

Empathetic\ Humane Oversight of Homeless Persons:

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Overview: There is no medium or full sized city in Ontario that does not have an over abundance of homeless persons and/or a lack of sufficient housing for them. In this document we discuss sensible strategies for diverting them away from your store front, condominium lobby or grounds, parking garages including stairwells, office towers, food courts or restaurants and most other areas known to attract them.

Sensible Interaction Policies:

- (i) **Nearby Resources:** Locate the names and phone numbers of the shelters and/or a street patrol nearest your property so you can call them directly to request that they provide out reach to a homeless person in distress and/or on a very cold night to provide transportation to the nearest shelter with an available bed. A list of 12 Shelter locations and phone numbers in downtown Toronto follows at the end of this document. A web search will quickly locate those closest to your location. Please feel

free to insert them to replace the listed Toronto Shelter contact information.

- (ii) **Voice: Tone\ Volume:** There is no need to immediately start yelling at homeless persons. Most are not deaf and most are already very stressed and embarrassed at the situation they find themselves in. Use the same tone and volume you would use when talking to a family member. Also do not directly or indirectly infer that they have mental health or substance abuse problems.
- (iii) **Maintain a Safe Distance:** Ideally property management, security or cleaners should always be at least 5 feet (1.5 metre) or more from any homeless person they are interacting with. Given that homeless persons sleeping outside on sidewalks, on benches, in underpasses, etcetera have been spit on, urinated on, set on fire and in one recent case in Toronto stabbed to death by a group of teen age girls, it is NOT SURPRISING that some homeless persons who chose not to use or sleep in shelters may be carrying some form of DIY weapon such as a homemade knife or club.
- (iv) **Interaction with Local Police:** Consider only calling the police regarding homeless persons only when they are a danger to themselves or others or when they are obviously committing or attempting to commit a criminal act.
- (v) **Her\His Possessions:** When guards or maintenance personnel are directing homeless persons to leave the property allow the homeless persons to take their possessions with them after, a cursory inspection to

ensure they are not also taking stolen property and/or weapons along with them. Most people would not let their dog sleep on the filthy mattress a homeless person is lugging around. However, to her or him it is 100 times better than sleeping on cold, wet and hard concrete.

(vi) **Food Distribution:** Some condominium residents like to give food directly to homeless persons. This encourages them to return to the condominium and some will bring friends. A preferable technique is to request residents to instead give the cooked or uncooked food to a nearby shelter or group that feeds the homeless. In Toronto the Law Society of Ontario is one group that feeds the homeless.

(vii) **Cellular Phone Charging:** In many cases the homeless persons cellular phone is their only connection to family or friends. However homeless persons should not be allowed to charge their phone in areas where they are obstructing pedestrian traffic especially residents or customers. Management should locate a power outlet in a safe area where the homeless persons will have minimal contact with customers, residents and other normal users and allow them to use it. Ideally this area should be in the general vicinity of the management office or security office so either group can supervise it at “arms length” without having to spend a lot of time moving to and from the selected location. If management decides to cut off homeless persons, present access to 115V power outlets where they can charge their phones, they should expect **a fire storm of negative publicity** from local homeless person advocates and local left wing media.

Recycling: Homeless persons routinely obtain access to recycling bins to forage for returnable soft drink and alcohol containers. Some will also search\unpack garbage dumpsters for food and returnable bottles and cans.” Unfortunately some homeless persons “unpack” some or most of the bin or dumpster and leave a large mess for staff to clean up. We recommend not putting the locked garbage dumpster or recycling carts out until approximately 15 minutes or less, before the re-cycling or the garbage disposal\ recycling trucks scheduled pick up\ tipping time. An employee or site security should remain with the bins until the truck or trucks arrive.

Exterior Countermeasures: (i) Hydrophobic Paint: If homeless persons are regularly using part of your property such as interior or exterior walls or a parking structure interior or exterior wall as a urinal consider painting the subject walls to a height of at least 1 meter or more with hydrophobic paint. It repels urine back at the offensive urinator. It is expensive. The surface where it is to be applied, requires proper preparation. Since it is subject to abrasion during cleaning, it will require annual or more frequent re-application in high use areas. It is not clear and usually turns white on the treated surface. One well known product is Ultra-Ever Dry. For a quotation contact coating.ca



(ii) Hostile Vegetation: If homeless persons are using flower beds, planters etcetera as informal toilets or for sleeping or to dispose of syringes consider planting them with shrubs that have thorns, or plants that emit obnoxious odors Some examples are:

(a) Shrubs with thorns: Russian Olive: - 1. Grows rapidly up to 20 feet tall, which is too tall for most flower beds.

2. Holly 3. Siberian Pea Shrub

4. Sea buck horn 5. Crown of Thorns

6. Gooseberry (edible fruit) 7. Jerusalem Thorn

8. Spirea

(b) Plants with Pungent Odors

1. Skunk Cabbage - emits its odor when bruised or crushed

2. Mint- Strong Odor when grown in a patch

3. Titanarium

4. Corpse Flowers

5. Fever Few (strong odor when grown in a patch, & is difficult to kill)

(c) Exterior Wall Graffiti Screens:

- 1. Upright Juniper 2. Spirea**
- 3. Fire Thorn 4. Sea Buck Thorn**
- 5. Five Leaf Aralia :**

Note: Local Landscape Gardeners maybe able to provide you with a list of species compatible with your local soil and climatic conditions.

(iii) Offensive Lighting: Where\when homeless persons and\or drug addicts are using indoor or outdoor areas to self inject , there are three types of lighting that can be effective at re-locating & discouraging homeless persons and drug addicts.

- (a) Low Pressure Sodium :** When installed lower than recommended LPS gives most people headaches. It also changes a person's color perception and depth perception. It does make facial flaws such as acne stand out and has been successfully used by the Calgary Police Service to relocate sex trade workers.
- (b) Ultra- Violet:** This lighting discourages drug addicts who self inject from doing so by making it very hard for them to find their veins. Known shooting "galleries" and washrooms are logical places to install this type of lighting. Before installing UV light review the location and installation with a medical professional as UV light can permanently damage eyes. A hospital in Burnaby BC successfully used it to relocate drug addicts who were breaking into doctor's expensive vehicles on site.

- (c) **Blue Light:** Blue light does also make it harder for drug addicts to find their veins. However, some drug addicts once they are aware of the blue lights in a washroom, stairwell etcetera simply mark their veins with a felt tip pen to make it easy to find.
- (d) **Wall Colour:** The books Environmental Psychology by Francis T. McAndrew Ph d. (page 65) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design by Timothy Crowe Ph d (page 107) both recommend the use of orange as it has negative connotations and can create feelings of “distress” and “upset”. In areas where drug addicts or criminals loiter or sleep consider using this color to reduce the time they want to spend there.
- Graffiti:** If the local drug addicts regularly apply graffiti to walls, board fences etcetera in nearby or on site areas consider treating the walls or fences you believe to be most likely to be vandalized, with a sacrificial coating available from most large graffiti removal companies. It and the graffiti both come off when sprayed with hot water. For board fences consider putting every second vertical board on the “other” side of the upper and lower horizontal members.
- (e) **Disturbing Images:** If none of the above tactics are suitable for your application consider installing disturbing images on the walls in the areas the homeless drug addicts and other abnormal users are applying graffiti, self injecting and/or loitering.



Note: Only install these images in locations where they will be protected by plexiglass screens or #6 gauge or thicker wire screens. While it will be time consuming and likely expensive another tactic is to install the disturbing image as high as possible on wall, possibly in a stairwell lobby that can only be accessed by staff using a ladder, a cherry picker or scaffold.

Note: We concur that the above image and others like it may be offensive to some persons. If you wish to delete them please contact Mike Fenton @ m.p.fenton@rogers.com for a new Word version of this document.

(IV) Sonic Counter Measures: There are 3 basic sonic approaches for moving on\ deterring loitering homeless persons and/or drug addicts.

(A) The Mosquito Anti-loitering Device It emits one of two high pitched sounds – one for people under 21 and the other for persons over 21. Advise the sales representative of the age group you are dealing with.

Caution: Years ago in an affluent Toronto neighborhood we had to remove a Mosquito we recommended for installation behind a

Beer Store. The homes that complained were about 83 yards away and their owners apparently could still hear it.

(B) Recorded Music Play recorded music selected to be offensive to the expected group of loiterers. This can include religious music, opera, native throat singers, 1940's country and western, classical, 1960's folk music etcetera. Some experimentation maybe required to find the correct music the loiterers find most objectionable.

Note:1. In Texas the "popular" songs " Its raining Tacos" and "Baby Shark" are played on a loop to move on homeless persons. A mall in Australia plays Bing Crosbie's "I am dreaming of a white Christmas" 24/7 in areas like outdoor stairwells and other areas where teenagers congregate. Experimentation is required to find the most effective music for your application.

2.The overly optimistic 1980's group "Up with People" is also an effective loitering deterrent.

NOTE: Music should not be so loud as to generate noise complaints.

(3) Animals or Birds: Noises in Distress or Premating Calls.

This also should be played on a loop. The Toronto Zoo maybe a source of some of these noises.

Protecting Cameras, Speakers & Light Fixtures from

Vandalism: Homeless persons and \or drug addicts will at some point determine the source of their discomfort or annoyance and will attempt to break or disable them.

- (i) **Cabling:** It should all be either be concealed or be installed inside metal conduit properly secured to an exterior wall. Plastic conduit is not recommended for this application.
- (ii) **Cameras, Speakers and Light Fixtures:** All should be installed above “hockey stick height” or approximately 10 feet/ 3 meters above grade or higher. Consider protective screens made from thick Plexiglass or expanded metal mesh. Note: Testing with the suggested material is recommended prior to permanent installation to ensure VS image quality, and that the amount of light and sound are not drastically affected.

Physical Anti- Loitering Countermeasures: (a) This can be as simple as installing dividers on benches so homeless persons cannot sleep there and ideally go to a



shelter instead.

Automatic Teller Machines: (i) Consider Installing vandal resistant art objects or waste height railings in middle of the floor of ATM's to prevent sleeping on the floor. Also art objects or rocks should also be considered for installation under ATM counters. This is because some homeless persons like to sleep under the

counters where they are less likely to be seen by patrolling guards.



(iii) Card Reader Lock Out: An even simpler ATM tactic is to deactivate\lock out the simple card readers used by normal users to gain access to the ATM interior at a time when use by normal users starts to decline. Each location's customer traffic patterns should be reviewed before locking out the exterior card reader. An alternative is to install a Mosquito anti loitering device and interphase it to motion sensor and a timer. If the person remains after a pre-determined time such as 10 minutes the Mosquito starts emitting its anti-loitering noise.

Note: If the card reader is to be turned off installation of a robust strike cover plate or full length astragal is recommended to prevent after hours forced entry to the ATM.

(iii) Heating: We **DO NOT** recommend turning off heat in ATM's to discourage overnight loitering by homeless persons. This can and has resulted in fatalities. It is acceptable to lower the temperature to 55 degrees

Fahrenheit or 10 Degrees Celsius. But much lower could be considered to be negligent homicide.

Window Sills: Homeless persons sitting on a store window sill blocks potential customers views of merchandise for sale and also send a negative message to those same potential customers. Installing vandal resistant sculptures so there is not enough room between them to allow persons to sit is one tactic. Another is installing rounded or flathead bolts on a window sills to prevent/discourage homeless persons from sitting there.

Note: Pointed or sharp spikes as shown below are **not recommended for any applications.**





Smooth metal studs with no sharp edges, or pinch hazards on a window sill as shown above are another, safer option.

Air Exhaust Ducts: Consider installing uneven bars of varying height as shown below, over a hot air exhaust vent to prevent homeless persons from sleeping on it is one effective tactic. The bars should be smooth with no abrasive edges. In Chicago we

have encountered round expanded metal grates that cover the entire horizontal grate and also effectively prevent persons from

sleeping there.



The well designed grate shown below effectively eliminates sleeping, sitting or loitering of any kind on this grate.

Note: Where \when the access hatch is secured with a padlock it requires a robust hasp . If the hinges are on the exterior they should have non-removable hinge pins. Use of high security padlocks such as Abus Granite are recommended for this type of exposed exterior application. **Rocks:** Consider installing rocks under a roof overhang where homeless persons might sleep or persons waiting for a bus could get out of the rain or drug dealers could loiter while watching for clients. Note: Select river rocks or other rocks with no sharp edges and make sure they are cemented in place.





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Commercial Buildings – Homeless Persons Visiting Tenants:

As soon as a homeless person enters the main lobby they should be politely and quietly asked by a security or concierge who they are here to see before they can get on an elevator or gain access to a stairwell. They maybe on site for a legitimate appointment. If they state they have an appointment the lobby guard should contact the tenant by phone and follow any instructions they are given such as direct the guest to a floor where there is a meeting room accessible from the lobby and the office interior. In some cases this maybe because the specified meeting room has a hidden VS camera and an under table duress/hold up button. The tenant may also request security to escort the homeless person to their floor.

Public Washrooms: Many commercial buildings equip washroom with PIN Pads or in card readers to deny homeless persons access. We recommend always having 1 set of male and female washroom available for homeless person use. Ideally these washrooms will be located in the basement, on a loading dock, in a service corridor or other area where tenants and their visitors do not spend a lot of time. Site lines and location permitting, these washrooms should have no doors and be checked by security or maintenance at least hourly, for persons sleeping in the cubicles and \or self injecting or overdose victims.

Ideally there will be a floor to ceiling partition between stalls. This is to discourage the movement of syringes or persons between stalls. A “Sharps” container is recommended to discourage addicts from disposing of syringes in toilets. The Sharp’s container has to be secured to a pillar or structural beam with very robust materials such as steel strapping and/or U bolts. This is because some addicts steal the container break it open and then drain the syringes into another syringe and then self inject a witches brew of various drugs including fentanyl and blood from numerous other addicts. Plaster ceilings are recommended to discourage the hiding of syringes, drugs, weapons etcetera above ceiling tiles. Easily broken glass mirrors are NOT RECOMMENDED for washroom used by homeless persons, many of which have mental health problems. Polished stainless steel mirrors are expensive but are very difficult to break.

Food Deliveries for On Site Restaurants: No food deliveries should left unattended on the sidewalk outside a tenant restaurant or the commercial building’s front door. They should be scheduled ONLY for times when shipping receiving personnel will be on duty. Any incoming deliveries outside of these hours should be refused.

If food deliveries are left unattended homeless persons will likely help themselves to food items knowing that it is unlikely that they will be arrested for such a minor offense. Ideally a patrol guard (her or his duties permitting) should be assigned to protect any incoming food items left unattended on the sidewalk until they are taken inside.

Note: The concern here is not only theft of bread, rolls, pies ,etcetera. It is also that homeless persons will start eating accessible items and there by contaminate either one or two trays or possibly the entire stack

Parking Garages: (i) Homeless Person Access Control: They typically enter the garage by waiting for a vehicle to arrive and they then follow it in. This is best dealt with by equipping the VS camera covering each\both overhead doors with video motion detection and interfacing it to a large monitor in the security office, guard station or lobby security desk. When the overhead door opens the image from its camera will “ pop up” full screen. When a homeless person is observed entering via an opening overhead door a patrol guard should be sent to intercept and eject him or her.

(ii) Thefts from Parked Vehicles:

Bicycle Patrol. It often attracts reliable athletic persons who enjoy the exercise. Also the bicycle is quiet and has some what of a “stealth” factor. It can go places where a vehicle or golf cart cannot It also has no distractions such as a AM/FM radio

(iii) Signage: In addition the following signage should be displayed throughout parking:

“ Lock your car. Take your keys. Hide or Take any Valuables”

“Suspicious??? Need help?? Call site security @ 555 555 5555”

Note: Before putting the security phone number on the signs

ENSURE THAT CELLULAR PHONES WORK THROUGH OUT PARKING”

(iv) Homeless Persons Sleeping in Parking: This happens most frequently under the stairs at the bottom of each stairwell. Unfortunately when this happens the homeless person often utilizes a nearby parking space as a bathroom. Tactics include:

- (a) 1. Painting the entire bottom level stairwell interior with gloss orange paint.
2. Paint any area in or near the stairwell being used as a toilet with hydrophobic paint which will repel urine back on the offensive urinator.
3. Install a key in knob classroom function lockset on the stairwell side of the door to parking. It can be left in the locked \unlocked mode by a key holder, on a schedule that accommodates most normal users. A homeless person or anyone else in the stairwell will not be able to enter parking via the locked stairwell door. However in accordance with the Fire Code people in parking can still easily egress the building via the stairs. Note: (a) The storeroom function lockset can be left in unlocked mode when numerous normal users are entering parking and ONLY be locked after business hours on a time table.
- (b) Classroom function key in knob locksets can be subject to pry bar attack. A steel strike cover plate is recommended where ever the gap between the door and its door frame is more than 3mm or 1/8 of an inch.
4. Install a motion activated Mosquito anti-loitering device in the stairwell on the bottom level. It will require an expanded metal mesh cage and should be mounted as high a possible to prevent vandalism. This will deter homeless persons from sleeping there and drug addicts from self injecting there.
5. If the homeless persons are using this stairwell for sleeping on a regular basis also consider installing one, two or

more concrete curbs under the stairs to make sleeping there very difficult and uncomfortable.

6. Ensure that owners of any abandoned vehicles used by homeless persons for sleeping are notified to remove them in a reasonable time frame e.g. 72 hours and if they fail to do so have them towed away to a nearby location where they can recover them. ENSURE THAT LOCAL POLICE ARE ADVISED BEFORE VEHICLES START BEING TOWED

Garbage and Recycling: Ideally garbage and recycling bins should only be moved to the building exterior 10 or 15 minutes before the first recycling or garbage vehicle is scheduled to arrive. Thefts from re-cycling containers with unlocked covers should be expected. The best way to deal with this is only place them outside 10 or 15 minutes before the scheduled arrival time of each companies truck and only unlock the covers when the truck is on site.

Condominiums: Lobby Package Thefts: This is usually not a concern where \when there is one or more guards or concierges working in the lobby. However, in some condominiums there maybe only one guard and she or he may have to leave the lobby to conduct patrols, unlock the swimming pool etcetera. Items coming from Canada Post are usually placed in a large parcel locker and its key is placed in the mail box of the official recipient. This is in our view a secure arrangement, For deliveries from other companies there are at least two parcel protection system available – (i) Parcel Pending & (ii) Automated Package Lockers. If used properly both systems provide for excellent delivered

package security and for resident\tenant notification of the arrival of their package.

Conclusion: Homeless persons can be managed effectively but sufficient financial & personnel resources are required to do it efficiently and safely, especially in small or mid size cities.

Acknowledgements: Barbara Spyropoulos TPS 12 Division Community\ Police Liaison, Biologist & landscape architect.

Downtown Toronto Shelter Locations:

1. Native Men's Residence 14 Vaughn Road 416 652 0334
2. Good Shepherd Ministries 412 Queen Street East
3. Christie Ossington Neighborhood Centre 973 Lansdowne Avenue 416 516 8642
4. Fred Victor Mission 145 Queen Street East 416 364 8228
5. Sojourn House , 101 Ontario Street 416 864 0515
6. The Salvation Army Canada 135 Sherburne Street 416 366 2733
7. Homes First Society , 90 Shutter Street, 2nd floor 416 214 1870
8. Salvation Army the Gateway 107 Jarvis Street 416 368 8710
9. Salvation Army Evangeline Residence 2808 Dundas Street West
10. Christine Ossington Neighborhood 854 Bloor Street W.
11. Haven Toronto 170 Jarvis Street 416 170 James Street 416 366 5377.
12. Covenant House 20 Gerrard Street East 416 598 4898

Note: Please feel free to obtain a word copy of this document from Mike Fenton at

m.p.fenton@rogers.com and replace the Toronto shelter locations list with a list of the shelters in your area\ jurisdiction and make any other changes you see fit.