



WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

A New Housing Hub

A Community-Informed Feasibility Study

for:



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"It's going to take a community to eradicate homelessness."

Focus Group Participant



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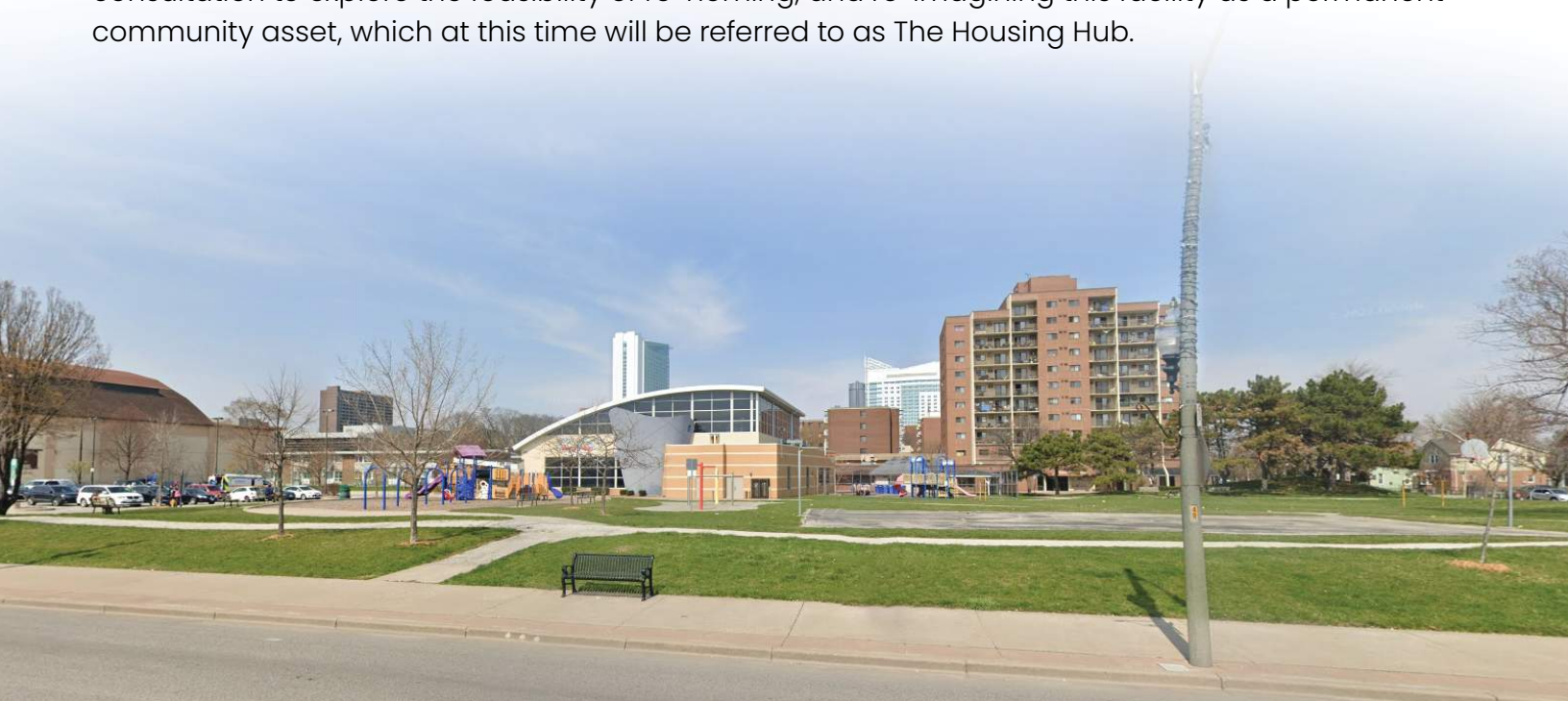
1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Homelessness & Housing Help Hub (H4) facility started as an **emergency response** to the Covid-19 pandemic. When public facilities closed, and stay-at-home orders and social distancing came into effect, the City of Windsor was quick to adapt to ensure people experiencing homelessness stayed safe. The former Windsor Water World building at 400 Wyandotte St E was identified as a building that could be occupied immediately for this purpose, and H4 as we know it was born.

Since it opened in 2020, H4 has become a well-loved space that has helped identify and fill gaps in serving and supporting those experiencing homelessness in Windsor-Essex. It has opened the eyes of many to how this community can transform care & support for this vulnerable sector, and ultimately have greater impact on transitioning people out of homelessness in this region.

The challenge this community faces now is that the existing facility in the former Windsor Water World building is a **“make-do situation”**, or as some have described – **“a square peg in a round hole”**. It is a roof overhead for a group of amazing staff that have been incredibly resourceful, but fails on many fundamental levels of functionality.

The City of Windsor has retained Glos Arch + Eng to undertake comprehensive stakeholder consultation to explore the feasibility of re-homing, and re-imagining this facility as a permanent community asset, which at this time will be referred to as The Housing Hub.





2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In December 2021 & January 2022, Glos Arch + Eng undertook consultation with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, user-groups, staff and service providers impacted most by The Housing Hub.



92

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS



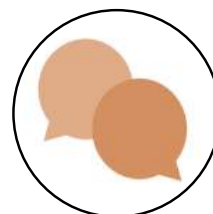
47

SURVEY RESPONDENTS



15

PHONE / VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS



28

1:1 INTERVIEWS (IN PERSON)



25

PRESENTATIONS TO COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

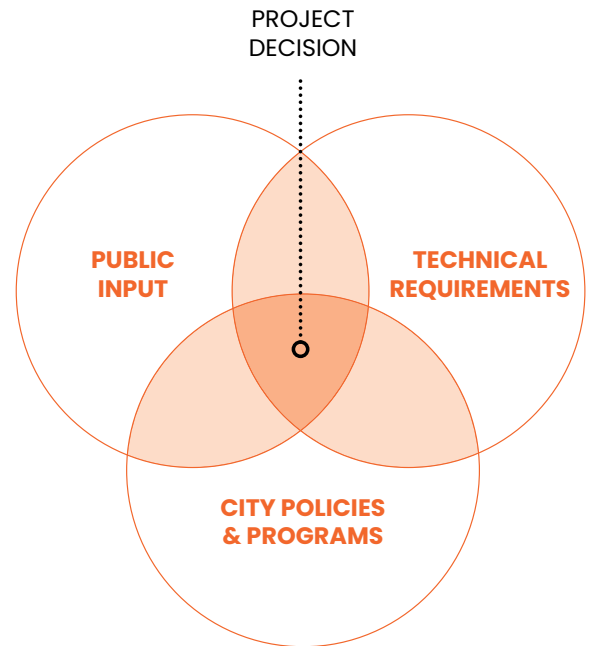
- City of Windsor
- Child Welfare & Youth
- Interim Housing / Shelters
- Windsor Essex Housing Connections
- Social Housing Providers
- Police & Justice Services
- Indigenous Service Providers
- Health Sector (Incl. Ontario Health Team)
- Immigration & Grass Roots
- LGBTQS2+
- Downtown Windsor BIA
- H4 Staff
- Current H4 Participants / Individuals with Lived Experience
- Glengarry Neighbourhood Representatives

ENGAGEMENT INTENT

The intent of the engagement process is to share information about the project background and vision, and gather feedback on key issues and decisions. Feedback alone cannot steer the project entirely, but robust stakeholder input allows us to find a “sweet spot” that balances technical requirements and city policies and programs, with the unique needs of this community. In every discussion, we clarify what decisions are intended to be influenced by feedback, and what is considered non-negotiable.

KEY DECISIONS

1. WHAT SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB INCLUDE?
2. WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?
3. HOW SHOULD IT LOOK & FEEL?
4. HOW SHOULD ENGAGEMENT CONTINUE?



NON-NEGOTIABLES

PROJECT GOAL

To end homelessness in Windsor-Essex

PROJECT VALUES

HOUSING FIRST

SUPPORTIVE

DIGNITY

“WE MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY’RE AT”

FOSTERS TRUST

TRAUMA INFORMED

SAFETY

WARM

“COME AS YOU ARE”

RESPECTFUL

FRIENDLY

INFORMED

INCLUSIVE

ACCESSIBLE



3 WHAT WE HEARD

The rapid impact of the current ad-hoc H4 has become evidence of the need for a complete paradigm shift in how services are delivered to support those experiencing homelessness in Windsor-Essex.

What we heard over and over again from service providers embedded in this work was that Windsor-Essex is full of incredible organizations working tirelessly and creatively to have positive impact – and at the same time – everyone’s plate is fuller than ever while demand and acuity grows faster than we’ve ever seen.

We heard that homelessness is vastly intersectional. Individuals are accessing services in a crisis, and often need immediate support from multiple different agencies – agencies that might be across town from each other with different intake models.

People are getting lost in the gaps.

We heard that only a portion of homelessness is visible. There are entire communities of people who need help and are not seeking it because they do not feel safe accessing emergency services. These are people who often only need low- to mid-level support to change their lives, and they aren’t walking in the door of emergency services because of stigma, triggers, and fear of harm.

People are getting stuck when they have to choose between getting help and feeling safe.

Even in its ad-hoc state, H4 is having impact because it is meeting people where they’re at, prioritizing relationships, and coordinating access to a complex web of services. It is connecting people casually and flexibly to the supports that they need, and walking alongside them as they find their own unique path to stability.

What we heard is that a permanent wrap-around service hub could change everything. It could be pivotal in helping service providers operate more nimbly with the resources they have, and allow them to have greater impact on their shared goal – ending homelessness. It would also shift Windsor-Essex into a position where they could better track progress, understand challenges, and demonstrate impact.

The diagrams on the following pages illustrate the evolution of the service delivery model from before 2020, to Covid response (H4), to the proposition for a permanent Housing Hub.

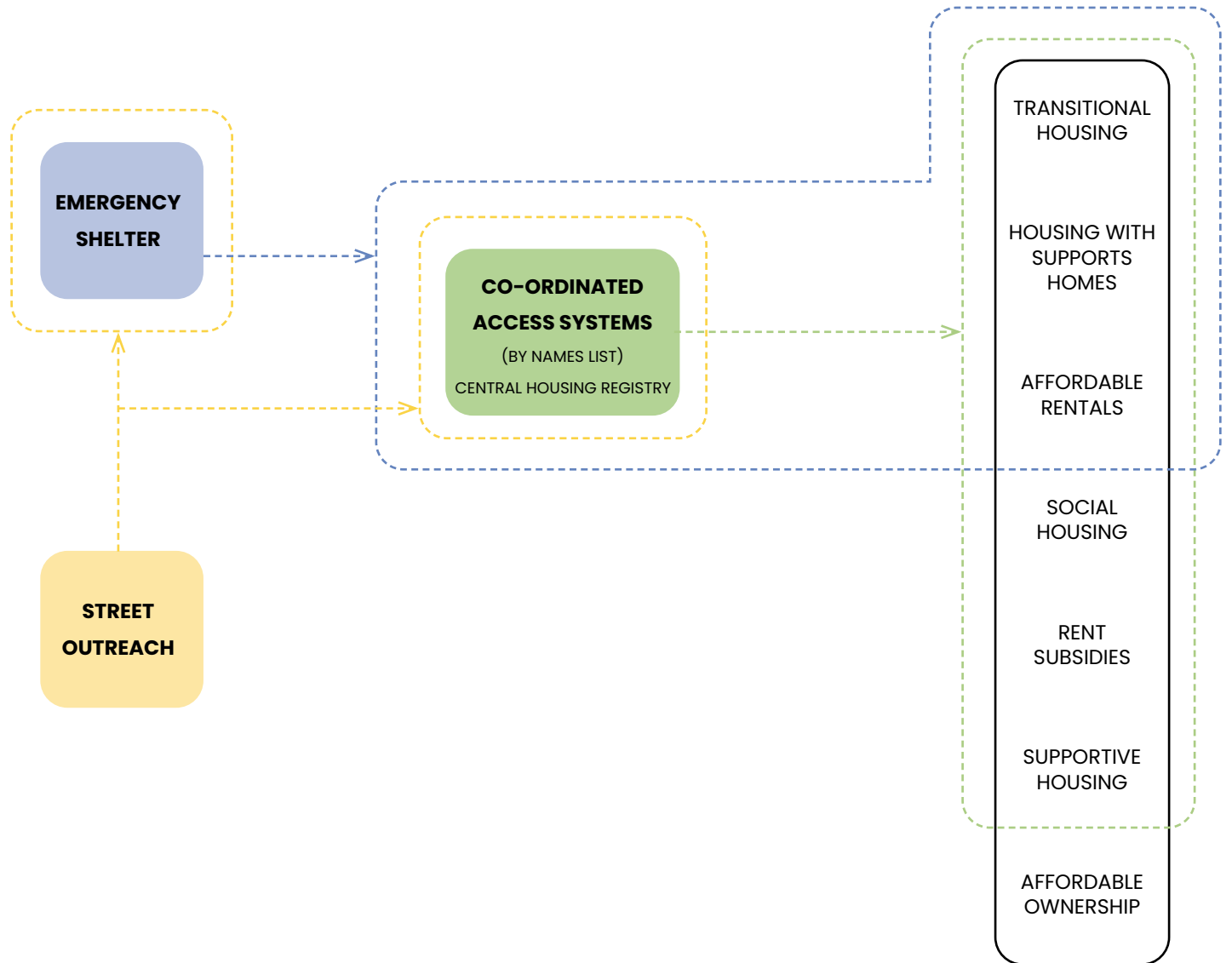
SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

BEFORE 2020

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

ACCESS PROCESS

HOUSING



SUPPORT SERVICES

TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS TO HELP THEM
OBTAIN & RETAIN HOUSING

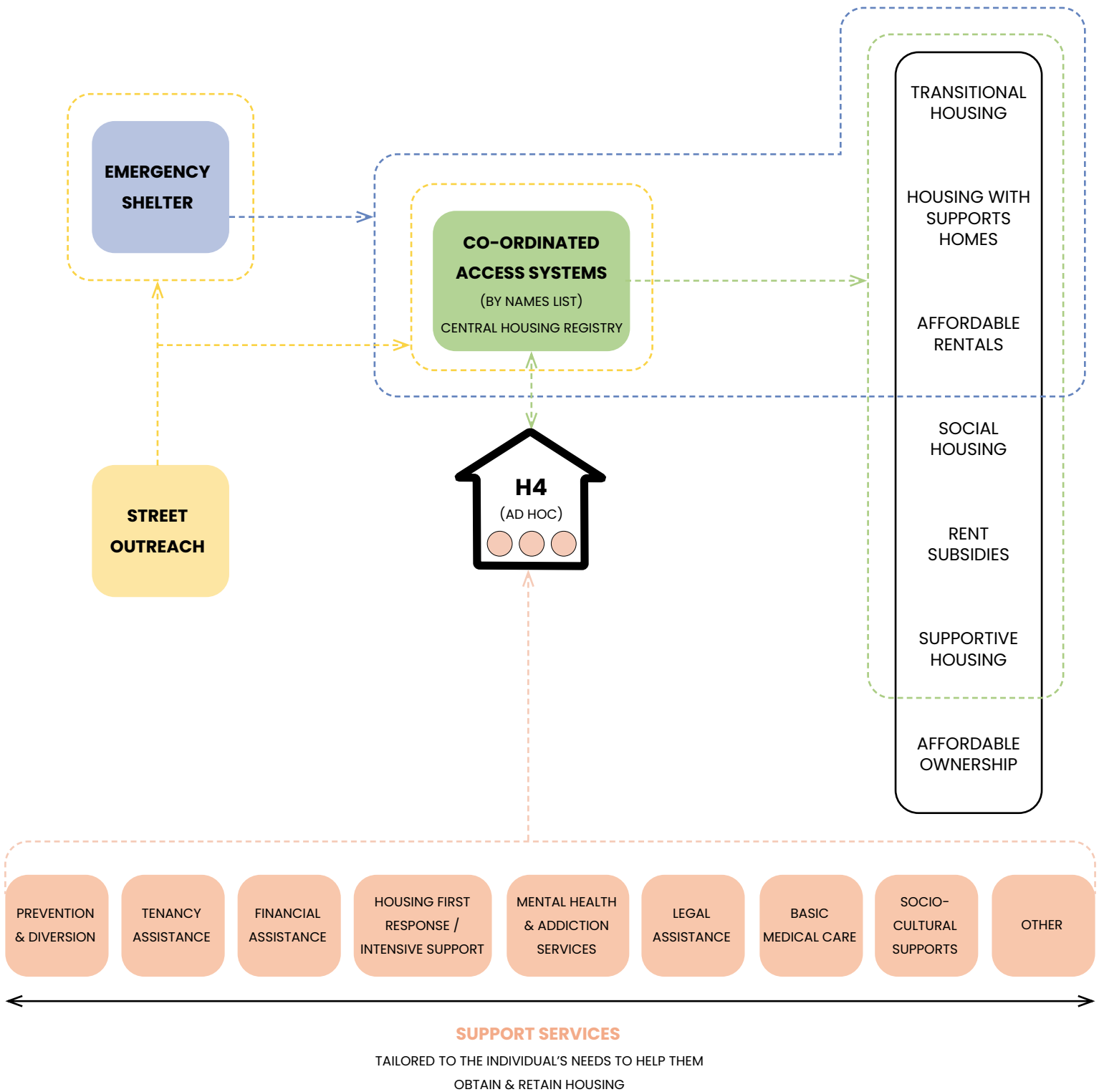
SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

COVID RESPONSE – AD-HOC H4

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

ACCESS PROCESS

HOUSING



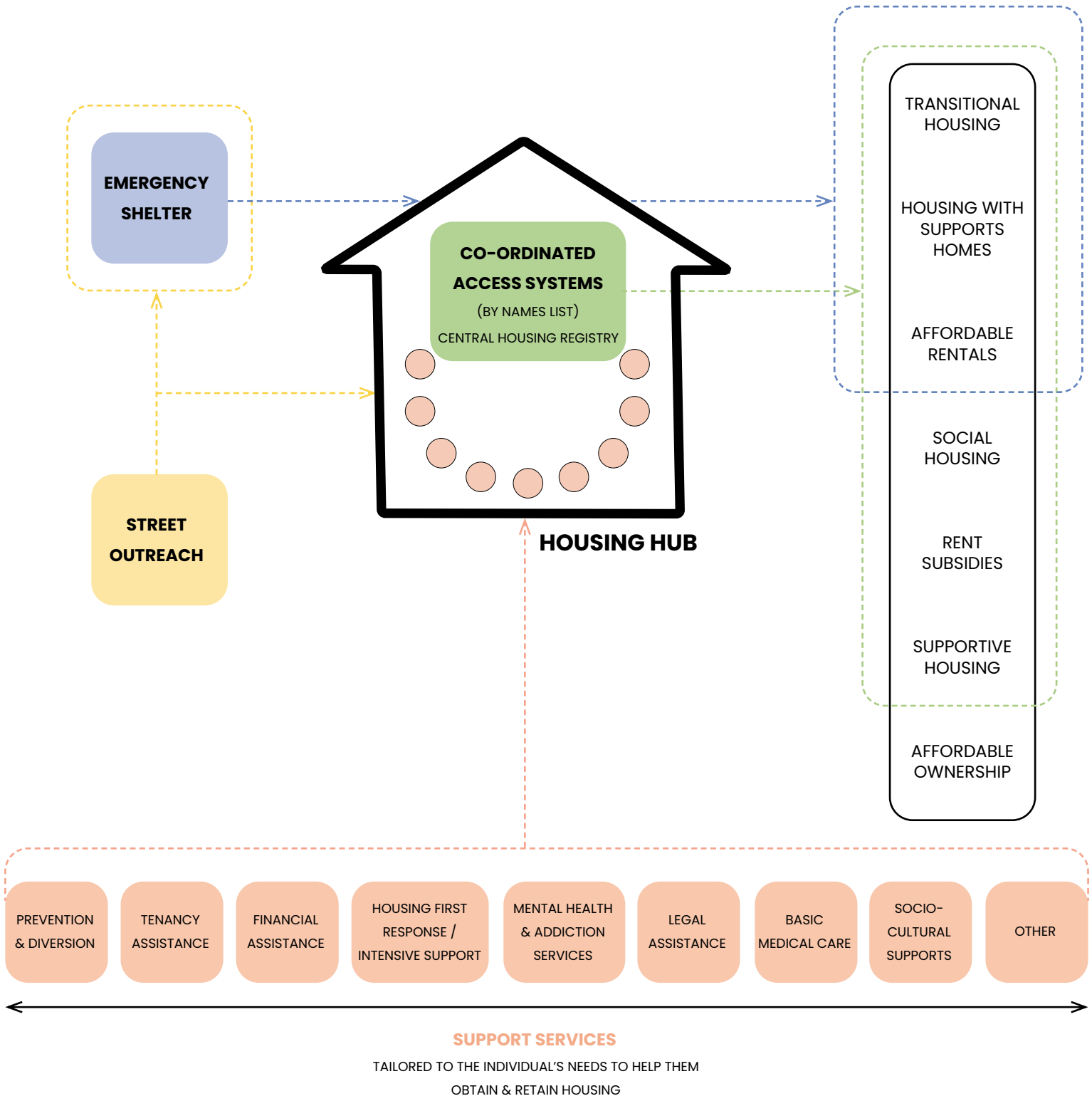
SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

PROPOSED – FUTURE H4

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

ACCESS PROCESS

HOUSING



SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

BEFORE 2020

- This model relies on people accessing services through shelters, although sheltered individuals only capture a fraction of the population experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Some individuals would enter into this service model through a specific service provider, and then move to other services by way of referrals to other independent service providers.
- The “By-Names Prioritized List” was established as the central tracking system to assist service providers in keeping track of all individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time.

- Challenges:
- people are getting lost between referrals
 - high rate of return to homelessness, since access to supports diminished after obtaining housing
 - a lot of redundancy since each partner conducts separate intake, and no resources are shared

COVID RESPONSE — AD-HOC H4

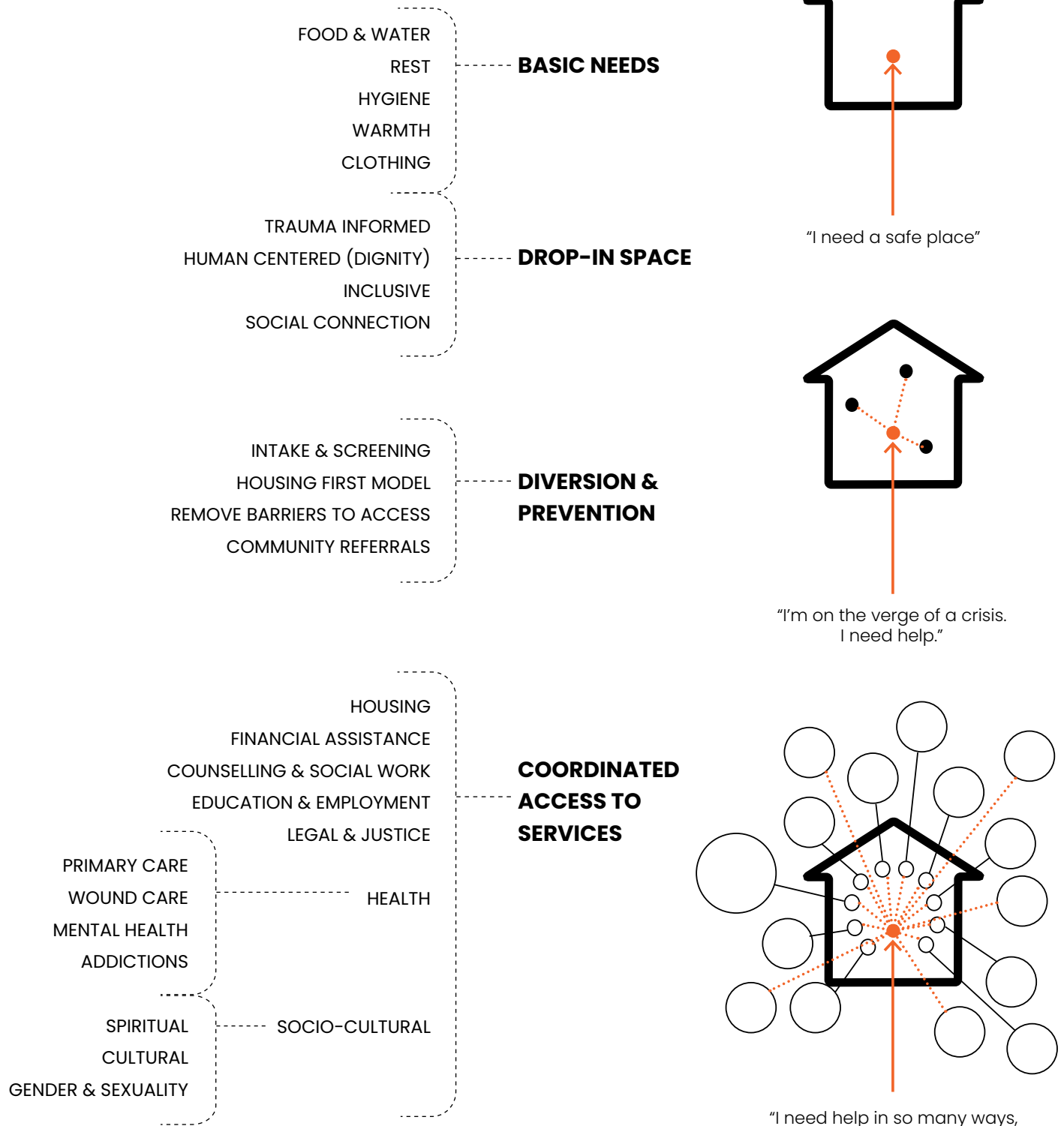
- Immediately addressed need to offer a safe place to stay during stay-home orders, as well as increased screening & hygiene during pandemic response
- Created a tangible “front door” to services where various partnering services could collaborate, and offered a space where partnering agencies could send staff on a hotelling basis
- Offered a dignified drop-in space where individuals experiencing homelessness felt a sense of respect, care and belonging

- Challenges:
- funding is temporary
 - building is too small
 - building is not suitable for this use (ie. poor visibility, odd layout, pool)
 - site is too enmeshed in residential community, causing safety challenges
 - site is too public-facing, causing challenges with local businesses

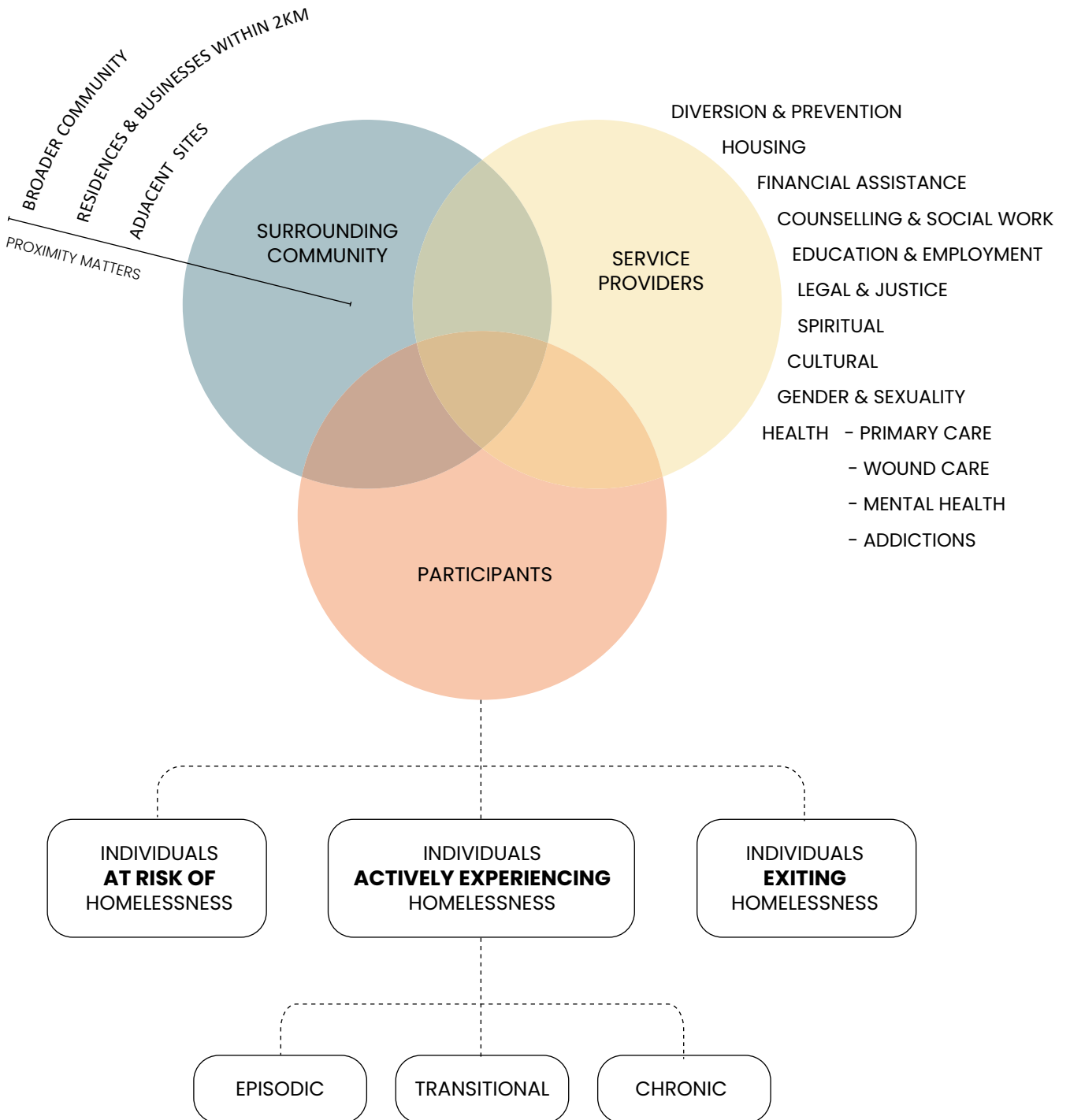
PROPOSED — THE HOUSING HUB

- Hub & Spokes Model: Wrap-around, co-ordinated access hub acts as front door to all services. Hub then connects individuals to their unique web of supports both on and off site. Partnering agencies have ongoing flexibility to dedicate staff on a temporary or permanent basis, to provide immediate care and bridge a connection with their primary service location.

3 WHAT DOES IT NEED TO BE?



4 WHO IS IMPACTED?



WHO IS IMPACTED?

PARTICIPANTS

The makeup of individuals supported by a facility like The Housing Hub include a broad spectrum of acuity, which is why robust triaging is so important. While participants with the highest acuity are often the most visible, and require the most resources, they are not the largest cohort.

- Low Acuity
- Largest cohort of service users, and likely underrepresented by data
 - Require minimal intervention to resolve their period of homelessness
 - Often able to search for and secure housing using their own resources as well as informal support systems (friends & family)

Supports Required:

- Service Referrals
- Service Coordination

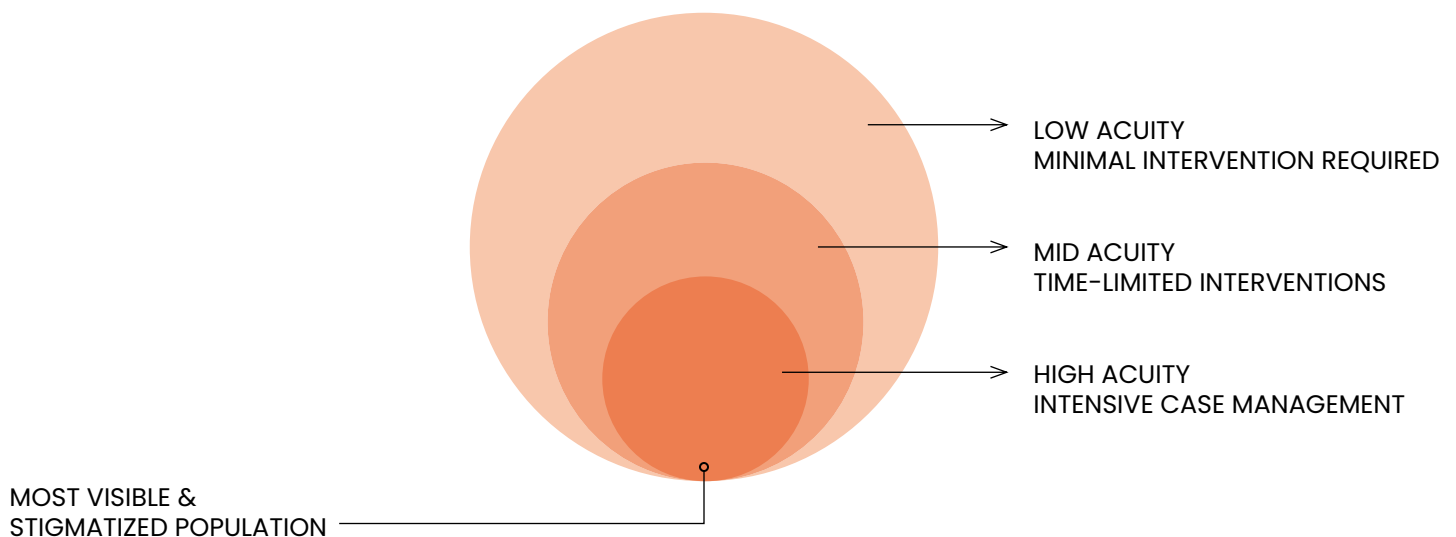
Challenges: Many choose to live precariously and avoid seeking help due to stigma and feeling unsafe accessing existing emergency services

- Mid Acuity
- Require time-limited interventions to resolve their period of homelessness
 - Often present with low/poverty income levels, and/or a history of trauma, mental health concerns, or substance misuse
 - Often have recurring episodes of homelessness that require intervention

Supports Required:

- Case Management
- Rapid Re-housing Supports

Challenges: Current disconnection between services, difficulty navigating multiple intake systems and maintaining self-led coordination



WHO IS IMPACTED?

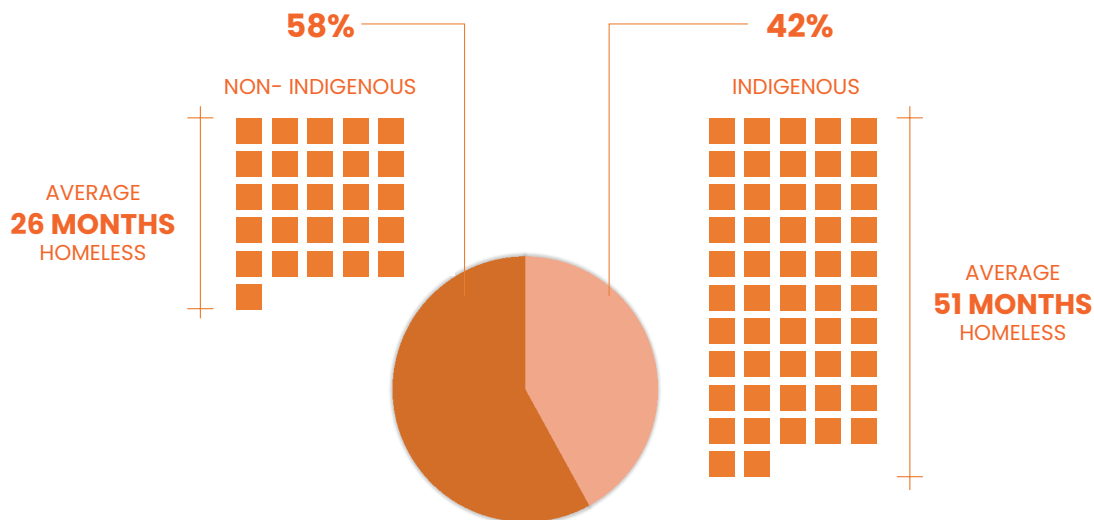
- High Acuity
- Smallest cohort of service users
 - Require the largest investment of resources to resolve chronic homelessness
 - Often present with co-occurring disorders or trimorbidity (presence of physical health condition, mental health disorder, and substance misuse)
 - Often disengaged or restricted from accessing mainstream services.

- Supports Required:**
- Intensive Case Management
 - Assertive Community Treatment
 - 24hr Supportive Housing

Challenges: Most heavily stigmatized population; highest level of cognitive instability; often struggle to maintain housing once housed

OVER-REPRESENTED POPULATIONS

Indigenous individuals are distinctly over-represented in the participant population at H4. H4 participants that are Indigenous represent 42% of total participants polled in April 2021, compared to only 3% of Windsor’s general population (according to census data)¹. Indigenous participants also experienced nearly double the average length of homelessness, compared to non-Indigenous participants – citing discrimination and underrepresentation of Indigenous-led services as reasons for the disparity.²



WHO IS IMPACTED?

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Serving this vulnerable sector is highly intersectional. Many active organizations play various roles in providing support services, and their roles evolve and change over time as community needs and available funding shifts. Some organizations offer intersectional services for target demographics, while others focus on a particular service type for the general population.

This list is not exhaustive.

HOUSING



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



COUNSELLING & SOCIAL WORK



EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT



LEGAL & JUSTICE



SOCIO-CULTURAL (spiritual, cultural, gender & sexuality)



WHO IS IMPACTED?

HEALTH

PRIMARY CARE



Canadian Mental Health Association

WOUND CARE



HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES
Erie St. Clair

MENTAL HEALTH



Canadian Mental Health Association



C.O.A.S.T.
M.C.R.R.T.



M.H.R.T.

ADDICTIONS



Canadian Mental Health Association



BEDS

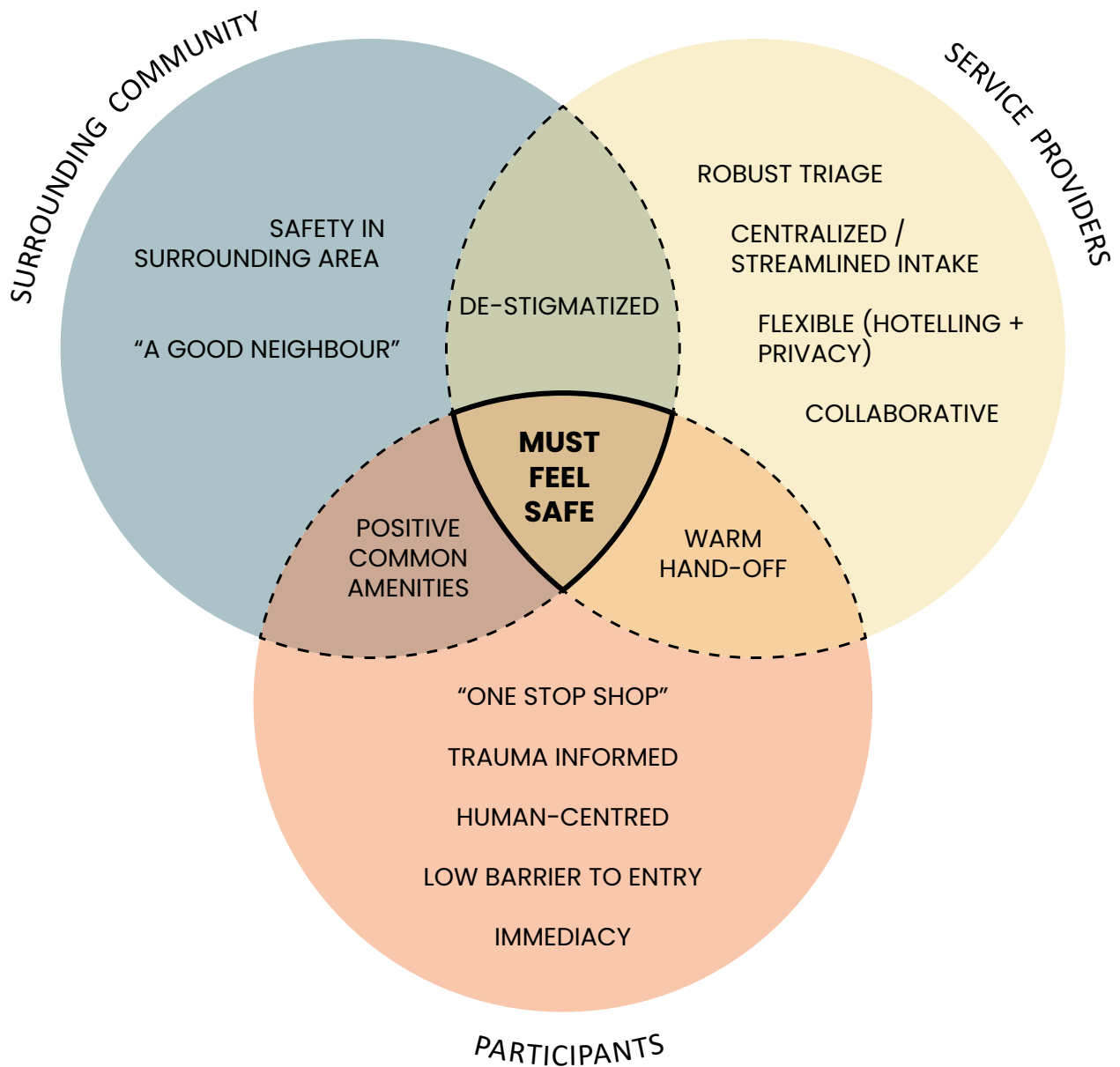
Shelters currently play a critical role in individuals accessing services. While housing options extend to a multi-faceted list of transitional and supportive housing options throughout the region, shelters play a unique role in housing people during times they have nowhere else to go. Due to their front-line role, many homeless emergency shelters offer a broad range of support services as well.

SHELTERS





5 CRITICAL NEEDS



CRITICAL NEEDS

Through multi-faceted dialogue with participants, service providers and representatives from the broader community, we've come to understand the 4 core needs that will make or break the success of The Housing Hub.

1

MUST FEEL SAFE

- Critical for participants at all acuity levels to access services
- Critical for the community to feel a sense of buy-in, and partnership with the efforts made by The Housing Hub to end homelessness
- Critical for service partners to easily and confidently send staff as needed

CRITICAL ACTION ITEMS

- Design building to foster positive relationship to community (welcoming facade & entry, dignified architectural language, etc)
- Integrate principles of walkable urbanism to positively activate the pedestrian realm, including site lighting at night
- Mitigate/avoid loitering hotspots (See Safety & Crime Prevention, p.29)
- Design to simplify security wherever possible (See Security, p.30)
- Building's interior to integrate principles of Trauma Informed Design (see p. 32), Human-Centred Care (p. 26) and Sensory Sensitivity (p. 30)

2

DESTIGMATIZED

- Critical for The Housing Hub's success since shame is a significant barrier to accessing services
- Critical for the surrounding community to shift into an understanding that The Housing Hub is a positive, progress-focused community asset

CRITICAL ACTION ITEMS

- Broaden spectrum of services to include support for those at risk of homelessness and those exiting homelessness
- Include community-bridging programming (ie. cafe, dog park, etc.)
- Design building to foster positive relationship to community (welcoming facade & entry, dignified architectural language, etc)
- Integrate principles of walkable urbanism to positively activate the pedestrian realm, including site lighting at night
- Design process must include authentic community consultation with residents & businesses within 2km to educate about the project's values and intent, and to gather feedback to inform decisions about community-bridging programming and key contextual relationships

CRITICAL NEEDS

3

POSITIVE COMMON AMENITIES

- Positive common amenities will increase The Housing Hub's impact and reach by increasing dignity and decreasing stigma for participants
- Positive common amenities will improve The Housing Hub's success by fostering a sense of partnership with the surrounding community, and by giving the community a voice in what amenities would be valuable

CRITICAL ACTION ITEMS

- Design to include space for community-bridging programming
- Community-bridging programming to be determined and steered by authentic (not survey based) community consultation with residents and businesses within 2km

4

WARM HAND-OFF

- Planning for The Housing Hub to foster warm hand-offs will directly impact its success since so many people are lost through the gaps of referrals between agencies. Designing for visibility between services, ease of collaboration and casual referral relationships is critical
- Warm hand-offs will be critical for service providers to feel like it is both easy and advantageous to come and "plug themselves in" to a robust facility specifically designed to serve this complex sector

CRITICAL ACTION ITEMS

- Design building to foster transparency & collaboration between service providers (open hotelling by sector, shared resource spaces, etc)
- Design public circulation spaces to have passive visibility into key staffed areas, especially prevention/diversion, housing & financial services
- Design service provider spaces to have flexible access to a variety of meeting areas that vary in terms of public/private/security (including spaces outside)



6 WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

Feedback at this stage indicates unanimous agreement about what core programming is required to make this facility successful. The extent of the ideal programming that can be included will be determined by the size of the site selected, the limitations of available funding, and should be further refined by continuing consultation with participants, service providers and the surrounding community.

PROGRAM

- Site
- Cart & Bike Storage
 - Parking

INTANGIBLES

- welcoming & dignified
- discourages loitering
- passive visibility to parking
- positive relationship to neighbourhood is critical

- Entrance & Welcome Desk
- Front Desk (3 workstations, Prevention & Diversion)
 - 2 Offices, Outreach Workers
 - 2 Offices, Crisis Workers
 - 3 Offices, Coordinated Entry System

INTANGIBLES

- welcoming, dignified
- includes de-escalation space
- discourages loitering
- clear lines of sight for staff (safety & security)
- clear lines of sight for participants to available resources
- should feel comfortable and homelike, not institutional

- Education & Employment
- 2 Multi-Purpose Classrooms

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

SUPPORT SERVICES

Housing Services

- Open Hotelling Space for 15 staff/partners
- 5 Trauma-Safe Offices (private, dual entry)
- Connection to a Semi-Public Lounge & Administrative Area

INTANGIBLES

- staff hotelling should be visible from public areas so participants can see who is available
- hotelling area should foster collaboration & warm-handoffs

Financial Services

- Open Hotelling Space for 2 staff/partners
- 1 Trauma-Safe Offices (private, dual entry)
- Connection to a Semi-Public Lounge & Administrative Area

INTANGIBLES

- staff hotelling should be visible from public areas so participants can see who is available
- hotelling area should foster collaboration & warm-handoffs

Socio-Cultural Services

- Dedicated semi-public waiting space
- Open Hotelling Space for 10 staff/partners
- 2 Trauma-Safe Offices (private, dual entry) to serve:
 - general social work
 - immigration
 - human trafficking
 - gender & sexuality
- 1 Non-Denominational Spiritual Space
- 1 Dedicated Indigenous Healing Space

INTANGIBLES

- hotelling area should foster collaboration & warm-handoffs
- must be private; not directly accessible from social areas
- spaces must feel confidential & trauma-informed
- considerations for staff safety

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

SUPPORT SERVICES CONT'D...

Health

- Dedicated semi-public waiting space
- Open Hotelling Space for 8 staff/partners
- 4 Trauma-Safe Offices (private, dual entry) to serve:
 - mental health
 - addictions
 - Indigenous specific care
- 4 Trauma-Safe Clinical Spaces (private, dual entry) to serve:
 - primary care
 - wound care
 - Indigenous specific care

INTANGIBLES

- hotelling area should foster collaboration & warm-handoffs
- offices & clinical spaces must be private; not directly accessible from social areas
- spaces must feel confidential & trauma-informed
- considerations for staff safety

Legal & Justice

- Open Hotelling Space for 4 staff/partners
- Must share hotelling space with Health partners
- 1 Barrired Intervention Room (Justice Partners)

INTANGIBLES

- hotelling area should foster collaboration & warm-handoffs
- must be private; not directly accessible from social areas
- must not be visible from entryway or primary public areas (can deter participants from seeking help)
- considerations for staff safety

Staff Space

- Staff washrooms & lockers
- Lunch room, kitchenette, lounge

INTANGIBLES

- fosters collaboration
- feels safe & supportive for partners to send staff as needed

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

AMENITIES

Basic Needs

Hygiene

- Washrooms (mens, womens, gender inclusive & universal)
- Showers

INTANGIBLES

- washrooms & showers feel very vulnerable in this setting, it is imperative that these spaces feel private & dignified while also allowing observation by staff where needed
- more stand-alone washrooms should be considered for the comfortable accommodation of non-binary participants, survivors of human trafficking, and other participants that would not feel safe in a congregate washroom setting
- washrooms require staff visibility as much as possible, while maintaining dignity and privacy

Food

- Cafe / Hospitality Station
- Grab & Go (canteen window)
- Commercial Kitchen & Food Prep Area
- Cafeteria
- Food Bank / Donation Storage

INTANGIBLES

- meal service can create large influx of participants at meal times. Plan for long lines that don't disrupt other programming.

Rest

- Recharge Room (dark, quiet, sensory sensitive)

INTANGIBLES

- balance staff visibility with participants sense of safety as much as possible (wide-open feels less safe for participants)
- theft is a big concern in this space
- consider sensory-sensitive design (ie. Snoezelen)

Laundry

- Laundry Room

INTANGIBLES

- this area should be open and passively visible to staff to increase safety & security
- this area should be adjacent to public areas and not tucked away in a service area to increase safety & security

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

AMENITIES CONT'D...

Social Space

- 1 Multi-Purpose Space
- a variety of small, visible lounges that vary in social dynamic (ie. quiet/contemplative vs. social)

INTANGIBLES

- social spaces should be visible from a distance (both for security and for participant choice/trauma-informed design)
- consideration should be given for animal-friendly spaces

Outdoor Space

- a variety of outdoor spaces that allow for flexibility (ie. spaces to meet outside, social area, talking circles, etc.)
- should be visible & immediately accessible from entry

INTANGIBLES

- visible to staff (passive security)
- should only be accessible through the building itself & mitigate possibility of participants entering through unmonitored access points
- consideration should be given for animal-friendly outdoor spaces (ie. a dog run)

Utilities

- Security
- Mechanical & Electrical Room
- IT Room
- Maintenance
- Storage

WHAT SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

HOUSING

“We shouldn’t build a thing to solve homelessness without building homes.”

Focus Group Participant



EMERGENCY SHELTER

Feedback indicates that Windsor–Essex’s emergency shelters are doing an excellent job of serving that specific need, and that any housing options explored through The Housing Hub should exclude emergency beds. The notable exception is that there is a need for shelter overflow space during winter surges & unexpected weather events



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Feedback indicates that there is a significant need for transitional housing – basic units that can be immediately available for short term use while next steps are determined by staff and supporting agencies.



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Feedback indicates that there is a significant need for permanent supportive housing – basic units available for longer-term tenancy while still accessing a full range of flexible support services.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ON-SITE HOUSING

For any on-site housing, there are 2 separate demographics that would benefit greatly from housing designed with their specific needs in mind:

- 1) High & Complex Needs (high-acuity)
- 2) Vulnerable & Underserved Populations (low & mid-acuity)
 - Indigenous
 - Trans & Queer
 - Women

FLEXIBLE USE

Feedback indicates that there should be heavy consideration for flexible space that can ebb & flow with the needs of the community. Some of the surge needs identified to date are

CIVIC EMERGENCIES

NATURAL DISASTERS

PEAK DEMAND IN WINTER MONTHS

SHELTER OVERFLOW



7 ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

Accountability is taking ownership of what happens next. Accountability also requires us to have a framework to return to, to know whether the project has upheld the needs that have been identified. The following pages include, in alphabetical order, a qualitative framework to return to – identifying categories of needs that will define the success of The Housing Hub.

ADDICTIONS

- Addictions are both a significant need to be supported at The Housing Hub, and a barrier to entry for many who either don't feel safe in an addiction-centred setting, or have recovered from substance misuse and want to maintain sobriety. Great care should be taken to separate those wishing to recover from individuals actively struggling with substance misuse.
- Building programming should balance "come as you are" drop-in spaces with overall programming that makes the path to wellness available when participants are ready
- On-site transitional units should prioritize participants struggling with addiction, and can be used to safely house individuals while they wait to access other support systems (ie. detox & withdrawal management)
- Immediacy is paramount. High risk participants are lost through referrals.

ANIMAL COMPANIONS

- Many participants have animal companions for both safety and companionship. Many participants will choose not to seek help if it would separate them from their animal.
- Building layout should consider zoning animal-friendly spaces, both inside and outside, to allow participants to remain with their companion while accessing services, and/or provide a safe space for an animal to stay while their owner accesses services. Layout should allow for choice and agency surrounding the choice to be near animals.
- An operational policy is recommended to set boundaries around animal temperament

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

COLLABORATIVE MODEL

“People show up with a primary concern, but as you start talking, you realize there are several other ways they need help. It’s a game-changer when those other supports are right there.”

Focus Group Participant - Staff

- This work is highly intersectional, and many participants will require supports from more than one agency. Creating workspaces that foster collaboration, while still providing a spectrum of private spaces for sensitive discussions is critical.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

HOURS OF OPERATION

- Participants would benefit greatly from increased and consistent access to medical, mental health and addictions supports.

HOME-LIKE / NON-INSTITUTIONAL

- It is imperative that the building feel comfortable, not institutional. This can be achieved through material finishes, the provision of comfortable seating, ample connection to views & natural light, and clear lines of sight that foster passive orientation & wayfinding.

HUMAN-CENTRED CARE

- see also: Destigmatization & Trauma Informed Design
- Human-centred care is critical to The Housing Hub's ongoing success. In theory, this means that all problem-solving puts the participant's holistic needs first. In practice, this means treating people with dignity, compassion & respect, and providing coordinated care that can be personalized to each individual's needs and desires.
- Design decisions for this facility should uphold human-centred care by:
 - Continuing open conversation with current H4 participants and individuals with previous lived experience with homelessness, and prioritizing their feedback.
 - Provide for simple security that can allow staff to keep the space safe without participants feeling policed or losing a sense of autonomy.
 - Prioritize programming that supports a sense of positivity, dignity & hope, and be vigilant not to integrate programming that jeopardizes those that are working hard to better themselves.

IMMIGRATION

- Facility should integrate translation services & offer signage in multiple languages.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

INDIGENOUS SPECIFIC NEEDS

- 40% of those seeking services at H4 currently are Indigenous.² This is a shocking over-representation compared to the general population, and even compared to other silo'd service sectors. This demonstrates a critical need to prioritize hearing, understanding, and honoring Indigenous needs in future design phases of The Housing Hub.

- The most critical and impactful need expressed by those representing Indigenous communities is the need for Indigenous staff (in as many roles as possible). The absolute game changer for many Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness is seeing someone who looks like them, and intuitively understands their unique history of collective trauma and systemic oppression, who can help them and show them the path forward.

"The thing that changes everything is meeting someone who looks like you, and understands some of your life, who looks you in the eye and tells you it's going to get better, and here's how."

Focus Group Participant - Indigenous Service Providers

- The building should provide at least one dedicated space for Indigenous healing practices. This should be a space whose configuration, materiality, aesthetic & functional needs should be informed by continuing conversations with Indigenous led service providers.

- Any on-site housing offered should prioritize and account for the needs specific to Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness. Design decisions for these spaces should be informed by continuing conversations with Indigenous individuals with lived experience of homelessness and Indigenous service providers.

- Understanding that the needs listed above are the absolute priority in terms of impact, we also learned about the "nice to have" considerations that contribute to a felt sense of belonging, pride and cultural teaching:

- Indigenous art
- Fires, where possible (gathering around)
- Smudging (airtight confidential spaces)
- Talking circles (indoor & outdoor)
- Raw/Natural Materials
- Connection to Nature (inc. sacred plants)
- Kitchen as a Gathering Space

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

MEDICAL

- Medical service providers voiced that a wrap-around service hub with co-ordinated access would be a huge support to the challenges that they face in servicing this vulnerable sector. Representatives from many facets of Windsor-Essex's health sector stressed that if the space felt safe and made it easy to drop-in & collaborate with other service providers, they would want to build teams to provide ongoing on-site care.

*"The gaps in the system are unbelievable.
This would solve so many of our biggest problems"*

Focus Group Participant - Health Sector

- There is a need for secure medical dispensing.
- Design decisions for clinical spaces should be informed by continuing conversations with primary care providers.
- Possible targetted specialized care could include:
 - oral health services
 - wound care
 - foot care
 - palliative care

MENTAL HEALTH

- see also: Trauma Informed Design
- Immediate walk-in mental health supports are critical. These supports will often intersect with every other support on site, so the facility should foster open collaboration between sectors and warm-handoffs of participants.
- Participants struggling with their mental health may arrive on site in crisis, or enter into an escalated state while accessing services. It is critical for the building to provide de-escalation space near the entrance, and make it as easy as possible for staff to escort an escalated participant out of the building when required. For example - keep all client-facing services on the ground level, and allow for zones or wings that are easy to secure from each other.
- Building should provide a variety of meeting spaces with various levels of privacy/ openness to allow staff to choose privacy level best suited to the participant's needs.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

OUTDOOR SPACE

- Outdoor space is desired by staff & participants and seen as a functional asset to the building's flexible use and human-centered approach. Many staff indicated that sitting with participants outside can be impactful for de-escalation and destigmatizing care.
- Outdoor space in front of the building was seen as a concern if it fostered loitering and degraded perceptions of safety. However, many felt that an outdoor space within the building would be well used and contribute to a sense of dignity, care and positivity.
- Consideration should be given to some animal-friendly outdoor space.
- Consideration should be given to cultivation space (ie. community garden)

SAFETY & CRIME PREVENTION

"Perception is everything.

Once you lose the perception of safety, it's almost impossible to get it back."

Focus Group Participant - Police

- see also: Destigmatization
- Activating the building & streetscape with a variety of uses over all times of day/week can significantly mitigate crime potential. This can be achieved by broadening the spectrum of services to increase the reasons for access, including appropriate public-facing amenities, and by integrating principals of walkable urbanism.
- Facility should be designed to orient public face away from sensitive land use (ie. a public park). Location should consider relationships to both residential & business areas.
- Careful consideration should be given to site design to mitigate loitering as a common pre-cursor to crime hotspots. Preconditions for loitering are understood to include: Convenience, Comfort, Concealment and Canopy/Cover.
- Parking lots should be open, passively visible (ie. not concealed or obscured), with effort to keep them activated and in use 24/7 to discourage loitering.
- On-site housing should be designed with careful consideration of "visual accountability" to increase safety. Concealed common spaces tend to feel unsafe.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

SECURITY

*“Security for a space like this is a huge operational cost.
The more we can simplify security in its design,
the more effective we can be in running it.”*

Focus Group Participant - Social Services

- Security within the building can be fostered by:
 - Positioning reception/welcome desk to have clear lines of sight into primary circulation paths, common areas and washrooms
 - Consolidate building access to a primary entrance so staff can have a constant passive understanding of who is in the building (ie. avoid secondary entrances that don't have visibility to reception/welcome desk)
 - Prioritize clear lines of sight between staffed areas and common areas
 - Passive visibility into common public amenities such as laundry and lockers
 - Keep participant-facing services on one level if possible (splitting staffing between 2 floors increases security risk)
 - Maintain 2 exits to all meeting spaces, wherever possible
 - Include 1 fully barriered intervention room to be used as needed
 - Ensure that it is easy for staff to lead an escalated participant out of the building in case of emergency or conflict
 - Design building to create securable zones or wings
 - Include good exterior lighting

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

SPIRITUAL

- Many participants benefit from non-judgemental spiritual counsel. The facility should provide a dedicated non-denominational spiritual practice space to allow for local parishioners and spiritual leaders to offer on-site support as needed.

STORAGE

- Many participants may only experience homelessness for a short time, but risk losing their homes' contents if they can't store it temporarily. Facility design should consider on-site storage options to support this need.

- Participants exiting homelessness often require assistance in accessing furnishings & basic household startup items (ie. dishes). On-site storage could also double as a furniture bank to assist in allocating furniture donations.

- Consideration should be given to how much of this need could be addressed and supported through a partnership with a local organization (Habitat for Humanity) and/or an off-site shipping container company.

TRANS & QUEER NEEDS

*"Most of the trans & queer community do not access emergency services because they **don't feel safe.**"*

Focus Group Participant - Socio-Cultural Support Sector

- Trans & queer participants are likely underrepresented in current data due to the fact that they do not feel safe enough to access emergency services. Many are young and have been rejected from their families on the basis of their gender expression or sexuality.

- Increasing safety for trans & queer participants can be achieved by:

- mandatory staff training for inclusion and safety of trans and queer participants
- gender inclusive washrooms (preferably stand-alone instead of congregate)
- gender inclusive signage and visual cues
- dedicated housing options that are separate from high & complex needs

- The trans & queer community has a specific need for employment supports, which could be prioritized through The Housing Hub's employment & education support services.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

TRAUMA-INFORMED DESIGN

- Trauma-Informed Design is simply understanding and prioritizing the environmental supports for Trauma-Informed Care. Trauma-Informed Care recognizes & responds to the signs, symptoms and risks of trauma to better support the health needs of individuals who have experienced trauma, and actively avoid retraumatization.

- The core goals of Trauma-Informed Design in architecture are to foster:

Physical Safety - see Security and Safety & Crime Prevention

Psychological Safety - see Destigmatization

- space should feel unthreatening and welcoming
- carefully delineate between public and private zones, creating a gradient between social and confidential program
- wherever possible, protect participants from triggers that may jeopardize their journey toward stability
- provide ample environmental opportunities to “ground” ones nervous system (ie. sensory grounding, connection to nature & sunlight, contemplative space, etc.)

Dignity - building design should uphold participant dignity by avoiding visual “othering”

- programming should prioritize self-betterment & hope
- avoid spaces that foster institutionalized operations (ie. being treated like a number, or being actively surveilled)

Empowerment - find opportunities to offer participants a sense of agency/ autonomy and empowerment to choose what they need (ie. intuitive visual wayfinding, passive security, ability to see common spaces before entering them, choice to spend time in areas that are social vs. contemplative, etc)

Collaboration - create spaces that foster collaboration & mutuality between staff, participants and service providers.

Social Reconnection - create spaces that offer participants the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging, and social connectedness

- create spaces for informal events that bring people together

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DESIGN

YOUTH

*"Most youth who have outgrown child-focused services do not access emergency services for adults because they **do not feel safe.**"*

Focus Group Participant - Children & Youth Sector

- Youth is underserved in terms of shelter and housing options. It would be advantageous to have transitional and permanent supportive housing specifically for this sector, that is separated from housing for high and complex needs participants.
- Youth specifically need employment supports and life skills training, which could be prioritized through The Housing Hub's employment & education support services.

WOMEN

- Women with children, and women escaping domestic violence are well supported through local shelters (The Welcome Centre & Hiatus House)
- There is a specific need to support women without children, who may not be eligible to access care elsewhere, and yet don't feel safe in a shelter for the general population. It would be advantageous to have transitional and permanent supportive housing specifically for this sector, that is separated from housing for high and complex needs participants.
- There is a specific need for housing women who are survivors of human trafficking.



9 CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

How will this relate to the future of other Emergency Shelter Services?
(Are we duplicating services?)

The intent of The Housing Hub is not to duplicate existing services, but rather to create a robust triaging service that streamlines the connection between them. Coordination of intake and referrals will allow every partnering agency to operate more effectively and strategically in serving their particular sector. The intent of The Housing Hub is to provide a wrap-around resource that is easy for service providers to plug themselves into as needed, to provide on-site extensions of the services their organizations support more fully at other locations. In some cases, organizations may choose to send full-time teams (eg. housing, finance & health sector), and in other cases organizations may send a single staff member for “office hours” on particular days of the week (eg. spiritual supports or trans & queer support organizations).

While we understand that the role of the emergency shelter systems differs significantly from the intent of The Housing Hub (wrap-around service hub with on-site permanent & transitional housing), it will benefit all organizations to remain in communication with each other as planning stages unfold. Ongoing communication will allow all organizations to optimize their impact within their separate frameworks, funding, and mandates.

What about a decentralized model?

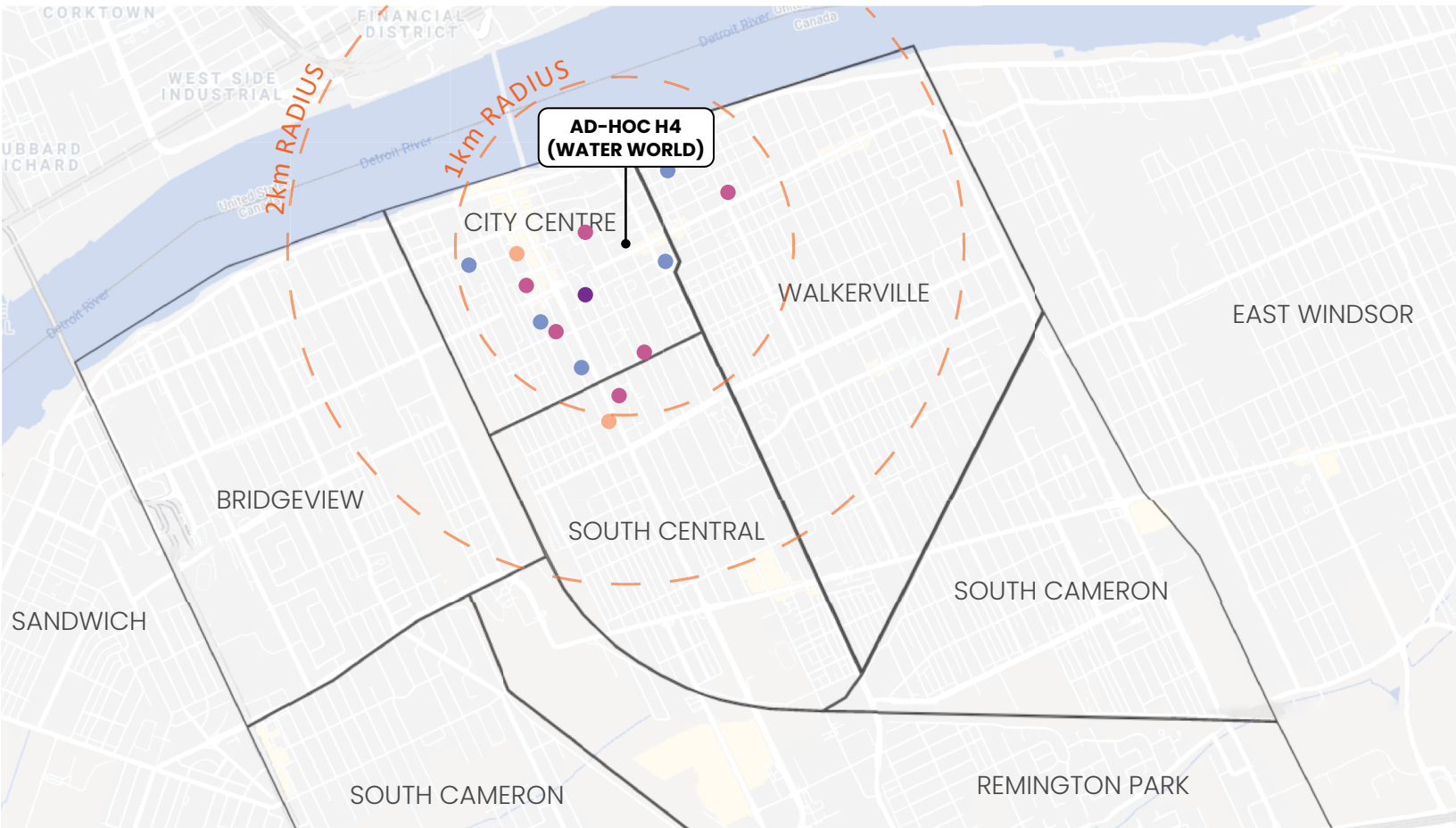
Feedback indicates that a “hub & spokes” model will allow for robust triaging and a singular access point for services, while also continuously connecting participants to decentralized housing all over the region. This will allow a continual effort for the City to distribute supportive housing equitably throughout the region, while also providing some on-site housing to cater to very specific needs (where immediacy is paramount, or where populations are particularly undersupported). Feedback indicates that decentralizing services, however, would fail to address the number of participants getting “lost in the gaps” between referrals.

Are the existing challenges inevitable anywhere?

No. Most of H4’s current challenges are either created or exacerbated by the site’s location and relationship to sensitive land use, or by the architectural limitations of the building itself. These challenges can be overcome through thoughtful site selection, and human-centred architectural design for The Housing Hub.



8 WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?

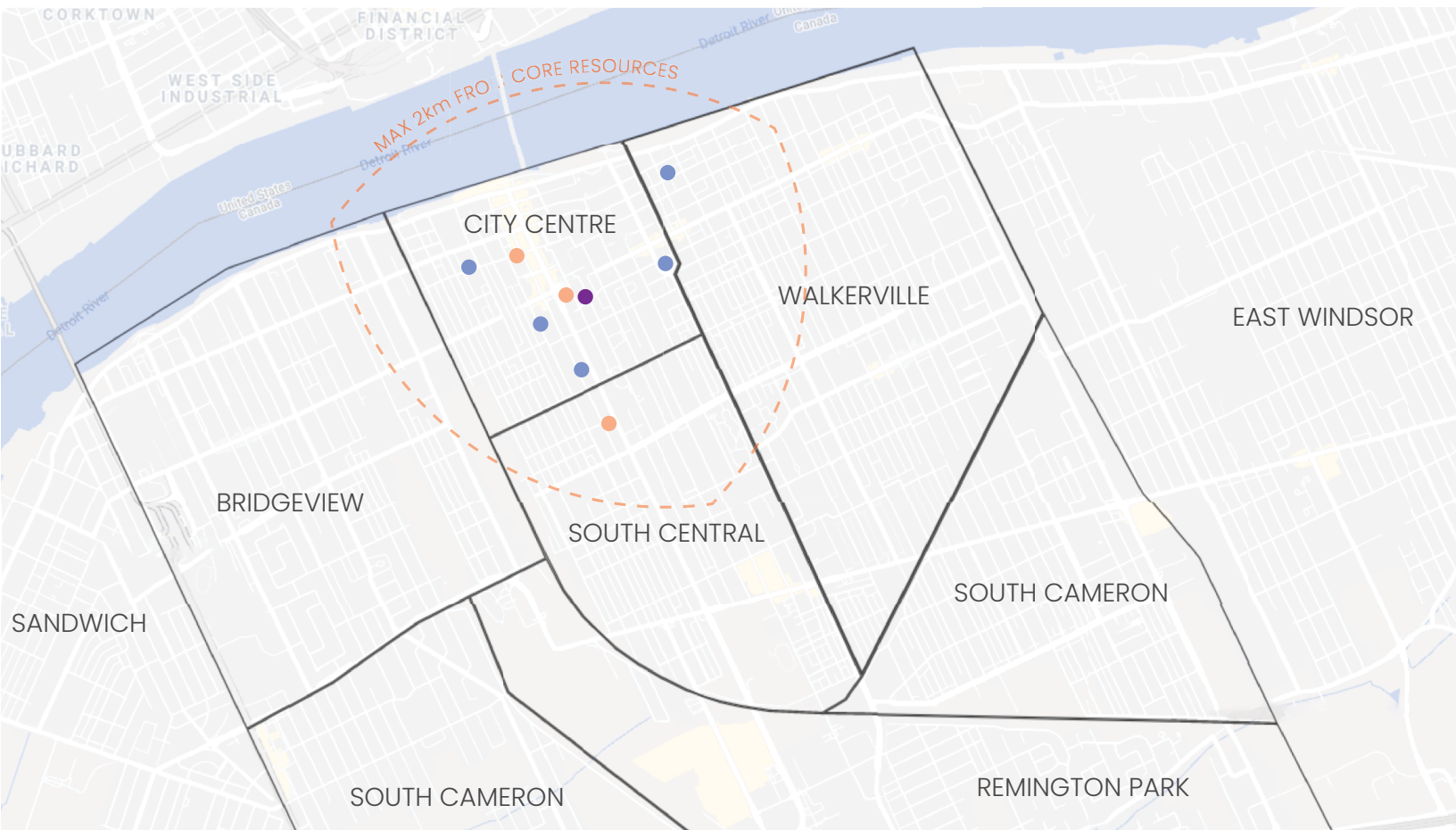


Community Resources in Relation to Existing H4

The map above depicts key community resources whose proximity to the existing H4 have been considered a contributing factor to H4's success and impact. Although many service providers cite 2km as the maximum distance the average participant might travel on foot to seek resources, we can see that in this case, H4's location affords walkability to these critical resources in under 1km.

- SHELTERS
- HARM REDUCTION PHARMACIES
- CONSUMPTION & TREATMENT SITE (CTS)
- FINANCIAL, HOUSING, MEDICAL & BASIC NEED SUPPORTS INTENDED TO BE OFFERED IN-HOUSE AT THE HOUSING HUB

WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?



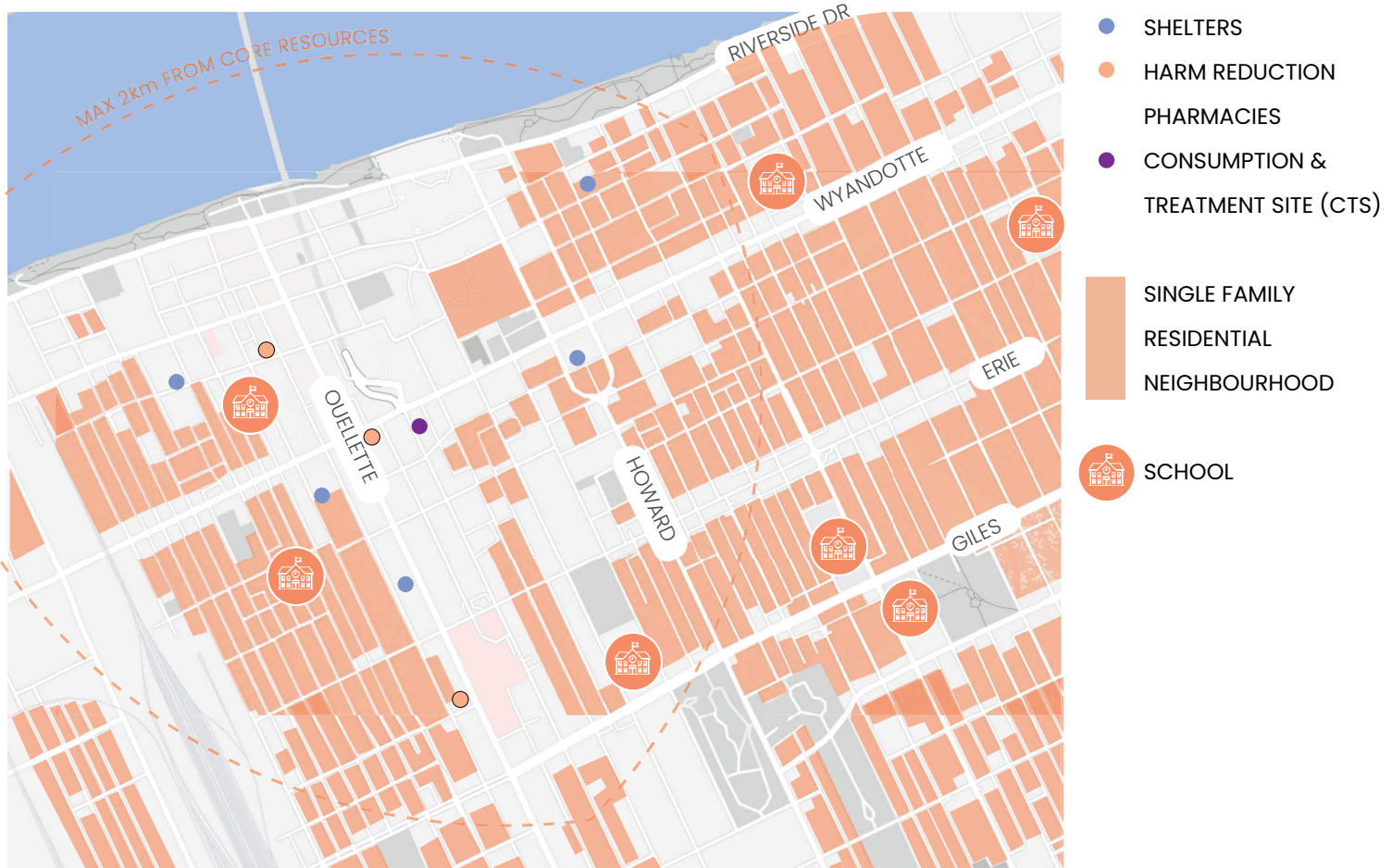
Community Resources in Relation to The Housing Hub

A significant mandate of The Housing Hub would be to coordinate access between many existing community supports – this would then have an impact on which community resources still require a walkable relationship to the facility. Feedback indicates that when The Housing Hub is fully operational with a broad range of in-house supports, it will remain important for the facility to have a walkable relationship to:

- SHELTERS
- HARM REDUCTION PHARMACIES
- CONSUMPTION & TREATMENT SITE (CTS)

Understanding that service providers cite 2km as the maximum distance the average participant is able to travel on foot to seek resources, the map above demonstrates an urban zone defined by a 2km maximum-distance from any of the remaining core resources. Feedback from participants, staff and service providers also indicates that these limitations are not impacted by access to public transit.

WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?



Relationship to Residential Neighbourhoods

In order to determine the ideal location for The Housing Hub, we need to assess the extents of nearby neighbourhoods of single family residential homes. We specifically look at single family residential neighbourhoods because of their sensitive relationship to the pedestrian realm – particularly for children. The ideal relationship to these neighbourhoods is not absolute. A site too embedded in these neighbourhoods can lead to increased community resistance, decreased sense of community safety, and increased demand for on-site policing. A site too alienated from a neighbourhood can increase a sense of stigma, and decrease a sense of dignity and safety for participants. Both outcomes would jeopardize The Housing Hub’s reach and impact.

When considering potential locations, seek sites that are not embedded in, or surrounded by neighbourhoods of single family residential homes, but rather seek sites that feel like extensions of them. Careful consideration should also be given to the proximity of schools, due to the increased number of unsupervised children walking within a 2 block radius.

WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?

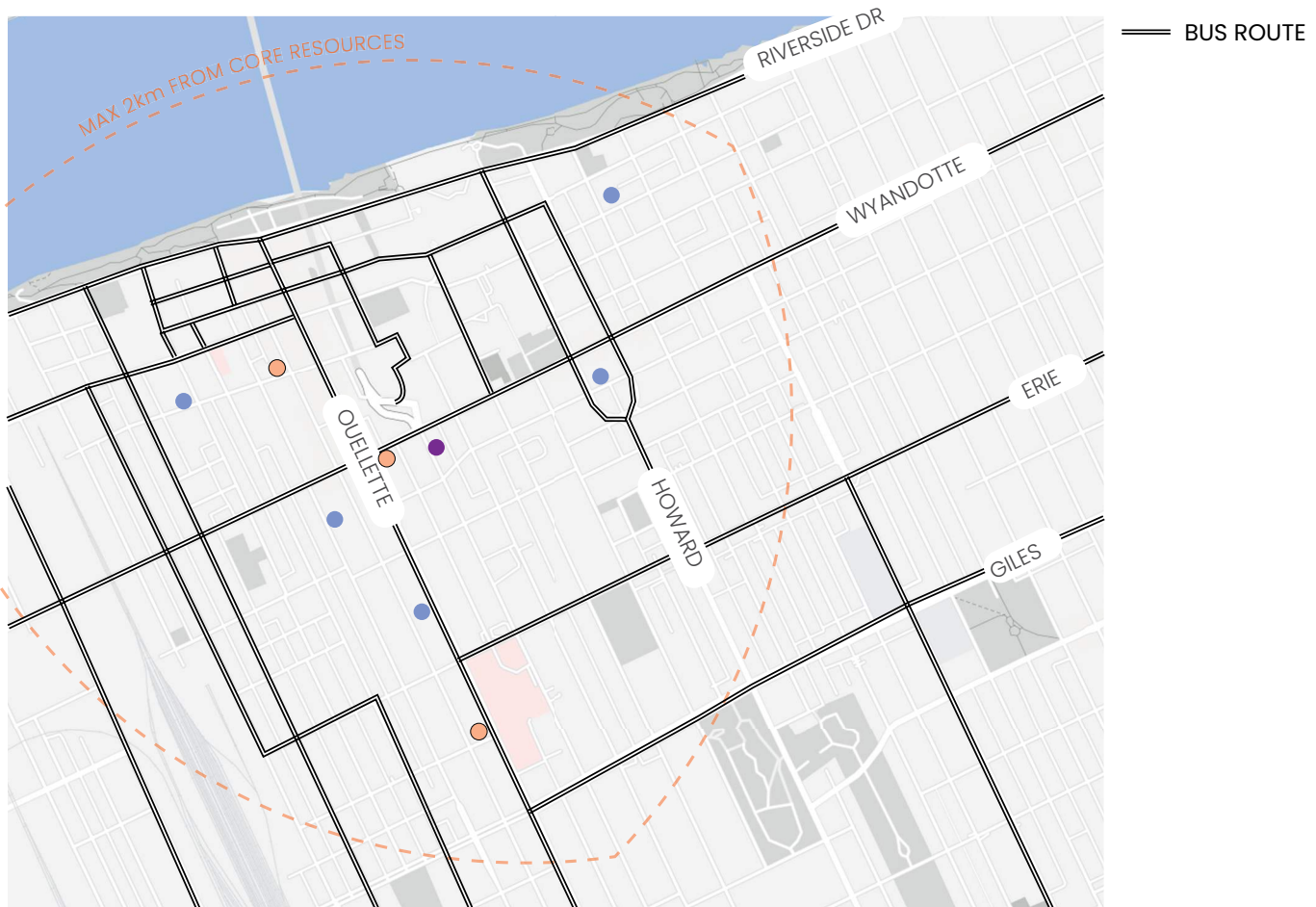


Relationship to Pedestrian Commercial Districts

The relationship between The Housing Hub and business districts is also critical to its success. The most important zones to consider are those with increased pedestrian traffic since those districts become “centres of gravity” for pieces of Windsor-Essex’s civic identity. These zones also represent the highest concentration of sensitive land use that would create friction with the vulnerable programming at The Housing Hub. Selecting a site embedded in any of these zones is likely to result in increased community resistance, increased demands for policing, and decreased sense of community safety.

When considering potential locations, seek sites that are not embedded in, or surrounded by pedestrian commercial districts.

WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?



Accessibility via Active & Public Transportation

The majority of high and mid-acuity participants arrive to H4 on foot, often from local shelters. Feedback indicates that these participants would struggle to access services if they needed to rely on public transit to access them, or if they needed to travel more than 2km to reach them.

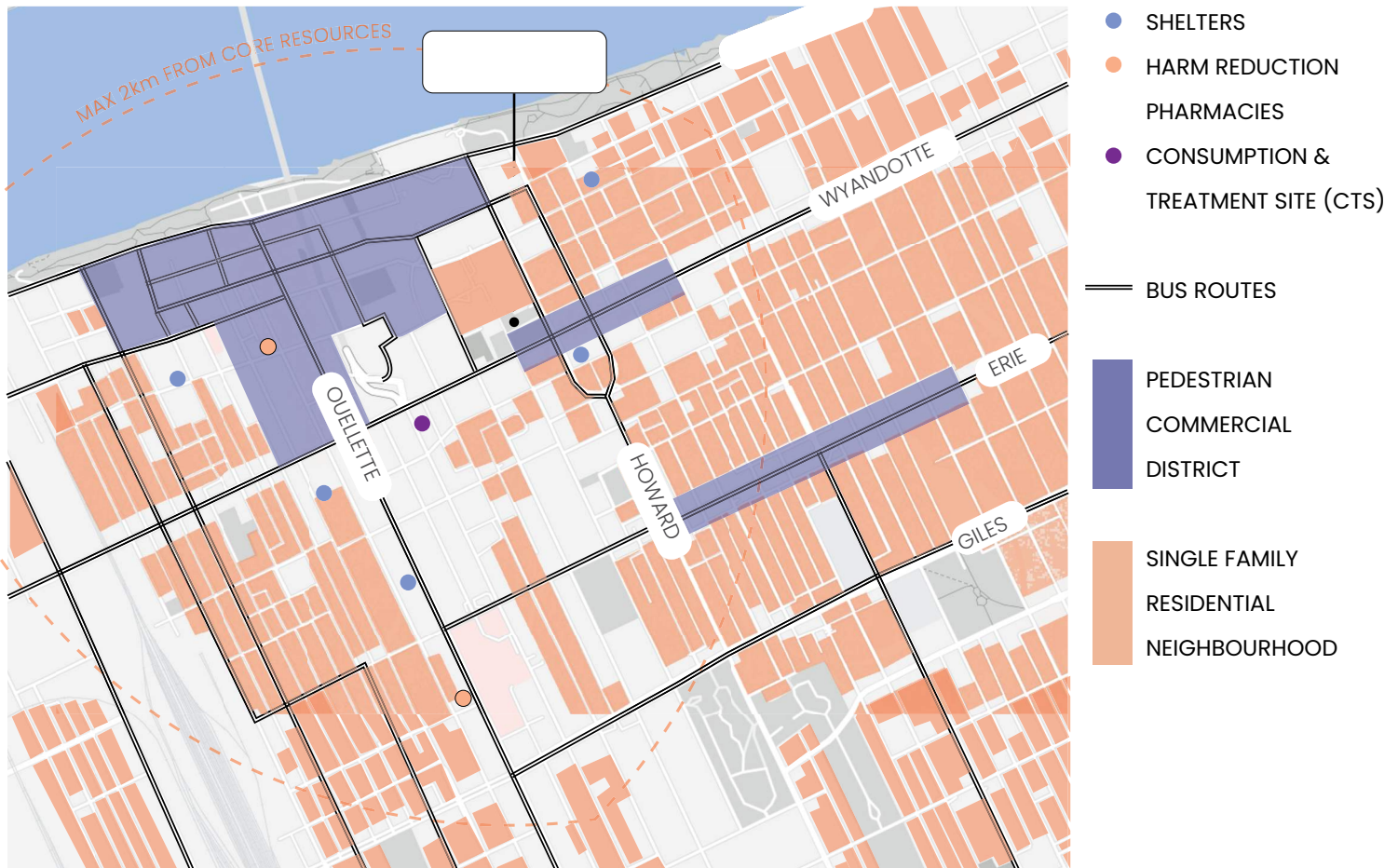
Low-acuity participants however, are likely to benefit greatly by a positioning a new H4 to be easily accessible by public transit.

When considering potential sites for The Housing Hub, seek sites that are accessible to public transit and within the 2km of core resources.

Loitering Hotspots

Careful consideration should be given to site selection in relation to “loitering hotspots” as a predictable precondition to increased crime and decreased sense of safety. Preconditions for loitering are understood to include: Convenience, Comfort, Concealment and Canopy/Cover. Parking lots that are not actively used or visible 24/7 are the most common example.

WHERE SHOULD THE HOUSING HUB GO?



Site Selection Criteria

Potential sites should be considered through the lens of the following site sensitivity criteria:

- 1 Relationship to Single Family Residential Neighbourhoods
- 2 Relationship to Pedestrian Commercial Districts
- 3 Accessibility via Active & Public Transportation
- 4 Loitering Hotspots / Environmental Security Concerns

Existing H4 Location

By visualizing the criteria for site sensitivity we can now clearly see some of the contextual underpinnings of H4's successes & challenges. Walkability to core community resources has been critical to its success, while being embedded between a residential community and a pedestrian commercial district has increased community resistance, decreased sense of safety, and increased demand for police presence. All of these factors jeopardize H4's impact.



10 FUTURE CONSULTATION

Feedback to date indicates that the success of The Housing Hub facility could be greatly informed by continuing dialogue with the very people this space is intended to serve. Our recommendations for future consultation are outlined below. We recommend that this consultation is human-centred and conversation-based, not performed via survey.

Pre-Design

- Surrounding Community (eg. residents & businesses within 2-5km of selected site)

After Schematic Design, to Inform Design Development

- Service Providers
 - housing & finance
 - health sector (specifically primary care providers)
 - police & justice
 - shelters & social housing
 - Indigenous service providers
 - immigration & grass roots organizations
 - trans & queer advocacy sector
- Current and Past Participants at H4 (incl. others with lived experience of homelessness)
- Staff at H4
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
- Surrounding Community (eg. residents & businesses within 2-5km of selected site)



11 NEXT STEPS

Architecturally, the next step is to turn this information into a functional program to better understand how this might translate into built form. That program can then be tested on a series of sites in order to equip the City with appropriate information for site acquisition. High-level cost estimation can also equip the City with appropriate information for capital investment planning.

If you have feedback for our team or would like to be added to the email list to receive future updates, please contact our project team directly:

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