



Hamilton

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Housing Services Division**

<b>TO:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> November 25, 2013	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Pressure at Emergency Shelters Serving Single Homeless Women (CS13051) (City Wide)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Vicki Woodcox Acting General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Brian Kreps 905-546-2424 Ext. 4329 Gillian Hendry 905-546-2424 Ext. 4818
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the General Manager of Emergency and Community Services be authorized and directed to provide one-time funding from the Social Services Initiative Reserve (#112214) in the amount of \$99,075 to Good Shepherd Centres to increase the number of emergency shelter beds from 20 to 30 on a temporary basis at Mary’s Place for the period of December 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014;
- (b) That the General Manager of Emergency and Community Services be authorized and directed to provide one-time funding for one year in 2014 from the Social Services Initiative Reserve (#112214) in the amount of \$152,815 to Good Shepherd Centres to increase the level of case management and housing supports provided through the Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) program; and,
- (c) That the Mayor correspond with the Honourable Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting an increase to the City of Hamilton’s funding allocation for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative to address pressures related to the increased need for emergency shelter and housing support services.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The number of emergency shelter beds for single homeless women in Hamilton does not meet the current needs of the community. The lack of emergency shelter beds and the approach of cold weather in the winter months have created an urgent need to develop a temporary solution to meet the needs of single homeless women in Hamilton. The City has one shelter dedicated to serving single homeless women - Mary's Place, which is operated by Good Shepherd Centres. Mary's Place has 20 regular beds and up to five overflow beds. To address this shortage of beds, WomanKind, an addiction treatment program for women has made six shelter beds and two overflow beds available for single homeless women. The City also purchases overflow beds from the Violence Against Women's (VAW) shelters when they are available. The VAW shelters are funded directly by the Province. If available, these beds may be occupied by single homeless women or by women fleeing violence and their children.

Over the past three years, all shelters serving single homeless women have been operating over capacity. Between 2011 and 2012, the number of times that overflow beds were used in shelters serving single homeless women increased by 85% from 107 to 199 times. To date in 2013, the utilization of overflow beds has increased by 297% to 791.

The factors behind the increase in demand for shelter services for women have not been fully investigated, however, it is known that there are disproportionate rates of poverty and violence for women. Community agencies have long argued that the problem of women's homelessness has been masked by the fact that women tend to exhaust less formalized supports such as family members and friends before accessing emergency shelter services. An additional factor could include a decrease in the women's ability to obtain affordable housing. The high demand for emergency shelter services for single women is occurring province-wide. The City of Toronto and surrounding municipalities are also reporting an increased demand for services.

Housing Services Division staff are working with members of the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative (WHPC) to identify a short-term solution to address this urgent gap in service. The WHPC consists of Good Shepherd Centres, Mission Services, Native Women's Centre, St. Joseph's Health Care (WomanKind), the Social Planning and Research Council and the YWCA. The proposal in this report reflects WHPC's desire to build an approach that does not create permanent shelter beds and instead focuses on approaches that help women to become rehoused as quickly as possible with the supports that they need.

It is recommended that the number of emergency shelter beds at Mary's Place be increased temporarily from 20 to 30 regular beds from December 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014. Mary's Place will add a second bed to ten of their single rooms to accommodate the expansion in service. Up to seven overflow beds will continue to be available at

Mary's Place and WomanKind when needed. The cost of \$99,075 for Mary's Place includes the purchase of beds and bedding, setting up the space, increasing the number of staff to serve the additional women and occupancy costs such as food.

Although the additional shelter beds will increase capacity in the shelters - they will quickly fill up and become backlogged unless supports are put in place to shorten the length of stays at the shelters and facilitate the women's successful transition to independent housing situations. This will be achieved through funding two additional case management workers and one housing support worker for one year through the Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) program. SOS is a comprehensive service system response for women experiencing homelessness. It is a mobile, trauma informed case management team that support women from emergency shelters to the housing that will meet their needs. The SOS case management workers continue to provide support to the women while they are living in the community. The housing support worker will work with landlords to secure appropriate housing and to resolve possible tenancy issues. The additional supports for a full year would cost \$152,815.

As winter arrives, the additional shelter beds at Mary's Place for six months and the ongoing case management and housing supports through the SOS project for one year will address the immediate occupancy pressures at the shelters that serve single homeless women. Housing Services Division staff will work with the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative to assess the impact of the ten temporary shelter beds and the additional supports provided through the SOS project and report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee in April 2014.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not applicable***

<b>FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial:**

The cost of temporarily increasing the number of shelter beds at Mary's Place by ten beds for six months is \$99,075. The cost for providing two additional case management workers and one housing support worker for one year to help women move out of emergency shelters and provide the supports that they need to maintain permanent housing is \$152,815. It is recommended that these costs be covered through the Social Services Initiative Reserve (#112214). There is currently \$659,695 in the SSIR Reserve. Should Council approve the two one-time expenditures, the remaining balance in the SSIR Reserve will be \$407,805.

**Cost of Providing Ten Additional Beds at Mary's Place for Six Months**

<b>Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>		
1.5 FTE Case Manager		\$31,918
1 FTE Shelter Assistant		\$19,157
<b>Total Salaries</b>		<b>\$51,075</b>
<b>Occupancy Costs</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Capital Costs</b>	10 beds x \$2,300	\$23,000
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>\$99,075</b>

**Cost of Providing Case Management and Housing Supports For One Year**

<b>Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>		
2 FTE Case Management Worker		\$87,509
1 FTE Housing Support Worker		\$58,506
<b>Total Salaries and Benefits</b>		<b>\$146,015</b>
<b>Capital Costs</b>	Computers, Work Stations, Blackberries, Services Plans	\$6,800
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>\$152,815</b>

**Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications to Report CS13051

**Legal:**

The additional funding would be provided to Good Shepherd Centres through a Service Agreement. Legal Services will review and draft any ancillary agreements, as may be required to deliver the additional services. Legal Services staff will also ensure that the security requirements, as required from the project proponents are fulfilled to protect the interests of the City, in accordance with the Service Agreement.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Mary's Place opened in 1995 as Hamilton's first emergency shelter dedicated to serving single homeless women. Mary's Place had nine regular beds and one overflow bed all of which were consistently filled. Over the next two decades a variety of responses emerged to address the needs of single homeless women including mats at Wesley Centre until 2010 and Out of the Cold which provided mats in churches during the

winter months until 2011. Six regular beds and two overflow beds were made available at WomanKind, an addiction treatment facility. Arrangements were also made with the Violence Against Women Shelters to provide services to single homeless women when space was available.

When Mary's Place moved into its new facility in December, 2010, it expanded to 20 beds. It was hoped that this additional space would provide adequate shelter spaces for single homeless women in Hamilton. As with its predecessor, the new Mary's Place has experienced increasing demand along with the other shelters that serve single homeless women.

In 2012, \$495,256 was invested from the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy for staffing at Honouring the Circle through the Native Women's Centre. The bulk of this funding is for capital costs with only \$90,000 being provided for staffing. Honouring the Circle provides transitional housing to single homeless women as well as women with children.

In 2013, \$810,540 was provided to Good Shepherd Centres in conjunction with the YWCA, Native Women's Centre, Phoenix Place and SPRC through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy for the Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) program. This funding is for two years and will end March 31, 2014. The program provides a comprehensive service system response for women at risk of and experiencing homelessness through a mobile, trauma informed case management team that will support women to move from emergency shelters/VAW to the most appropriate form of housing that will meet their needs. Since its inception, 254 women have been served through SOS and 88% remained housed as of September 30, 2013.

In January 2013, \$133,600 was provided to Mary's Place for additional shelter workers because the shelter was consistently operating over capacity, but without the resources to assist the additional women. With funding for the additional shelter workers, the number of overflow beds was increased to three beds. The shelter workers also provide support to help women to leave the shelter and move more quickly to permanent housing. In 2013, an average of ten women per month are being housed which is double the amount in 2012.

On April 15, 2013, Council directed staff to provide \$250,000 to the YWCA for their Transitional Living Program. YWCA Hamilton provides a Transitional Living Program at 75 MacNab Street South that provides safe and affordable housing for 65 at risk women who struggle with the impacts of poverty, homelessness and violence. The one-time funding provided additional staffing supports to better meet the needs of the residents. Previously, there was one staff person on site at any given time and the additional funding allowed for one more staff person to increase the ability to work with residents.

In summary, the following amounts were invested in women's shelter and housing-related services from 2012 - 2014:

- \$284,597 in 2012;
- \$841,883 in 2013; and,
- \$159,660 for 2014.

Additionally, \$405,256 was spent in 2012 in capital funding for Honouring the Circle.

The majority (77%) of the funding was through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The balance is funded from the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no policy implications associated with the recommendations in report CS13051.

### **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Housing Services staff worked with the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative (WHPC) in the development of this proposal. The WHPC consists of Good Shepherd Centres, Mission Services, Native Women's Centre, St. Joseph's Health Care (WomanKind), the Social Planning and Research Council and the YWCA. This proposal reflects WHPC's concern about the availability of additional services to meet the needs of single homeless women during the winter months and throughout the year. It also reflects WHPC's desire to build an approach that does not create permanent shelter beds and instead focuses on approaches that help women to become rehoused as quickly as possible.

Housing Services staff consulted with Finance staff to determine the availability of funds in the Social Services Initiative Reserve.

### **ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

As described above, the City of Hamilton has provided project funding to the YWCA's Transitional Living Program, Good Shepherd's collaborative SOS program and Honouring the Circle. These programs have seen positive results, but have not been running for a sufficient length of time to determine their full impact. In spite of these

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efforts, the demand for shelters for single homeless women has continued to increase and the need for additional shelter beds and case management and housing supports appear to be urgent. The numbers of stays in over flow beds have been increasing year over year at Mary's Place:

- In 2011 - 72 stays
- In 2012 - 132 stays
- January to October 2013 - 656 stays

The number of women who were turned away from the shelter due to lack of beds increased by 57% between 2011 and 2012. The number of women turned away due to lack of beds was 2,649 to the end of October 2013. The number of women turned away does not represent unique individuals. Due to challenges with data collection, this could represent the same person calling for space on separate days or even the same person calling multiple times on the same day. The number of women turned away provides an indication of demand for emergency shelter beds.

<b>Mary's Place Stats</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Jan - Oct 2013</b>
# of Stays	7306	7418	6728
Times Over Capacity	72	132	656
Turn Away Full	2968	4238	2649

During this same period, the use of WomanKind's beds has increased. Originally, these beds were considered overflow. By the end of 2012, WomanKind was regularly using two overflow beds as well as the six regular. WomanKind was at or above their occupancy of six for most of 2013. The chart below provides shows their occupancy since 2011.

<b>WomanKind Stats</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Jan – Sept. 2013</b>
# Stays	1,807	1,901*	1,599*
Times Over Capacity	35	67	135

\*Missing data for month of June.

The City of Hamilton pays for overflow beds in Violence Against Women's (VAW) shelters which are funded directly by the Province. These beds may be occupied by single homeless women or by women fleeing violence and their children. Between 2011 and 2012, the use of overflow beds nights in VAW shelters increased 44% from 880 to 1266. In 2013, the use of overflow beds appears to have returned to 2011 levels of 719.

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<b>Violence Against Women Overflow Beds</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Jan – Sept. 2013</b>
Times Over Capacity	880	1266	719

While additional investments have been made over the past two years, many of them have had relatively short time to prove their effectiveness.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

There are no alternatives for Report CS13051

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

**Strategic Priority #2**

Valued & Sustainable Services

*WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.*

**Strategic Objective**

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

None