

PROJECT COMFORT

Who we are:

Project Comfort is an initiative of local residents in the Fort York, Liberty Village City Place and Queens Quay neighbourhoods committed to addressing the needs of the homeless in our community, in particular the clients of the new respite shelters in our neighbourhoods.

Our objective is to work with all stake holders including the City of Toronto, City Councillor, federal and provincial representatives, residents, businesses and operators of respite centres to provide a comfortable and safe transitional living space for Toronto's most vulnerable.

As Project Comfort is NOT a legal entity nor a charitable organization we will look to promote and encourage the activities of not for profit organizations assisting the marginalized of our community. (note to draft - just a statement reconfirming we are not a charity but more importantly we will look to support charities and other organizations.)

Key Principles:

1) To be an advocate of the homeless by working with other stakeholders on strategies and programs that are both effective and reduce the need for temporary housing in our community. We will accomplish this by ensuring that stakeholders have clear and defined objectives and measurements that meet this principle.

2) Through our volunteer network, establish community programs and events that recognize that all individuals are members of our community. Project Comfort will look to provide for both the basic and long term needs of shelter residents. Volunteers recognize that the needs are more than just material needs. We accomplish this through different events and initiatives of our members.

3) To be a source of information, research and advice for members of our community. This includes being an advocate and voice of the homeless in our community.

Approach:

Project Comfort's approach is

Compassion, Community led decision making, Safety, and Long Term Results.

1. *Compassion:* We plan to show compassion to our neighbours and fellow residents who have fallen on hard times. Everyone deserves a safe place to live and sleep.
2. *Community Led Decision Making:* The City, despite its best efforts, cannot combat and effectively manage Toronto's affordability and homelessness crisis alone. The local community must be part of the process and solution.
3. *Safety:* The City needs to ensure there are measures in place to respond to any safety needs in the surrounding community. This starts with effective communication

between the community, the City, and the respite centres. That is where Project Comfort comes in.

4. *Long Term Results:* It is not enough to simply 'manage' a crisis; the goal should be to resolve the crisis. Building on our goal of having a community led effort to combat the problem of homelessness and affordability, we will advocate for short, medium and long term actions to help transition as many people as possible to being able to have their own homes. We will take a fresh approach and look at how communities can help disadvantaged people to get back on their feet for the long term.

Actions:

Project Comfort's actions can be grouped in two broad categories: Immediate Relief and Longer-Term Solutions. The following are examples of some actions which could be included in each category and which Project Comfort intends to work towards. These are examples and are in no way exhaustive or definitive:

Immediate Relief:

- Neighbourhood gatherings to meet with residents of the respite centres over coffee or food (one past event has been held, another being planned for the holidays).
- Clothing and necessity drives (established and ongoing).
- Sharing information with neighbours and other community groups.
- Receive any concerns from local residents and/or clients of respite centres and attempt to resolve where appropriate.

Longer-Term Solutions:

- Ensure that the current infrastructure is sufficient to meet the needs of the members of our community requiring shelter and affordable housing.
- In conjunction with City staff and Councillor's office, form a formalized neighbourhood liaison committee which should include representatives from: The City, Project Comfort, resident associations, local business, service providers (Fred Victor, etc.) and residents of the centres.
- As active participants work directly with all stakeholders in identifying concrete actions that can be taken to reduce the number of homeless in our city.
- Endeavour to work with all stakeholders to create effective long term solutions to reduce the number of homeless people and provide them with skills and opportunities needed to live healthy and meaningful lives (where appropriate).