



City of Hamilton

**EXPANDING HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WOMEN, NON-BINARY, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY
SUB-COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Meeting #: 21-001

Date: March 18, 2021

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Due to the COVID-19 and the Closure of City Hall

All electronic meetings can be viewed at:

City's Website:

<https://www.hamilton.ca/council-committee/council-committee-meetings/meetings-and-agendas>

City's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/InsideCityofHamilton> or Cable 14

Tamara Bates, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 4102

Pages

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(Added Items, if applicable, will be noted with *)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1. December 4, 2020

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5. COMMUNICATIONS

5.1. Correspondence from Jennifer Hompoth, respecting the need for targeted housing for women, non-binary and transgender people

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Recommendation: Be received

6. DELEGATION REQUESTS

7. CONSENT ITEMS

7.1. Winter 2020 Housing and Emergency Shelter Supports (HSC21007)
(City Wide)

9

8. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS / DELEGATIONS

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

11. MOTIONS

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

13. GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS

14. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

15. ADJOURNMENT



**EXPANDING HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR
WOMEN, NON-BINARY, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY
SUB-COMMITTEE
MINUTES 20-003**

12:30 p.m.
Friday, December 4, 2020
Room 264
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Present:

Voting:

Councillors N. Nann (Chair), C. Collins, J. Farr, and M. Wilson
S. Badri, R. Bouwman, C. Cowan-Morneau, K. Kalinowski, and
C. Kirkby

Non-Voting:

N. Zelisko

Regrets:

R. Mastroianni and M. Vaccaro

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REFERRED TO THE EMERGENCY AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**1. Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options (HSC20061) (City Wide)
(Added Item 10.1)**

(Collins/Farr)

- (a) That annual funding up to \$950,000 from the Net Levy to support the operating costs of the Good Shepherd Centre's Emergency Shelter proposal and increase the investment in the Municipally-funded Portable Housing Benefit Program for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults from Hamilton's By-Name List, be approved to be referred to the 2021 Operating Budget for consideration; and,
- (b) That, in the event the proposed Good Shepherd Emergency Shelter project does not proceed, annual funding of up to \$950,000 from the Net Levy to support the operating costs of Mission Services' Emergency Shelter proposal and increase the investment in the Municipally-funded Portable Housing Benefit Program for women, trans-feminine, trans-

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masculine and non-binary adults from Hamilton's By-Name List, be approved to be referred to the 2021 Operating Budget for consideration.

CARRIED

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda.

10 DISCUSSION ITEMS

10.1 Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options (HSC20061)
(City Wide)

(Kalinowski/Wilson)

That the agenda for the December 4, 2020 Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary, and Transgender Community Sub-Committee meeting be approved, as amended.

CARRIED

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

(i) November 10, 2020 (Item 4.1)

(Kirkby/Cowan-Morneau)

That the Minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary, and Transgender Community Sub-Committee, be approved, as presented.

CARRIED

(d) DISCUSSION ITEMS

(i) Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options (HSC20061) (City Wide) (Added Item 10.1)

(Wilson/Farr)

That staff be directed to report back to the next meeting of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary, and Transgender Community Sub-Committee with a status update on the use of existing housing and emergency shelter supports for women, non-binary and transgender people during the 2020 winter season, with particular focus on investments that have been made, outcomes that have been achieved,

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and further existing strains, including measures that could be taken
alleviate those strains.

CARRIED

For further disposition of this matter, see Item 1.

(e) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

(Bouwman/Badri)

That there being no further business, the Expanding Housing and Support
Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee be adjourned
at 1:06 p.m.

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Nrinder Nann
Chair, Expanding Housing and Support
Services for Women, Non-Binary and
Transgender Community Sub-Committee

Tamara Bates
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk

Bates, Tamara

Subject: FW: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

From: Jennifer Hompoth <>

Sent: December 7, 2020 10:59 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Fwd: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

Please forward correspondence to members of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee.

Thank You!

Jennifer Hompoth.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jennifer Hompoth <j>

Date: Mon, 7 Dec 2020 at 10:36

Subject: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

To: <nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca>, <chad.collins@hamilton.ca>, Wilson, Maureen <maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca>, Jason Farr <jason.farr@hamilton.ca>

To Councilor Nrinder Nann, Chair, and members of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee,

I applaud this committee's collective efforts to recognize the need for targeted housing for women, non-binary and transgender people.

When the Mountainview shelter was the New Dawn Reception Centre under SISO, it was able to host approximately 40 people, in family units, in one section of the facility. As a building, it has a huge footprint, with a lot of potential. Several million dollars were already added to the facility directly funded by the federal government in 2005. Valuation of this facility to its fullest requires a municipal investment-- an investment which would soundly add value to a property which has demonstrated utility.

While short term shelter beds are needed, the pressure to expediently turn over high quantities of guests also places operational pressure on agency staff, who are dependent on funding models that privilege # of guests over the quality of their care. This attempt at increasing short-term beds must also be accompanied by a concurrent attempt to raise the liveable permanent housing stock for women, non-binary, and trans people. I have had colleagues who are housing workers, funded through Housing First, who are unable to find their clients, women, non-binary and trans folks with complex needs, any shelter despite working together with them for periods over 20 months.

Lastly, I ask that you consider the significant fact that Hamilton has no dedicated not-for-profit organization whose mission is Queer and Trans community health or housing. While there are organizations with a significant research and advocacy interest, such as the SPRC Hamilton, we do not have a single dedicated LGBTQ2SI+ health organization. Research tells us that homelessness for trans and non-binary people often

begins in youth; however, there are a lack of dedicated Queer and Trans housing supports for youth. Many youth who I have encountered as the Founder of a youth centre which saw 10,000 visits annually did not feel safe in existing youth temporary housing, and cited lack of culturally appropriate safety in existing youth shelters as a reason.

I urge you to take a position as a Committee which prioritises:

- increase net number of permanent shelter beds for women, trans, and non-binary people
- value-for dollar investment in facilities, with a view to their long-term benefit to helping women, trans, non-binary people to find and keep long term housing
- operational review of how "serve as many people as possible" policy emphasis contributes to funding pressures faced by Not-For Profit Housing agencies and agencies with housing contracts
- Use of a Diversity & Equity lens to assess agency success. (i.e. not penalizing Indigenous organizations who are not as "successful" in housing clients.
- Increase to net number of beds for temporary & long term shelter for victims of Domestic Violence

Several issues come to bear, here.

1) Historic resourcing & profile of larger, more connected, Christian faith-based organizations- have ongoing funding & support from members of faith congregations, national networks (International, in the case of Good Shepherd).

2) Client base, "multiple and complex" health and social needs: Need to distinguish the unique and systemic nature of barriers for particular homeless populations. Indigenous clients may face multiple and complex traumas based on loss of land, displacement, residential schooling.

Given this disparity, the additional attention to funding, and diversion of municipal resources to equity seeking groups can help bolster universal access.

- creation/rentention of Indigenous & LGBTQ2SI+ housing advisory committees, with role of advising & informing housing framework for Indigenous, Two Spirited, and Trans, non-binary people.

I thank all members of this subcommittee for their dedicated efforts to understand the policy implications of operational- real life, on the ground issues- as pertaining to expanding housing options for women, non-binary, and transgender people in our municipality.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hompoth.

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"What are the standards that we have? If we're concerned about unarmed truth--understanding this condition of truth is allowing suffering to speak--and unconditional love--understanding justice is what love looks like in public--then the question is, what suffering voices do we hear...and what kinds of concerns about justice are made manifest...? Cornell West



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 18, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Winter 2020 Housing and Emergency Shelter Supports (HSC21007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Yolisa de Jager (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3863 Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035 Nadia Zelisko (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2548
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On December 4, 2020, the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee directed that:

“Staff report back to the next meeting of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary, and Transgender Community Sub-Committee with a status update on the use of existing housing and emergency shelter supports for women, non-binary and transgender people during the 2020 winter season, with particular focus on investments that have been made, outcomes that have been achieved, and further existing strains, including measures that could be taken alleviate those strains.”

INFORMATION

Background

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Winter 2020 Housing and Emergency Shelter Supports
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On January 16, 2020, Council approved the funding recommendations outlined in Report HSC20004 Recommended Projects from Coming Together to End Homelessness: Call for Applications 2019. The collection of homelessness interventions that were approved for funding constructed the foundation of Hamilton's homeless-serving system of care, aligning with the vision articulated in Coming Together to End Homelessness: Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework. The report outlines a summary of funding allocations, including programs providing gender-specific prevention, shelter diversion and in-home housing support services.

On June 19, 2020, Council approved the recommendations in Report HSC20020 Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness. Gender-specific drop-in programs at the YWCA and Mission Services received funding to extend services until June 30, 2021.

On July 13, 2020, Council approved recommendations outlined in Report HSC20020(a) Adaptation and Transformation of Services Update 1. Housing Services Division purchased services of rental hotel rooms and associated services, such as cleaning, security and food provision to meet the needs of homeless individuals, couples and families. Women's emergency shelters and other emergency shelter providers received additional financial support to increase staffing capacity.

On September 10, 2020, Council received Report HSC20037 Emergency Shelter Services for Single Homeless Women. The report confirmed the closure of Native Women's Centre Mountainview Shelter and the commencement of a request for proposals process for additional women's emergency shelter beds.

On December 4, 2020, the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee approved Report HSC20061 Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options. Recommendations included an additional, annual \$950 K levy investment to fund the successful Request for Proposal proponent and/or create a municipally-funded Portable Housing Benefit Program for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults from Hamilton's By-Name List.

On December 10, 2020, Council received Report HSC20062 Women's Emergency Shelter Request for Proposals, notifying Council of Good Shepherd Centres' successful application.

Use of Existing Housing and Emergency Shelter Supports During Winter 2020

For the purpose of this Report, Winter 2020 is defined as November to December 2020 for program outcomes, and November 2020 to March 2021 for financial investments. The additional funding received, and investment decisions made in Spring and Summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in expanded emergency shelter services

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for the promotion of social distancing and mitigation of program outbreaks and general community spread.

Of the total funds allocated and distributed through Housing Services, \$8.2 M was designated to programs and support services for women, gender-diverse individuals, couples and families during winter months. This investment increased shelter beds from 46 core-funded shelter beds up to 168 beds, by phasing in additional hotel rooms. Women's drop-in centre services were extended, and city-funded homelessness programs were financially supported to implement infection prevention and control plans and increase staffing teams.

Table 1: Additional Investments in Shelter and Housing				
Project Name	Target Population	Funding Commitment	Timeframe	Purpose
Hotels	Families, Women, Gender-Diverse Adults, Couples	\$5,000,816	November 2020 to March 2021	Overflow Shelter Beds, COVID Response 55 Rooms for Women and Gender-Diverse Adults 110 Rooms accessible for couples, overflow beds for Women / Gender-Diverse Adults Rooms as needed for Families (no limit)
Hotel Case Management	Women, Gender-Diverse Adults, Couples	\$1,581,203	November 2020 to March 2021	Additional Staffing
Hotel Support Costs		\$158,366	November 2020 to March 2021	Security Environmental Cleaning Food Costs
Drop-in Program Operations	Women, Gender-Diverse Adults	\$1,471,897	November 2020 to March 2021	
Total: \$8,218,282 * Pending Negotiation in some categories				

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From November 1 to December 31, 2020, shelter bed and hotel room occupancy was high, with a range of near-full to over-capacity occupancy rates among women's emergency shelter beds and women-specific hotels rooms. The Men and Couples' Hotel is designed to function as an overflow shelter option to the women's system. During this same timeframe, it operated at an average occupancy rate of 75% capacity, with approximately 25% room capacity consistently open and available (see Table 2). As of January 4, 2021, hotel capacity was expanded further by an additional 22 rooms.

Notre Dame Youth Shelter had the lowest average occupancy rate over November and December at 48%, with up to six beds consistently available to homeless youth. Family Shelter Services operated at near-full occupancy and supported an equivalent volume of families in the hotel system in November. Hotel usage by families decreased in December, a reduction that historically occurs around the holiday season.

Table 2: Shelter and Hotel Usage November 1 to December 31, 2020				
Program	Target Population	Max Beds/Rooms	November average occupancy	December average occupancy
Good Shepherd Mary's Place	Single women	20 beds	105%	96%
St. Joseph's Healthcare—WomanKind	Single women	6 beds	127%	84%
Good Shepherd Family Centre	Families	20 rooms/80 beds	95%	92%
Good Shepherd Notre Dame	Youth, all genders	13 beds	49%	46%
Men and Couples Hotel	Adults all Genders, Women's System overflow, Couples	November: 57 rooms/114 beds December: 67 rooms/134 beds	77%	72%
Family Hotel	Families	20 rooms/80 beds*	90%	54%
Single Women Hotel	Single women	55 rooms/55 beds	94%	93%
*No predetermined upper limit of rooms at the family hotel. Used as needed.				

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From November 1 to December 31, 2020, a total of 437 unique individuals accessed women's emergency shelters or women-specific hotel accommodations, with an average length of stay of 45 days. There is an increase in time clients are staying within hotel programs, with more individuals staying in place for 3 months or longer. Longer stays impact shelter bed turnover frequency, thus reducing the capacity of the program to serve a higher volume of individuals. If these trends continue, the average length of stay will rise and a person's experience of homelessness on average will extend.

An analysis of the YWCA Transitional Living Program demonstrates an average occupancy rate of 75%, with 10 to 15 private rooms available per month. Unit repairs, unit turnover schedules and a multistep intake process provide explanations for the consistent 25% underutilization of private rooms and program spaces. Anecdotally, the program reports difficulty in recruiting participants to Transitional Housing in part due to clients preferring hotel accommodations. These reports do align with length of stay averages for hotels programs, cited earlier. To address these concerns, the YWCA received temporary funding to provide meals to residents. In December 2020, the program experienced a fire resulting in 15 beds temporarily offline while restoration work occurred.

City-funded drop-in programs served a high volume of adult women and gender diverse persons seeking assistance. The YWCA Carol Anne's Place had an average monthly occupancy rate of 109%, a calculation based on 20 program spaces per night. Mission Services Willow's Place reported serving 65 unique women and gender-diverse persons from November 1 to December 31, 2021. Willow's Place provides services to both individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are precariously housed.

Housing Outcomes achieved in Winter 2020

The City of Hamilton funds three gender-specific housing programs: Good Shepherd Intensive Case Management (ICM), Good Shepherd Rapid Rehousing and YWCA Transitional Living Program. Combined, these programs have achieved 34% of their annual housing placements targets, nine months into their funding contracts. From November 1 to December 31, 2020, emergency shelter and hotels directly housed an additional four women/gender-diverse clients, and men's ICM programs housed an additional eight women/gender-diverse adults.

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Good Shepherd Rapid Rehousing, ICM and YWCA Transitional Living Program Housing Placement Actuals and Targets for 2020-2021						
Month	Rapid Rehousing Women	Rapid Rehousing Families *households	ICM Women	ICM Families *households	ICM Youth	YWCA Transitional Living Program
April	2	6	1	3	2	0
May	1	3	2	0	2	4
June	2	2	0	3	3	1
July	5	1	1	0	2	4
August	2	0	0	4	2	2
September	0	1	1	0	1	2
October	1	7	0	2	1	2
November	3	2	3	2	0	3
December	3	7	1	6	0	2
Totals	19	29	9	20	13	20
Program Targets for 2020-2021	87	86	77	35	34	N/A
Total Clients Housed	61 individuals and 49 households					

Existing Strains

The overall strain on the homeless-serving system is a combination of: increase individual women and gender diverse adults seeking shelter, utilizing drop-ins and sleeping rough; growing average lengths of stays, most notably in hotel programs; and low housing placement outcomes. These factors combined place clients at risk of remaining homeless for extended periods of time. The increase in hotel usage also represents financial sustainability risks, as renewed funding is dependent on other levels of government. Despite the continual availability of overflow hotel space, some women and gender-diverse individuals are still utilizing overnight drop-in spaces or staying in encampments.

External factors have contributed to the high occupancy and low housing outcomes evident in the women's homelessness sector. COVID-19 is a significant health risk to the homeless population, specifically to those who have with underlying medical conditions and challenges adhering to social distance measures. Across the entire shelter system, congregate living designs of physical infrastructures placed additional

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pressures on systems to reduce crowding. Even in single room shelters and hotels, overall outbreak risks remain high due to the bio-burden of all individuals present onsite. Hamilton's housing market remains competitive, with rental costs outpacing income earnings of most homeless clients. The roll out of the Canada-Ontario Housing benefit in April 2020 did receive significant uptake by families, and moderate uptake by single adults. As additional housing units and supportive housing programs become available, an equity, diversity and inclusion analysis is applied to resource allocation, with a 25% women and gender-diverse individual allotment. When factoring youth, families and Indigenous singles and families, the total overall percentage of women and gender-diverse individuals accessing resources increases.

City-funded homelessness programs have been required to redeploy staff in order to ensure critical 24/7 staffing is maintained at all emergency shelter operations and hotel expansions. Staff recruitment and retention at all programs have been exasperated by the pandemic. This has resulted in difficulty consistently staffing Intensive Case Management and Rapid Rehousing programs, thereby decreasing overall caseload capacity.

Efforts Underway

1. The City of Hamilton, St Joseph's Healthcare and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Hamilton Branch have initiated a pilot project to support chronically homeless individuals with mental health and active addiction obtain permanent housing with in-home supports to promote housing and health stabilization.
2. Through the Request for Proposals, Good Shepherd's successful application aims to bring online additional gender-specific shelter beds and Single-Room Occupancy permanent housing units. This investment through various funding streams will prioritize affordable, permanent housing options for homeless women and gender-diverse persons with limited incomes.

Mitigation Strategy Options

1. Review city-funded programs' staff contingency plans, with a focus on strategies to achieve full staff complements in housing programs. This could include a review of new flexibilities built into Federal and Provincial homelessness funding streams.
2. Support city-funded gender-specific housing programs to develop a strategic plan to increase the monthly housing placement rates for homeless women and gender-diverse individuals. These efforts could be broadened to include input from additional city-funded Landlord Liaison roles and the Housing Help Centre.

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Testing innovative housing options for women on limited incomes may be required.

3. Review hotel referral procedures to ensure that available overflow hotel spaces are accessible to women and gender-diverse individuals currently using overnight drop-ins or sleeping rough.
4. Explore potential for process efficiencies with the YWCA Transitional Living Program, including shortening unit turnover timeframes and expediting intake process.
5. Cross reference Access to Housing applications with women and gender-diverse adults to ensure all eligible clients are positioned to have up to date applications for subsidized housing.
6. Plan for the strategic use of housing affordability benefits to further opportunities for housing placements through City-funded Rapid Rehousing and Intensive Case Management programs.
7. Continued onboarding on to the the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) database program. As gender-specific programs progress towards consistent and accurate data entry into HIFIS, there are future opportunities to utilize sector-specific data for planning and problem-solving purposes. The database is developed to report on a wide range of data points, including occupancy levels, service restrictions, and housing placements. Custom reports could eventually be created to capture other specific business needs in the sector.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None