



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 13, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2015 Funding for Emergency Food System (CES15006) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Greg Witt 905-546-2424 ext. 4288 Amanda DiFalco 905-546-2424 ext. 3132 Gillian Hendry 905-546-2424 ext. 4818
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That effective April 1, 2015, \$350,000 in 100% provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding be allocated to the emergency food system on an annual basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2007, Council has allocated up to \$350,000 in one-time funding from the City of Hamilton Reserves to off-set costs for food and staff shortages at the City’s food banks and for the Christmas Hamper Program administered by Hamilton Food Share and its member agencies. In 2014, the City received an enhancement of \$3,190,278 to the existing Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding which has increased the annual allocation to \$19,073,663. The CHPI enhancement provides an opportunity to allocate \$350,000 in sustainable funding to alleviate the pressures that have consistently been experienced by Hamilton’s Emergency Food System.

The one-time funding of \$350,000 represents approximately 5% of operational costs for the member agencies of Hamilton Food Share as listed in Appendix A to Report CES15006. Food banks are primarily funded through charitable donations which fluctuate significantly over the course of the calendar year. On average, the majority of charitable donations (80-85%) are received between October and March. The seasonal changes in donations results in financial instability for the emergency food system. Funding from the City supports the food banks in continuing to meet demand when donations are low.

Emergency food services are a critical lifeline for many Hamiltonians experiencing a crisis. The emergency food system serves low-income Hamiltonians. More than 75% of the households that access food banks rely on social assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program) as their primary source of income. In 2013, over 36% of people served were children.

According to the March 2013 Hunger Count Survey, the emergency food system served 7,420 households, a 6% decrease from 2012. While this number has declined from its March 2010 peak of more than 8,500 households, the volume of households served today still greatly exceeds the number of households served pre-recession.

By increasing the annualized funding to Hamilton Food Share, it will ensure that low-income Hamiltonian's have access to emergency food services throughout the year. The funding will assist Hamilton Food Share to bridge the gap within the emergency food system during the periods when donations are scarce and fulfil the need during the periods when demand is highest, therefore reducing instability in the system.

The City of Hamilton's Public Health Services is in the process of developing a Food Strategy for Hamilton. The Board of Health endorsed, in principle, a Food Strategy vision, principles and goals (BOH13001) including that by 2023, food banks are no longer necessary in Hamilton. While there is a long term strategy to eliminate the need for emergency food services, the system is necessary until the strategies are successfully implemented.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The City of Hamilton receives an annual allocation of \$19,073,663 through the CHPI program. This allocation includes an annual increase of \$3,190,278.

\$135,730 is currently budgeted for the emergency food system. If the additional \$350,000 is approved, the food banks through Hamilton Food Share would receive a total allocation of \$485,730 per year.

While the City is not mandated to deliver emergency food services, food banks are considered an eligible expense under CHPI funding guidelines.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES15006

Legal:

Legal Services will review and draft any ancillary agreements, as may be required under the CHPI Program. 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 CHPI Service Agreement.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Unlike other mandated social service programs such as Ontario Works, Social Housing and Child Care, municipalities have no provincially legislated mandate to manage or fund emergency food services. In Hamilton, decisions related to emergency food services have historically been for one-time funding requests through City Reserve Funds.

In 2005, the City of Hamilton funded a needs assessment of food banks and hot meal programs in Hamilton. It was incorporated into the City's strategic plan to address homelessness called Everyone Has a Home, which was approved by Council in March of 2007 (Report ECS07020).

In 2007, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved a staff recommendation to provide financial support to the Christmas Hamper Program administered by Hamilton Food Share and its member agencies. The approval was contingent on the Emergency Food System developing a strategic plan (Report ECS07101(a)).

On November 2, 2009, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved and endorsed the implementation of a strategic plan titled "No One Goes Hungry: Strategic Directions for Hamilton's Emergency Food System 2010-2012" (Report CS09072).

On May 19, 2010, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved one-time funding of \$350,000 for the Christmas Hamper program, and pressures in the emergency food system over the summer months. The one-time funding was issued through the Tax Stabilization Reserve (Report CS10048).

On October 6, 2010, the Emergency and Community Services Committee received an update on "No One Goes Hungry: Strategic Directors for Hamilton's Emergency Food System Plan 2010-2012." This report demonstrated progress in working towards the goals outlined in the strategic plan (Report CS09072(a)).

On April 1, 2011, the City Council approved one-time funding of \$350,000 for the Emergency Food System during the 2011 budget process. Funding was directed from the Social Services Initiative Reserve (Report 11-003(a)).

On December 11, 2011, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved annual funding of \$350,000 to December 31, 2013 from the Social Services Initiative Reserve (Report CS11095) utilizing Ontario Municipal Partnership Funding (OMPF) reconciliation funding.

On August 13, 2012, the General Issues Committee passed a motion that Public Health Services report back on how a Food Strategy to be developed in consultation with the following departments; Community and Emergency Services, Public Works, and Planning and Economic Development.

On March 25, 2013, Emergency and Community Services Committee received an update on the Emergency Food System. The report illustrated accomplishments to date as well as progress in working towards the goals outlined in the strategic plan. (Report CS13015).

On November 25, 2013, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved one-time funding of \$350,000 be funded from the Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR) Reserve (Report CS13017(a)). The report indicated that Housing Services Division staff would return to the Emergency and Community Services Committee with a plan to address 2015 pressures.

On August 14, 2014 the Board of Health endorsed, in principle, proposed Food Strategy vision, principles and goals pending community consultation (Report BOH13001).

On September 8, 2014, Emergency and Community Services Committee received an Information Report (Report CES14051) that the City of Hamilton would receive an enhancement to its existing CHPI funding allocation in the amount of \$3,190,278. It is recommended that \$350,000 of this funding be applied to alleviate the pressure that exists in the Emergency Food System.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The flexibility contained within the CHPI program guidelines provides an opportunity to align funding allocations with local planning objectives. The recommendations in this report acknowledge the community's planning efforts and builds on the work that is reflected in Hamilton's Emergency Food Strategic plan "No One Goes Hungry: Strategic Directions for Hamilton's Emergency Food System".

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Hamilton Food Share and the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee were consulted in the development of these recommendations.

Public Health and Employment and Income Support Division staff representatives participated on the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee. City staff also advised the Inter-Departmental committee overseeing the development of Hamilton's Food Strategy.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Emergency Food System will continue working with their partners including the City of Hamilton Housing Services Division, Employment and Income Support Division and Public Health Services to achieve the objectives outlined in Hamilton's Emergency Food Strategic plan "No One Goes Hungry: Strategic Directions for Hamilton's Emergency Food System". The objectives include:

- Achieving increased financial stability;
- Developing and implementing service delivery standards;
- Increasing collaboration and communication within the emergency food system; and,
- Educating the public about food insecurity issues in Hamilton.

The City of Hamilton's Public Health Services is in the process of developing a Food Strategy for Hamilton. The Board of Health endorsed, in principle, the proposed Food Strategy vision and principles and goals (Report BOH13001) pending community consultation.

The proposed vision is:

- A City with a sustainable food system where all people at all times have economic and physical access to enough safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences.

One of the proposed principles concerning the emergency food system is:

- Healthy, Sustainable and Just. A just food system ensures that all residents can access healthy food. By 2023, food banks are no longer necessary in Hamilton.

While long term strategies may help Hamilton reduce and/or eliminate the need for emergency food services, these supports will still be a necessity until those strategies are successfully realized.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

An alternative for consideration is to approve a one-time allocation of \$350,000 for 2015 through the Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR) Reserve (#112239).

By choosing this option, the City would be selecting an unsustainable funding resource that would address pressures only in 2015. In 2016, it may then be necessary to look for other funding resources including levy funding or a decision to discontinue funding for the emergency food system. The Hamilton Food Strategy is expected to be presented to the Board of Health in early 2016. It is anticipated that the principle of eliminating the need for food banks is a long term strategy which would take a number of years to accomplish. This leads to the conclusion that the emergency food system will continue to require funding for multiple years to come. On the other hand, Council

may wish to approve one-time funding for 2015 pending further information regarding the Hamilton Food Strategy. The additional CHPI funding would then be allocated to other needs within the homelessness system.

Financial:

There is currently a balance of \$393,475 in the Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters (DOOR) Reserve (#112239). If one-time funding is approved from the DOOR Reserve, a balance of \$43,475 would remain. The DOOR funding is being held in reserve for costs pending recommendations from a review of the women's shelter system and for unexpected funding pressures in the homelessness service system.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with the alternative.

Legal:

Legal Services will review and draft any ancillary agreements, as may be required under the CHPI Program. 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 CHPI Service Agreement.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
- 1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES15006: List of Member Agencies in Hamilton's Emergency Food System.