

Mitigation Strategies for the Proposed Barrie Supervised Consumption Site Location: 11 Innisfil St.

May 19, 2021

Background

The goal of the mitigation strategies is to ensure the supervised consumption site (SCS) provides a safe, effective service to clients and operates to improve community safety and minimize any negative impacts on the surrounding community.

The local mitigation strategies were developed based on several inputs. Firstly, a review was conducted of existing reports created by other supervised consumption sites across the province of Ontario and in Canada. A partial list of the reports reviewed include: An August 2018 report by the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (CHC) - [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) about the Overdose Prevention Site at Parkdale](#); Guelph CHC - [Consumption and Treatment Services: Listening to our Community, Community Consultation Report](#); and information provided to the Halifax Municipality in December of 2019 in the [Supervised Consumption/overdose prevention site Council report](#). Further follow up conversations were also conducted with the operators of some of the SCSs in Ontario, particularly those in communities similar in size and demographics to Barrie (London, Guelph).

Secondly, the community engagement and consultation processes to date have all elicited a range of mitigation strategies. The consultations for the previous proposed SCS application in 2019 included suggestions for a number of general mitigation strategies, and the consultations for the recent site options conducted in the fall of 2020 and winter of 2021 also provided general mitigation strategies, as well as some that are specific to 11 Innisfil St. The following mitigation strategies have been developed to advance the overarching goals and objectives of the Barrie Supervised Consumption Site. In particular, they have been created to address the concerns identified in the community engagement and consultation feedback from the surveys conducted online; neighbourhood consultation sessions; engagement with key stake holders including Barrie City Council; feedback from the SCS Site Selection Advisory committee; and direct feedback received through letters, emails and telephone calls from residents of Barrie.

Mitigation strategies will be reviewed for progress and updated on a yearly basis, or as needed. An annual written status update on the progress of the mitigation strategies listed below will be provided to the Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy Steering Committee and Barrie City Council, and/or incorporated within evaluations of the SCS.

The mitigation strategies have been categorized as follows: Community and Client Safety; Ongoing Community Engagement; Access to wrap around and community services; and Education and Awareness. They include recommendations that may apply to any SCS location, as well as those that are specific to the proposed site of 11 Innisfil St.

Mitigation Strategies

Community and Client Safety:

Create safe space inside and outside of the SCS that encourages the clients to utilize the space and feel safe from the potential of being victimized (i.e. theft of their drugs or personal belongings). In order to address these concerns of the clients, the SCS will provide **adequate seating/space, privacy, non-judgemental and supportive staff engagement**, staff that are trained in **trauma informed practice, mental health first aid and de-escalation techniques**, and a positive SCS relationship with hired **security officers and the Barrie Police Service**.

The ability to manage people waiting to use the site will depend on the number of people waiting and the overall design of the space. The space inside the SCS will accommodate a small **waiting area**. If there are a significant number of people waiting, a staff member will engage with them to advise of timelines and coordinate options with them.

SCS staff will encourage the clients to stay in the **after-care space** for as long as they need and **discourage loitering** on the sidewalks surrounding the building. A site **Code of Conduct** will be created by the clients and staff onsite to ensure that everyone who utilizes and works at the site is treated with **mutual dignity and respect**.

Onsite **security cameras** and appropriate **lighting** will also be installed for the safety and security of all who use the site and the surrounding neighbourhood. The SCS site will also have a **security officer** onsite during operational hours, who is aligned with the operating philosophy and approach of the SCS.

Grounds maintenance including **regular needle and other drug paraphernalia sweeps** will be planned and undertaken to ensure a safe environment for all those attending the site and the surrounding community. These regular needle and drug paraphernalia sweeps will include monitoring and sweeping of the areas nearby 11 Innisfil St. known to be frequented by potential clients of the SCS (e.g. Milligan's Pond).

Discussions will be pursued with the City of Barrie to consider **improvements to the built environment** around 11 Innisfil St., to enhance pedestrian safety and walkability - not only for the SCS clients, but the broader community as well.

An **SCS staff liaison position** will be designated by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Simcoe County Branch (CMHA-SCB). The liaison will be responsible for community safety planning, responding to public, business and media questions or concerns regarding the site, and other roles as necessary. **Residences and businesses** nearby the proposed SCS location, and **tenants in the main building of 80 Bradford St.**, will be engaged and invited to share concerns and suggestions with the liaison.

Social service agencies that service the clientele of the SCS and that currently provide service within 80 Bradford will be available on site at the SCS on a regular basis to meet with their clients. These services include **The Gilbert Centre, John Howard Society of Simcoe Muskoka, and Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit**. The addition of these services within the SCS will enhance access for clients of the SCS, and **limit additional visitors within the main building of 80 Bradford St.**

In addition, the CMHA-SCB, as operator, will **liaise regularly with the landlord and property manager** of 11 Innisfil St./80 Bradford St to ensure that the needs of clients, tenants of 80 Bradford St., and the surrounding community are being met.

Furthermore, CMHA-SCB will endeavour to have a **Crime Prevention through Environment Design (CEPTED) Assessment** conducted by Barrie Police Services and will consider recommendations arising from that - in combination with client and community preferences - to address risks, safety, and other concerns.

SCS staff will engage and **work collaboratively** with those agencies already providing outreach to potential clients nearby the SCS (e.g. at Milligan's Pond) to promote the services offered and encourage access to the SCS.

Ongoing Community Engagement:

Create a neighbourhood committee that includes but is not limited to representatives of: clients of the SCS, neighbours and businesses surrounding the SCS, local police, community partner agencies and the staff/manager of the SCS. This committee would **meet monthly** or as needed to discuss any potential needs, challenges, successes, and solutions regarding the SCS. A Terms of Reference would be created for this committee with responsibilities that should include at minimum: **needle and other drug paraphernalia sweeps/safe disposal surrounding the site and a commitment to work together for an inclusive, safe community for all.**

The SCS operator will be responsible to **report data** (number of clients accessing services, number of overdoses reversed onsite, number of client referrals to treatment and other health and social services) to the Ministry of Health on a monthly basis. The data collected will also be made public. The services and impact of the SCS will have ongoing **evaluation** to ensure that they are meeting the expectations of the clients and the community.

The SCS operators will maintain regular communication with Barrie Police service to develop and maintain a response plan in relation to the clients accessing the SCS and the services being offered by the SCS.

The SCS operators will work collaboratively with existing community initiatives such as [Connected Core Barrie](#) to engage local area businesses and residents about the SCS, and ways to support people who use drugs and strengthen connections within our community.

Access to Wrap-Around Community Services:

As the lead agency in the application and operations of the SCS, CMHA-SCB will be a substantial part of providing **low-barrier access to appropriate addiction treatment** for interested clients of the SCS. CMHA-SCB will provide on-site services via two main programs: The **Addictions Outreach Program and the Mobile Withdrawal Management Services (MWMS) program**. The Addictions Outreach Counsellor will provide on-site brief counselling, screening, and completing/scheduling intakes for ongoing treatment. Intakes for both out-patient addictions counselling as well as assessment and referrals to in-patient residential treatment programs will be viable options explored. Group counselling support will also be explored as an option. The MWMS staff will provide withdrawal assessment, screening and provide service options to clients who express interest in this program.

When in-patient withdrawal services are required and/or requested, **RVH Residential Withdrawal Management Services (WMS)** are also available off-site within walking distance from 11 Innisfil St. This off-site program can accept direct admissions from those seeking service from the SCS. SCS staff will facilitate initial contact and telephone screening for admission to WMS to support a smooth transition of care. **Barrie's Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic (RAAM)**, which is supported by the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH), will be able to provide leading-edge addiction medicine and opioid agonist treatment (OAT; i.e. Suboxone) to appropriate and interested candidates.

Access to **Mental Health services** will be available both on-site and off-site of the SCS. On-site initiatives will be largely serviced by CMHA's Brief Service Mental Health & Case management programs. Off-site, SCS staff will be able to facilitate referrals for specific mental health counselling to two community partners: **Catholic Family Services (CFS)** and **Newpath Youth & Family Services**. Both services offer free and/or low-cost mental health counselling, as well as provide call-in and walk-in counselling weekly. The on-site SCS staff can facilitate the initial connection between client and relevant mental health partner.

Nurses hired by the SCS will provide general medical assessment and wound care while on-site. CMHA also has a **Nurse Practitioner** clinic that regularly operates out of their 90 Mulcaster building. The NP will extend their services to help facilitate assessment, testing, treatment, and follow-up primary care to those clients of the SCS who are not connected to a family physician

Alongside the on-site care, **The Gilbert Center** will also provide on-site social assistance in the areas related to LGBTQIP2SAA support, sexual health and information pertaining to consent, harm reduction, court support, among others. In addition, the **John Howard Society (JHS)** will deploy staff to the SCS to assist clients who may be reintegrating into the community after incarceration, who are legally involved, and/or who require employment, court, and/or housing support. The SCS Planning and Application committee is also anticipating that SMDHU will provide sexual health services including assessment, testing, treatment, and health teaching for sexually transmitted blood borne infections within the SCS touch-down space.

Close connection will be maintained with other community agencies operating off site. Emergency housing will be facilitated through the on-site SCS staff and community partners such as **The David Busby Street Centre, The Salvation Army Bayside Mission, and the Elizabeth Fry Society**.

Clients can also be referred to **Empower Simcoe** for further housing support. Clients who are interested in receiving Indigenous specific services can be referred to the **Barrie Native Friendship Centre**.

Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling and Advocacy Centre is another off-site resource that specifically provides gender-specific programming to women who have faced/are facing sexual abuse. For men who have experienced/are experiencing sexual violence, CFS will be able to assist through their gender-specific programming, as well. SCS Staff will be able to facilitate contact with these programs while clients use the services at the SCS.

When accessing the SCS, clients who are eligible and/or requesting bereavement support, will be provided with information and ways to connect with **Hospice Simcoe**. Hospice Simcoe provides individual bereavement counselling for those impacted by death due to opioid use, specifically.

Education and Awareness:

CMHA-SC and SMDHU will engage in efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of the Barrie SCS through social media, presentations, and updates on the CMHA-SC and SMDHU websites. Planned **open houses** of the facility will be provided during non-operational hours for the community to familiarize themselves to the services being offered at the SCS site. To address stigma associated with the SCS and the perception of the site 'enabling' drug use, continued endorsement and public sharing of the [*People who Use Drugs are Real People*](#) campaign banners, videos, posters/post cards as well as presentations to community partnerships will be continued. Harm Reduction and SCS **education and presentations to interested community groups and business groups** will continue to be offered, with a focus on the area surrounding 11 Innisfil St.

In addition, the operators, and tenants at 80 Bradford St will be offered the opportunity for continued learning about the SCS and principles of harm reduction by engaging in guided tours of the facility, prior to and after its opening.