted at all entrances to the buildings advising that the premises are monitored by security cameras. All secondary entrances include signs advising that these entrances are for tenants only and visitors must enter through the front door after being 'buzzed' into the building by the intended host.
- c. Staff regularly communicates with tenants, either at tenant meetings or through newsletters, reminding tenants not to allow non-residents into the building. When a tenant enters or leaves the building an uninvited visitor may enter into the building without first using the intercom system (i.e. 'tailgating'). Tenants are asked to ensure the entrance door closes and latches behind them on entry and to not let anyone they do not recognize as a tenant to enter behind them. There are times when tenants feel intimidated by the person who is tailgating and will not stop them from entering the building. Staff has advised tenants not to intervene, but to report the date and time of the entry and staff will review video footage in an attempt to identify the uninvited visitor, and the unit(s) that they visit. Tenants, who willingly permit persons into the building and their units, are held responsible for the actions of their guests. Should a guest interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of other tenants or the landlord, the host tenant will be held responsible and may be subject to eviction.
- d. Housing staff work closely with Brantford Police Services. Liaison Officers and staff meet regularly to share information about public nuisances and illegal activity taking place in the community and on City-owned property. Housing staff have requested Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments completed by Brantford Police for affordable housing properties experiencing safety and security issues. For sites that have a completed CPTED, staff are implementing the recommendations including:

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- i. additional security cameras to address blind spots
  - ii. enhanced locking mechanisms to prevent persons from manipulating door latches
  - iii. installation of lag bots so that tenants can lock their mobility scooters to lag bots installed in concrete floors
  - iv. additional fencing
  - v. removal of hedges that block views
  - vi. planting of hedges to prevent persons from cutting through on housing property.

Citizens on Patrol (COP) is a community partnership program between citizen volunteers and Brantford Police Services. COP volunteers have been provided access to apartment buildings and grounds at any time. Tenants are highly supportive that COP is present, completing walk-throughs and observing and reporting any suspicious behaviour to the Police. Crime Stoppers contact information is prominently displayed within these sites. Tenants are encouraged to contact Crime Stoppers to report any suspected criminal activity.

### **5 Marlene Avenue, Brantford**

The Provincially-funded Home for Good Program is located at 5 Marlene Avenue and the 30 unit apartment building opened its doors on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Staff presented a Staffing Proposal, Report #2020-530 (Home for Good Support Services Staffing Proposal) to address staffing and security challenges at this site. Approved recommendations include a temporary contract staffing model, 24/7 level 3 security and the inclusion of additional partners to assist and support the support the Live Well – Home for Good Support model.

In addition, below are on-site solutions currently underway at 5 Marlene Avenue:

- a) From the hours of 10:00 PM to 8:00 AM the intercom system at 5 Marlene Avenue will be disabled and tenants will not be able to allow guests in by using the intercom system. Instead, tenants will have to go to the front door to allow the guest in, sign them in and acknowledge they are responsible and accountable for the actions of the guest. The guest must stay in the unit of the tenant who is

signing them in and cannot visit other units. If the tenant does not want to allow the guest to visit, security will ask the visitor to leave the premises immediately. Guests will not be permitted to bring bikes, scooters, carts, etc., into the building. Guests are not permitted to stay with a tenant for more than 2 days.

- b) Upon moving into their unit, all tenants were required to sign a lease agreement. In the lease agreement, tenants agree to follow rules as established through the Residential Tenancies Act and tenancy rules set by Housing. A Crime Free Addendum (which is in use by other community housing providers in the GTA) has been developed and will be signed by all tenants stating the following:
- Tenants and/or their guests shall not engage in any criminal activity on the premises or property including, but not limited to:
    - any drug-related criminal activity
    - solicitation (sex trade workers and related nuisance activity)
    - street gang activity
    - assault or threatened assault
    - unlawful use or possession of a firearm
    - any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or welfare of the landlord, other tenants or persons on the residential property or the residential premises
- c) To be able to identify all tenants living in the building, photo ID will be provided for all tenants. This information will be shared with staff, support providers, as well as the Security Guard service so guests are easily identifiable.
- d) Magnetic locking devices have been installed on all secondary doors (3 in total). There is now one main entry and exit door to the building. The secondary doors will remain locked at all times and will only be opened automatically when the fire alarm is engaged. Each fire alarm pull station has been equipped with a plastic cover which will sound a tamper alarm should anyone attempt to tamper with the fire alarm system without cause. Anyone found tampering with the fire alarm system will be subject to eviction. The costs for the magnetic locking devices were included in the initial building capital costs.

- e) Installation of fencing along the parameter of the building footprint is being considered. Staff is currently in the design process, focusing on a fence that is durable and not scalable. Contractors have been invited to submit quotes for the potential fencing installation. The costs for the perimeter fencing will be funded from initial building capital allocation.
- f) Upgrading to Level 3 Security occurred in October. The licensed Level 3 Security Officer will be on site 24 hours daily, 7 days a week. The security service will provide on-going security, conflict de-escalation, deter non-residents from entering the building and offer security support to on-site staff as required. This contractor will also be responsible for the needle pick-up and on-site external clean-up. The ongoing costs for the security program have been included in the annual Home for Good operating costs.

Making the building a safer space for occupants and less attractive for unwanted uninvited persons will have the advantage of alleviating many of the community concerns and assist staff with the intensive supports required for many tenants.

A chart identifying the various safety and security measures currently in place at all community housing locations managed by Housing and Homelessness is attached, as Appendix "A".

## **8.2 The Role of By-Law Enforcement**

Municipal By-law Enforcement Officers enforce a number of City By-laws that are designed to protect private properties from neglect and also societal by-laws that ensure people conduct themselves in a manner so as not to offend or harm themselves or other persons.

Non-property related offences are regulated under other such by-laws, including the Noise Control By-law, the Clean Air Smoking By-law and the Public Nuisance By-law. For offences of this nature, Part 1 Provincial Offence Notices can be issued resulting in fines being assessed as per the Provincial Offences Act. It has long been the accepted practice of the City's By-law Enforcement Division, as with the majority of other municipal By-law Enforcement Departments throughout Ontario, to educate first and enforce second. The punitive tools of enforcement are reserved for life safety issues, repeat offender situations or at the discretion of the Officer on a site specific basis. By-law Officers can respond to by-law violations

on City property as resources are available, however current resources do not allow for an extended or regular attention to specific City-owned sites due to demands in other areas, both through public complaints and City directives.

Brantford Police enforce all criminal matters and offer assistance to the By-law Enforcement Division when deemed necessary from a staff safety perspective.

### **8.3 Best Practices, Recommendations and Associated Implementation Costs**

Following staff site-review and a scan of measures used in other municipalities, the following best practices are being implemented, many of which are in progress:

1. Completing Threat, Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (TRVA), using an experienced 3<sup>rd</sup> party security consultant to review the current state of security, conduct gap analysis and provide recommendations to mitigate gaps that have been identified.
2. Completing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments. The assessment provides guidance about precautions that may be taken to reduce the risk of crime around the building or area principles. Communities with completed CPTED are noted in **Appendix A**. Further CPTED assessments will be scheduled for completion by Police Services based on identified issues or community concerns.
3. Implementing recommendations that may come out of TRVA's or CPTED assessments, including but not limited to further improvements to the following:
  - ✓ Practical Access Control, including doors, fences and landscaping.
  - ✓ Surveillance, including cameras, lighting, windows, landscaping.
  - ✓ Territorial reinforcement, including signs, sidewalks and fences.

Any community housing safety and security recommendation as a result of TRVA or CPTED assessments, not currently budgeted, will be subject to 2021 and 2022 budget approvals.

#### **8.4 Establishment of a Corporate Security Program**

Facilities Management & Security staff are currently developing a Corporate Security Program to consolidate and standardize security practices across the organization which will be the subject of a report to Committee and Council in Q1 2021, including associated costs, for consideration. The Corporate security program will include an incident reporting and management process to track and understand safety and security concerns and help prevent risk of reoccurrence. The Facilities Management and Security Department is in the process of hiring a Security Technical Specialist that will be responsible for assessing the City's current security practices, procedures and security resources across all business units, including the City-owned community housing sites to establish a Corporate Security Strategy. The new strategy would provide a roadmap for cost effective and improved safety and security for City staff, citizens and visitors in or around City-owned properties.

The safety and security requirements in community housing sites have increased dramatically as staff continues to house some of the community's most vulnerable residents. Therefore, staff are recommending that community housing sites be included in the development of a Corporate security program. With the implementation of a Corporate security program, staff are further recommending that a review of the Keyholder position be conducted with a view to eliminate the 11 Keyholder positions located on site in adult and senior community housing apartment buildings. It is anticipated that the Corporate Security Program would incorporate a mobile team that could be dispatched to housing sites as required. The elimination of the Keyholder positions, who currently occupy on-site units would create additional revenue and make additional affordable housing units available.

#### **9.0 Financial Implications**

There are no current financial implications associated with this report, any future financial implications will be brought back to Council or be part of the annual budget approval process.

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Facilities Management & Security staff plan to bring a report in Q1 2021, with a proposed improved program, including associated costs, for consideration.

## 10.0 Conclusion

The objectives and approach outlined in this report are consistent with best practices from other municipalities and account for Brantford's characteristics (i.e. size, resources, safety trends and threats). Achieving them in a standardized and consistent manner across the Corporation will best position the City to make an effective investment in security infrastructure and services, and to develop a corporately managed security program, which includes the best possible level of service with available resources, to adequately address safety and security. Facilities Management & Security staff plans to report back in early 2021 with a proposed improved program, including associated costs, for consideration.

A chart identifying the various safety and security measures currently in place at all community housing locations managed by Housing and Homelessness Services is attached, as Appendix "A".

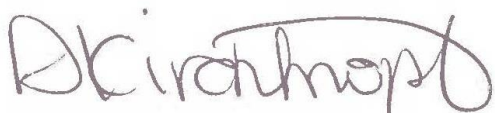
Community housing locations currently contain a number of safety and security measures, although ongoing review, continuous improvement and upgrading to new technologies should be considered wherever possible. However, staff has determined that immediate solutions were required to be implemented to address the serious safety and security concerns at Brant and Lorne Towers, and Marlene Avenue Apartments and are proceeding with required enhancements.



Maryellen MacLellan, Director  
Housing & Homelessness



Aaron Wallace, Acting General Manager  
Community Services & Social Development



Donna Kirchknopf, Manager  
Housing Operations

Attachments:

Appendix A: Housing & Homelessness Units – Current Safety and Security

Copy to: NA

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required ☐ yes ☒ no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk ☐ yes ☒ no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? ☐ yes ☒ no