

MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
THURSDAY DECEMBER 13, 10 am at MOSAIC

PRESENT:

Tammy and Peter (inasmuch)
Loren (Kinbrace)
James (Journey Home)
Khim (Options)
Muna and Nasra (SOS)
Mandana (Canadian Red Cross)
Alexandra (MOSAIC)
Jenny (MAP)

- The Co-Chair, **Loren Balisky**, welcomed everyone and **Introductions** were made
NEW addition: Muna Amir, new Housing Search Worker at SOS. Muna will be stationed at the Surrey SOS office, but until a replacement for Rami is found she is covering both Surrey and Vancouver areas. Welcome Muna!

Regrets received from: Barry, Theresa, Nathan

- The Agenda was approved
- The Minutes from November 22nd were approved

Update on Housing Solutions Research

James provided an update on Alice Sundberg's research into referral pathways for RC's. Alice interviewed all HWG (15 people) and compiled a preliminary report to be published last week of December.

There will be an opportunity for members to review the report and send comments by the 1st/2nd week of January for final review and submission to MAP on January 24th.

The focus of this research is not long term but analyzes the immediate situation

Question: will Alice work with the asset mapping research after this report?

Response: We will maintain contact certainly and see what's needed.

Khim (Options) commented that Alice did a great job respecting the agency and their time – **Loren:** good to hear – this builds great collaboration within MAP.

At that point Loren explained the graphic and how the communication system under the MAP HWG-funded project works (see graphic attached)

Update on Asset Mapping Research Project – Loren

The RCAM committee has retained **Pomegranate Housing Consultancy** to do the research. The lead is coincidentally **Mukhtar Latif** who attended Forum and offered modular housing. He and his group are personally very interested in the issues around RC housing.

Loren described the 3 members and their roles:

Mukhtar – lead and with a history with Vancouver Housing he has very good contacts

Cherie Enns – she will arrange focus groups and interviews

Hamed Taheri – is the technical whizz behind how Pomegranate will collect and process the data and produce an asset map in conjunction with **GeoBC** possibly.

Jenny: MAP mailout list will be sent to Pomegranate for the purpose of mailing out a questionnaire, once permissions are given. A slimmed down version has been created.

Province's request for data

Vicki Chiu (MJTT) has asked for some data for policy development at MJTT by end of January if possible.

Pomegranate are on board for providing this data as early as possible.

Comments and questions:

James: the Province in communication with municipalities around emergency response to a sudden influx of claimants via municipalities.

Peter: in terms of messaging to the Provincial govt. we need to provide clarification around what is supported, sustainable housing

Loren: Agreed - this is important in order to produce an accurate report
RCAM committee will create an online form for agencies to complete

Alexandra/Khim: Need to be careful not to collect the wrong information – asset mapping needs to do this in an informed way.

For example: Ask the question: **How do refugees find safe housing?**

Tammy – like a journey,

Nasra: ongoing relationship with settlement workers/housing providers etc that responds to changes in claimant's life

Alexandra – will these Q's be decided by asset mapping group?

Loren: yes, nimble groups within RCAM

Alexandra: Vicki has asked Stream B groups to add housing to their monthly reports

Strategy for "one-voice" communication to government and other groups

A comment had been made that we need to be careful that we provide the same message to external bodies in terms of our goal. And keep each other informed of external contacts.

Loren asked: So what is our one message as HWG?

Tammy: before you talk about housing you need to explain who is a RC. Use a story (confidentially)

Alexandra: explain that housing system is so bad and RC's put pressure on shelter system, so if there was housing for claimants that would be a win/win.

Also, speaking in a collaborative MAP voice makes us strong –

Priority messages are:

- 1) focused on refugee claimants
- 2) our ask is about housing
- 3) we need a Welcome Centre to provide supported housing to new arrivals.

The conversation should always be solution-focused

Brainstorm a process to increase capacity

Loren put up a visual of budget needed over time from Forum – to Provincial Fund – to Asset Map/Report to Welcome Center

Discussion:

Peter/Loren: The Asset Mapping Report and Recommendations should go to all Forum participants as an update as we will need funding for this and all agencies are involved

Tammy: have you asked Mukhtar to engage in the long term in terms of the actual housing?

Loren: Yes – through Anhart who would provide the modular housing:

Estimate cost for 30 modular units: \$8.5 million costs – without land.

Other costs apart from the building costs might need to include:

- Project development costs (planning)
- Ongoing support to claimants
- Accurate, comprehensive quantitative data captured

James – we need to develop private funding in addition to any public funding
we need to provide supported housing – staffing capacity has to be provided.

Toronto refugee claimant oriented agencies are planning a refugee claimant hub. At this point it does not appear that this hub will have a housing component. Terms of Reference and policy documents appear to be in place.

Loren asked James who was involved in the Toronto collaboration – usual partners of Matthew House, FCJ Refugee Center, Canadian Red Cross.

- **Mandana** will get info on plan in Toronto from First Contact as they are involved as well as establish what is Red Cross' role.

James – suggested the meeting discuss capacity- building in the much-needed

Housing Referral System:

Peter – we need an agency to be a 'zipper' to mesh all the work together (a replacement for IRS)

Loren noted the system needs a Point Lead Person (Housing Referral)

We need to include:

- a) the cost of transportation
to housing and to training and support service
- b) staffing to support housing searcher
- c) permanent housing broker: at the moment Journey Home/Kinbrace work together via Raul/Doug
- d) Lead person (RC/RC/- from MAP HWG)
- e) Development Lead (for Project Development)

Mandana – the key agency should be SOS

Alexandra – MOSAIC has this role too now (Stream B)

She has met with Nasra this week to work out a system as the two Stream B providers need to be in agreement about their protocols and how they will work together.

MOSAIC needs to let people know that they have that responsibility in their zones too – not just SOS

Khim – Options also has someone who is looking for housing constantly – how can we all work together so that people know who to refer to?

Nasra – we are working with Alexandra – we are not giving out shelter lists – not since she started.

Muna is the ISS Surrey housing search worker, but she's working in Vancouver at the moment.

Mandana – asked for clarification about Stream B services

Alexandra explained how cases get transferred from SOS to MOSAIC if the claimant is in their zone (FV). It's a little more complicated with the geography as it is.

Peter – we really need to look at vulnerability – to help the most needy clients.

Nasra: commented she needs to alleviate settlement workers who are doing housing on top of their usual work. Providing accompaniment as well.

Question: Can BC211 help with shelter capacity information?

Mandana: can volunteers help SOS with accompaniment?

Nasra: Not really. There are safety concerns, it's dangerous at night. They can do admin work like lists, but not accompaniment

James: what help is Red Cross providing?

Mandana: they have provided 117 claimants since March with emergency accommodation in hotels – and spent more than \$60,000 – it's supposed to be 72 hours but some have stayed more than 10 days as it's difficult to move them on when there's no housing available.

Mandana: Should we only refer to SOS, or to MOSAIC too?

Alexandra: inter-agency face-to-face contact so important to explain new systems and gain confidence – she is visiting cultural groups, YWCA, shelters so they know her.

Yes, please refer to MOSAIC too.

Loren: commented on the fruitfulness of the process at today's meeting – the capacity needs will provide information for costs and for the recommendations.

Muna (SOS) asked: – could we lease a building for housing in the interim until the Refugee Center building is

constructed?

Response: this will be part of the ask

Alexandra commented that data collection (numbers) must be realistic – only count when you're still working with a client.

Budget planning and strategy after March 2019

There was some discussion regarding:

- the need for a paid housing leader to take over HWG's activities
- costs to support settlement workers at allied agencies who will provide support.
- Reception Centre budget - what will it take?

Further conversation tabled to next meeting

12:00 pm **Adjourn**