



City of Toronto Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER)

Item 17

March 3, 2016

Resident Services Committee

Report:	RSC:2015-14
To:	Resident Services Committee
From:	President and Chief Executive Officer (Interim)
Date:	February 2, 2016
Strategic Plan	Vibrant Communities:
Priority:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Housing Stability

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the City of Toronto's (the City) Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER) and how the program supports Toronto Community Housing residents. On December 9th, 2015, City Council adopted an item (Attachment 1) that summarizes proof-of-concept results from SPIDER's first year of operations and recommends that the City continue to implement SPIDER on an ongoing basis. The item was forwarded to City Council from their Community Development and Recreation Committee and is now presented, at the request of City Council, to the Board of Directors for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Resident Services Committee receive this report for information and forward to the Board of Directors for information..

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

1. About SPIDER

The mandate of SPIDER is to reduce acutely elevated health and safety risks involving vulnerable residents, their homes or property and their neighbours by:

- a) Coordinating front-line responses across City of Toronto divisions and agencies;
- b) Building effective linkages to relevant health care and social services; and
- c) Driving policy reforms related to vulnerability.

SPIDER is not designed to supersede normal City services. Only complex situations that can't be resolved through existing channels are brought to SPIDER.

Toronto Community Housing has participated in the program since its inception and continues to be an active participant, along with several other City divisions, community agencies, and City boards, including Toronto Public Health, Toronto Paramedic Services, Children's Services, and Long-Term Care Homes and Services.

2. Referrals from Toronto Community Housing

In its first year of operation, SPIDER coordinated responses to 45 acutely elevated risk situations involving residents of Toronto. Attachment 1 notes that:

“Half of all situations were introduced by Toronto Community Housing (TCHC): Many vulnerable Torontonians live in TCHC buildings, and TCHC is frequently the first point of contact with municipally-funded services for many residents facing complex or acutely elevated risks. The City will continue to work with TCHC to respond to vulnerable tenants.”

Referrals from Toronto Community Housing are referred through both the Resident and Community Services Division and the Asset Management Division. Staff from these divisions represent Toronto Community Housing at the SPIDER Situation Table and bring cases forward for consideration. Since the program's inception in 2014, Toronto Community Housing staff have referred vulnerable residents to the SPIDER table at a rate of approximately two referrals per month. This rate of referral has remained steady. 72% of cases have been resolved, 23% remain under consideration and 5% of cases were closed without resolution due to lack of consent from the resident.

Cases are referred only when they meet the SPIDER threshold criteria, meaning that they represent complex and intractable situations that could not be resolved on initial connection with City divisions, City boards, and community agencies. Toronto Community Housing staff will have worked to exhaust all avenues before making a referral to SPIDER for intervention.

In 2015, 19 Toronto Community Housing residents were stabilized in their homes as a result of SPIDER interventions. Toronto Community Housing also participates in other

elements of the SPIDER program such as the system reform table, which examines and acts on opportunities to improve system-level responses to vulnerability in Toronto.

3. Moving forward

Collaboration between Toronto Community Housing and other City divisions and agencies through the SPIDER table is important to maximize the effectiveness and targeting of the resources available to meet the needs of vulnerable residents. However, the current resources available are not sufficient.

As indicated by the Council motion that accompanied this report requesting the Minister of Health and Long-term Care and the Toronto Central LHIN to increase access to mental health supports for vulnerable residents, there is support needed from the Province to better meet the needs of vulnerable Torontonians, including those living in Toronto Community Housing. This fact was underlined in recommendation 18 from *Transformative Change at TCHC*, the final report from the Mayor's Task Force on Toronto Community Housing, which recommended that the City and Toronto Community Housing continue to work closely with the five Toronto LHINs to put mental health and other supports in place in high need buildings.

In the Action Plan to Increase Safety and Security, part of *Getting it Done*, Toronto Community Housing's response to the interim report of the Mayor's Task Force on Toronto Community Housing, Management proposed an increase in the number of Community Services Coordinators dedicated to early intervention to support residents with unit condition and excessive clutter issues. If funding is secured to increase staffing levels in this area, it is expected that we will be able to increase the supports available to address the number of complex cases that are identified early, when resolution options are more plentiful and consequences for residents are less severe. This may lead to greater resolution of these cases within the network of existing Toronto Community Housing resources without the need for referral to SPIDER, or it may lead to an increased volume of referrals to SPIDER due to an overall increase in identified intractable complex situations.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

As an initiative that is led and managed by the City, the primary risk for Toronto Community Housing relates to information-sharing and privacy protection when individual resident cases are discussed by different divisions and agencies. This risk is being actively managed by Toronto Community Housing, its legal services team, and the other partners in the SPIDER program. SPIDER Staff and the City's Legal Services developed a step-by-step protocol for participant agencies to share personal information as part of SPIDER (more details are provided in Appendix 2 of Attachment A). Management is committed to

supporting SPIDER given its demonstrable benefit in supporting tenants, while at the same time working to appropriately address resident privacy.

SIGNATURE:

“Greg Spearn”

Greg Spearn
President and Chief Executive Officer (Interim)

ATTACHMENT:

1. Update on the Specialized Programs for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER), City of Toronto Community Development and Recreation Committee, considered by City Council on December 9 and 10, 2015.

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