

Purpose-Built Safe House and Service Hub for Survivors of Sex Trafficking in York Region

January 2023

Presentation to Council – Overview of Business Plan





Safe House & Service Hub Partners

Project Team & Partners

- York Region Police
- Victim Services York Region
- 360°kids
- Women's Support Network York Region
- Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region
- Safe Hope Home

Committed & Interested Partners

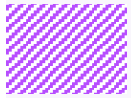
- Dr. Petra Wildgoose, Family Physician
- Dr. Amanda Adams, Family Physician
- Cedar Centre
- York Region Centre for Community Safety
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Kylemore Homes



The Need: Sex Trafficking in Canada, and Ontario

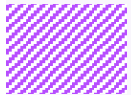
- Sex trafficking is defined as recruiting, moving, or holding victims to exploit them for profit. Traffickers control and pressure victims by force or through threats, including mental/emotional abuse & manipulation.

- **Sex trafficking as an international illegal enterprise is growing and is second only to guns and drugs**
- A gun or drugs can be sold only once – a girl can be sold for sex many times each day
- Over 90% of people trafficked in Canada are Canadian citizens. Over 60% are residents of Ontario. Anyone can be trafficked with racialized groups overrepresented
- Over 60% of prosecuted trafficking cases derive from the GTA
- Children are targets for trafficking, with an average age of entry as low as 11 to 16 years of age
- One girl represents tens of thousands of dollars in revenue to a trafficker on a given year, and each survivor can cost the social services and justice system hundreds of thousands of dollars
- The severe trauma resulting from physical and emotional abuse, substance dependence used as a form of control, lack of medical care, and at times outright torture, leave survivors with complex, unique needs that are unlike any other



The Need: Sex Trafficking in York Region

- Instances of sex trafficking are increasing within York Region, with approximately **146 to 185 survivors** served in the Region annually
- Survivors are mostly female, ranging in age from 11 – 30+
- Survivors can be trafficked for months or years, with 10 years as an approximate duration
- Over 90% of survivors in York Region are residents of Ontario
 - Over half of survivors in York Region are residents of the Region



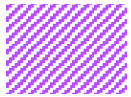
Current Response to the Need in York Region

- There are 8 shelters in York Region survivors could access, however shelters are generally not equipped to meet the unique needs of survivors of sex trafficking
- There are 6 beds specifically for survivors of sex trafficking in York Region, provided by 360°kids
- There is no available crisis* housing for survivors in York Region, nor is there any dedicated housing with on-site unique supports for survivors with children and for survivors that are older than 26

Total York Region Supported Beds	6
Crisis Beds	0
Stage 1 (length of stay is up to 1 year)	3
Stage 2 (length of stay is up to 2 years)	3

**Crisis = somewhere safe & supported for survivor to go immediately upon exiting from trafficker - no applications/forms required*

This response is not adequate: There is a critical need for dedicated housing for survivors of sex trafficking in York Region, especially for survivors beyond their youth and those with children

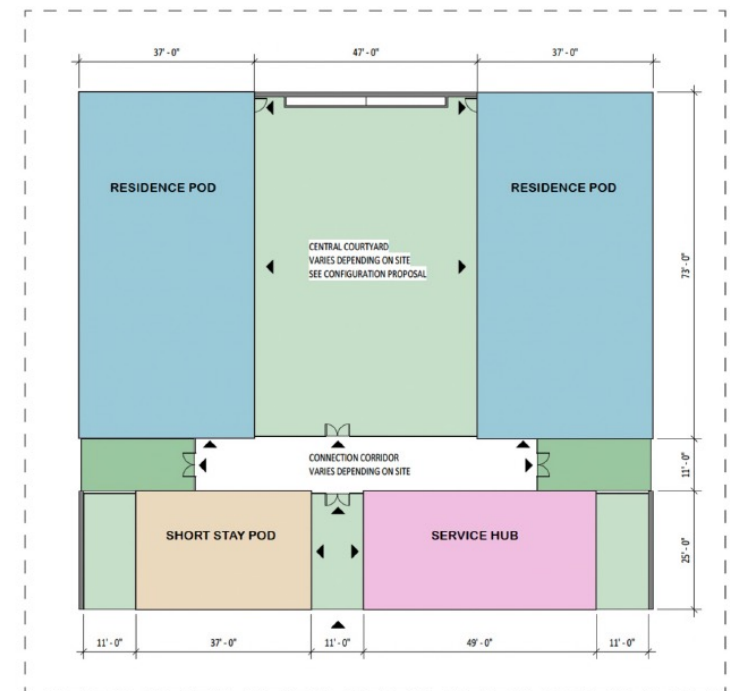


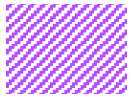
Proposed Solution For This Urgent Need

- Purpose-built safe house and hub with 24/7 professional and lived experience staff, low barrier entry
- A continuum of unique care to treat severe PTSD, medical issues, emotional abuse, and harm reduction approach to substance abuse

Safe House and Serve Hub Specifics in Brief:

- 2 identical pods housing 6 survivors each with accommodation for wheelchair accessibility and some rooms large enough for a cot or crib for survivor's children
- 3 crisis beds separate from main living pods
- Space for counselling, fitness, plant therapy, flex activities, classrooms
- Service hub for initial and ongoing care / navigation (health, education, legal)





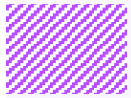
Cost and Benefits of a Safe House and Hub

Cost

- Capital: \$19 million – includes land, preconstruction planning & construction
- Annual Operating: \$2 million

Benefits

- Young women who have been controlled, sold and harmed emotionally and physically for the financial benefit of others are given the opportunity they fully deserve, to define their future and begin the journey to a safe, fulfilling independent life
- Inaction is costing our government: a study by the University of Winnipeg of personal, fiscal and societal costs of sexual exploitation (in today's dollars):
 - \$273,063 – estimated lifetime personal cost for exploited individuals
 - \$734,309 – estimated cost to social services & justice per individual
 - \$700,815 – other societal costs per individual
 - **\$1.7 m – estimated total social costs and lost potential per exploited individual**



How Can You Help?

- The Project Team has identified a critical need for dedicated housing for survivors of sex trafficking in York Region, and established a project concept and path forward to address this gap
- **The Project Team is requesting that York Region staff review the Business Plan, work with the Project Team to identify a site and funding sources, and report back to Council on the preferred approach to address the critical gaps identified in the Plan**
- By partnering to create a purpose-built Safe House and Service Hub for survivors of sex trafficking, we can realize savings to our community worth millions of dollars a year and provide support that is clearly owing to those victimized by a crime society has not been able to address

Appendices

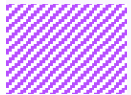


Our Process for Preparing the Business Case for a Safe House and Service Hub

The Business Plan makes the case for government support for a Safe House and Service Hub for survivors of human sex trafficking in York Region. This presentation provides an overview of the critical need for dedicated housing for survivors, and a path forward for meeting this need.

The process of developing this Business Plan involved extensive research, analysis and consultation:

- Background research and data analysis
- In-depth workshops with the project team to establish the vision, design, support services, governance, and financial viability of the project, along with several additional meetings
- Key informant interviews with industry experts
- Seventeen survivors from at least three different organizations were interviewed to inform the vision, design, and support services for the project
- Site search and evaluation that involved engaging a realtor and analyzing potential sites against criteria informed by the research, workshops, and interviews
- Proforma and space analysis



The Opportunity

Organizations in York Region have the **expertise to operate and provide support services** to the Safe House and Service Hub

We need **financial support** to realize the opportunity to address the critical need for a safe house and hub for survivors of sex trafficking in York Region

Contributors to the Business Plan and potential partners include:

- York Region Police
- Victim Services York Region
- 360°kids
- Women's Support Network York Region
- Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region
- Carol Wildgoose
- Safe Hope Home

Additional service provision partners:

- Dr. Petra Wildgoose, Family Physician
- Dr. Amanda Adams, Family Physician
- Cedar Centre
- York Region Centre for Community Safety

Interested financial contributors include:

- United Way Greater Toronto – support programming / seed funding
- Kylemore Homes – support programming
- Discussions have taken place with the province – capital and operating funding



How Do Traffickers Wield Control?

- **Troll social media, schools, malls, shelters to find unsuspecting targets**
- **The gorilla pimp – uses physical force and threats of harm to victim & to victim’s friends, families & friends – and even pets**
- **The romeo pimp – 3 steps to groom: 1. Promises of love and all that they may otherwise be missing in their lives 2. Starts to normalize sexual acts with others ‘if you love me you will do this...’ 3. Physical force & emotional manipulation**
- **Forms of ongoing control: emotional, physical, sexual abuse, substance addiction, financial debt, child/ren – sometimes torture (burns, water boarding)**
- **Branding may be used to denote ownership**
- **Stockholm syndrome for some**