



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 22, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Co-ordinated Access System for Social Housing (CES14052(d)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Adam Sweedland 905-546-2424 ext. 1782
SUBMITTED BY:	Vicki Woodcox Acting Director, Housing Services Division Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Access-to-Housing system of coordinated social housing access be approved for direct service delivery effective April 1, 2018 through the Housing Services Division;
- (b) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be directed and authorized to notify Del Management Systems Inc., in writing, of the City's decision not to renew the service agreement for the provision of the coordinated wait list service;
- (c) That the Housing Services Division's budgeted staff complement be increased by 4.5 permanent full-time equivalent positions, effective March 1, 2018, as follows:
 - (i) Three (3) Housing Administration Clerks (3 FTE) be approved and funded from the current net levy supported budget for wait list administration (Dept ID 624200) with no additional net levy impact to support the administrative and intake functions of the centralized wait list service;
 - (ii) One (1) Housing Support Worker (1 FTE) be approved and funded from the current net levy supported budget for the wait list administration (Dept ID 624200) with no additional net levy impact to support the enhancements and case management function to households accessing the wait list service or waiting for housing; and,
 - (iii) One (1) Supervisor, Housing Access & Supports (0.5 FTE) be approved and funded by converting an existing vacant 0.5 Housing Administration

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Officer position and by utilizing Social Infrastructure Fund administration dollars (6731640602) with no additional net levy impact to support the oversight of the administration of the centralized intake service and its integration with existing housing allowance and rent supplement programs;

- (d) That the estimated capital costs of \$1.1M that will be required for tenant fit-up renovations for any additional office space, as described in Report CES14052(d), be funded from the following 100% provincially funded programs with no additional levy impact;
- (i) \$700,000 from the Social Housing Reserve Fund (#112248);
 - (ii) \$300,000 from the provincially funded Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) administration funding allocation;
 - (iii) \$100,000 from the provincially funded 2018 Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHARP) administration funding; and,
- (e) That the Co-ordinated Access System for Social Housing be identified as complete and removed from the Emergency and Community Services Committee Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton, as Service Manager for social housing, is responsible for meeting provincial requirements under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) for the establishment and administration of an application and wait list system for social housing. In Hamilton, the current co-ordinated social housing wait list system is called Access to Housing (ATH). ATH serves as a central point for the application and initial eligibility screening for the social housing units operated by Hamilton's 43 social housing providers. The City currently provides the service through a third party agreement with Del Management Solutions Inc. (DMS) at an annual cost of approximately \$360K.

On June 24, 2015, Council approved Item 6 of the Emergency and Community Services Committee Report 15-006 which approved, in principle, bringing the current wait list system in-house, subject to the following direction:

"That Housing Services Division staff be directed to report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee in October 2015 with a detailed implementation plan including costs for such a transition for Council's consideration."

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Report CES14052(d) responds specifically to this direction. Interim Reports CES14052(b) and CES14052(c) provided updates and sought approval for annual extensions of the existing service agreement with DMS.

The current administration of the wait list service meets the requirements of the legislation. However, the requirements of the legislation are strictly administrative. With an increasing number of households and individuals requiring rent-gear-to-income housing, the legislated access system needs to be delivered in concert with other support mechanisms, the broader housing continuum and homelessness prevention system. The plan to transition the wait list service to direct delivery includes enhancements to support a client-focused system that better aligns the needs of households and individuals with the most appropriate housing options and supports. It will also allow staff to better monitor processes to ensure individuals accessing housing experience respect, fairness and equity.

Direct program delivery will focus on continuous improvement and accountability through initiatives such as:

- Improving the information available to households and individuals about housing choices and available supports;
- Working more closely with households and individuals to ensure that their housing needs are optimally aligned with the most appropriate housing options;
- Connecting households and individuals with existing homelessness and shelter system workers;
- Reporting annually to Council and the Community;
- Maintaining a comprehensive building inventory with neighbourhood, building and unit amenities;
- Streamlining the application process and implementing an online process and identifying other options for accessing the services;
- Conducting client satisfaction and system improvement surveys;
- Conducting education workshops with applicants, housing providers and other community service providers; and
- Improving data collection to better support non-social housing programming (e.g. establishing community hubs, private sector development of housing, recreational programming).

The wait list service will be initially delivered from the current Housing Services Division office space located at First Place. In order to create the required interim space, one section of the Housing Services Division will be relocated temporarily for up to one-year to existing vacant space within the City of Hamilton's leased portfolio.

During this time, additional space adjacent to the Housing Services Division offices may be renovated to properly accommodate the permanent delivery of the wait list service.

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Preliminary capital cost estimates for the renovations and fit-ups are approximately \$1.1M. Through the provincially funded Social Housing Reserve Fund and administrative funding from other provincial and federal social housing capital initiatives, this can be achieved with no additional levy impact.

The lease costs for the additional space (approximately \$36K annually) and the temporary space (approximately \$20K one time) can be funded from the current levy supported budget for the wait list administration with no additional levy impact.

The ATH service is currently delivered by 5 staff employed by DMS (1 manager, 4 front line clerks). In order to support core service delivery and enhanced service initiatives to applicants and households waiting for housing, Housing Services will deliver the service with one Supervisor, one Housing Support Worker and three Housing Access Clerks. This requires an increase to the Housing Services Division's budgeted complement of 4.5 full time equivalent positions, which can be funded from the existing levy supported budget for wait list administration, by converting a vacant 0.5 FTE (Housing Administration Officer) and by utilizing administrative funding from provincially funded initiatives to offset the cost of the Supervisor position.

Alternatives for Consideration –Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There is no additional levy impact associated with Report CES14052(d). The current levy supported operating budget for the delivery of the coordinated access to social housing system is approximately \$360K.

The existing levy supported complement for social housing includes a 0.5 FTE (\$49K) which will be repurposed to support the staffing costs with additional funds available from provincial/federal administration funds of \$62K.

Table 1 – 2018 & 2019 Operating Budget Estimate

Description	2018 Est. Cost (Apr. - Dec)	2019 Est. Cost
DMS Service Agreement (Jan – Mar)	\$78,000	\$0
Staffing Costs (current levy supported)(Apr – Dec)	\$225,500	\$300,664
Temporary Space – rental costs (based on costing for available space at City Centre)	\$20,000	\$0
Rental costs at First Place (\$36K annually)	0	\$36,000
Office Set up and moving fees	\$10,000	0
Contingency/Program Costs (e.g. software support, postage, courier) (based on review of DMS’ annual administration costs)	\$20,000	\$20,000
Subtotal funded from existing tax supported levy for wait list administration	<u>\$353,500</u>	<u>\$356,664</u>
Repurposed 0.5 FTE from existing levy supported complement	\$36,750	\$49,000
Transferred from Provincial/Federal Admin Funding	\$46,500	\$62,000
Total	<u>\$406,550</u>	<u>\$467,664</u>

Staffing: Direct delivery of the wait list service requires 5 full-time permanent positions:

- 1 FTE Supervisor, Housing Access and Supports*
- 3 FTE Housing Access Clerks; and,
- 1 FTE Housing Support Worker.

* repurposed 0.5 FTE from existing levy supported complement

Staffing requirements will be achieved with no additional levy impact.

Legal: There are no legal implications with Report CES14052(d).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) requires Service Managers to administer a system for administering an access system or wait list for social housing.

At the time of devolution of social housing in 2001, the wait list was operated by a third party, Community Housing Access Network (CHAN). When the contract with CHAN expired, Fengate Property Management Ltd. was awarded the contract through a

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Request for Proposal (RFP) process effective January 1, 2005. As per the City of Hamilton's Purchasing Policy, every three years the City of Hamilton issued another RFP for the delivery of the co-ordinated access system for social housing. Fengate was the successful proponent in all RFPs since 2007. In 2011, Fengate sold its business to Del Management Solutions Inc. (DMS) and the contract continued with DMS effective November 7, 2011.

Access to Housing (ATH) was adopted as the working name for the access system for the City of Hamilton. The primary purpose of ATH is to meet the legislated requirements. However, over time, the context in which the waitlist operates has changed and expectations about the role of the waitlist within the housing access system have evolved.

In 2012, a committee of City staff and housing stakeholders undertook a critical review of the wait list service. Through this process, stakeholders endorsed an enhanced model that would transform the current wait list service to a more person-centred service that could better support individuals and families while they wait for a social housing unit. The recommended model includes increased service coordination and integration in addition to improving the core administration of the coordinated access system.

On September 22, 2014, the Emergency and Community Services Committee received Report CES14052 describing an enhanced service for the ATH system that would better meet the needs of applicants for social housing, and included:

- improving the information available to individuals to support informed decisions and choices regarding their housing options;
- integrating referrals to community resources;
- connecting individuals and households with homelessness and emergency shelter system workers;
- revising and updating forms, letters and building inventory information;
- upgrading technology with potential for submission of on-line applications;
- increasing the supports to help people when they apply, during their time on the wait list and as they prepare to move into RGI subsidized housing; and,
- Integrating supports to help people maintain housing.

A Request for Information (RFI) was issued on May 1, 2013 to see if any organizations were able and interested in delivering the ATH co-ordinated access system. Four submissions were received and the Housing Services Division staff decided to proceed with a Request for Proposals (RFPs). On February 12, 2014, Council approved Report CES14008 to approve a single source contract with DMS because staff anticipated that the RFP process would be completed and a successful proponent would be selected by the end of the third quarter 2014.

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On August 26, 2014, the RFP was issued to secure a qualified service provider to deliver the enhanced ATH Service. After reviewing the two proposals that met the minimum requirements, staff determined that the City should instead explore the option of delivering the service in-house where there is opportunity to better integrate existing services and infrastructure. Therefore, the City's Procurement Division issued a Notice of Cancellation to all of the proponents that submitted proposals for the RFP.

On June 24, 2015, Council approved Report CES14052(a) which approved, in principle, the transfer of the ATH social housing waitlist service from a third party delivery agent to direct delivery by the Housing Services Division.

In March, 2016, Council approved a one-year extension of DMS' contract until March 31, 2017. In February, 2017, Council approved a subsequent one-year extension of DMS' contract until March 31, 2018.

These extensions were required to ensure continued provision of the core service while staff undertook significant review of its available options.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* required the City of Hamilton, as Service Manager for social housing, to maintain and administer a coordinated system of access to social housing.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Sector Working Group

To support the implementation of an enhanced co-ordinated access system to housing, Housing Services Division staff consulted with a working group comprised of social housing providers, tenant advocates and community agency representatives.

Del Management Services Inc. (DMS)

Housing Services Division staff met with management and staff from DMS to discuss the logistics of transitioning the service to an in-house model. Staff conducted operational reviews and process mapping to understand the activity based workload of current DMS staff, such as:

- Information on office visits (the number of clients served "in person" on a daily, monthly and yearly basis and the peak demand times);
- Volume of telephone inquiries;
- Number of new applications, file updates and annual renewals;
- Inquiries from Housing Providers; and,

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- Other value-added services (such as referrals to other service providers or “advice” regarding building selections).

Public Works Department, Energy, Fleet and Facilities Division)

Staff from the Facilities Management and Capital Programs section were consulted on design requirements and helped to assess and determine the additional accommodations to bring the service in-house.

CityHousing Hamilton

Staff from CityHousing Hamilton were consulted with respect to the location chosen and the amendments to the lease agreement, as well as capital upgrades required.

Planning & Economic Development, Economic Development Division (Real Estate Section)

Staff from the Real Estate section were consulted on the lease requirements and negotiation.

Corporate Services, Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation Division

Staff from the Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation Division were consulted regarding the staffing costs and budget considerations. Those recommendations and comments were incorporated into Report CES14052(d).

City Manager’s Office, Human Resources Division

Staff from the Human Resources Division were consulted on job descriptions and compensation for the recommended new positions.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Hamilton, as Service Manager for social housing, is responsible for meeting provincial requirements under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*(the “Act”) for managing the wait list process for social housing. Hamilton’s social housing wait list service is called Access to Housing (ATH). Access to Housing is the access point for households needing subsidized social housing units. Social housing providers are responsible for selecting tenants for vacant rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units from ATH.

Since the downloading of responsibility for social housing, ATH has been administered by a third party. The current ATH service meets the minimum legislated requirements of the Act. However, the minimum legislated requirements are not adequate to address the increasing and complex needs of the individuals and families on the waitlist.

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Hamilton and Ottawa are the only two municipal service managers that continue to provide the coordinated wait list through a third party service delivery agent. Toronto was the most recent service manager to bring the administration of its wait list system in-house in late 2015.

Service Managers that operate the wait list directly have generally higher rates of households housed from the wait list. Feedback suggests that this experience is driven, in part, by the increased level of oversight and policy compliance that ensures housing providers are selecting tenants in accordance with local policies. The Region of Waterloo, which operates its wait list internally, has a history of success in helping people achieve longer term housing stability through broader service integration and targeted program enhancements similar to those proposed in the new service delivery model.

Increasing pressures to the social housing system require a more comprehensive and holistic approach to managing the overall service system, such as:

- a rapidly increasing number of individuals and families applying for social housing (e.g. the waitlist saw an increase of almost 600 households between January 1, 2016 and October, 2017);
- increased needs of tenants (e.g. physical and mental health, aging related needs, newcomers, victims of domestic abuse);
- reduced number of social housing units (e.g. a result of the end of federal operating agreements, poor condition); and,
- the need for high quality data around households' needs (e.g. location, unit sizes, accessibility) that can support evidence-based development of new housing options.

There are a finite number of units that are filled from the wait list. For this reason, despite efforts to address affordable housing needs in Hamilton, the number of households and length of time on the social housing waitlist will continue to increase. It is critical that individuals and households are able to make informed decisions about their housing and are not always forced to depend on traditional social housing as their only housing remedy. Administration of the waitlist by the Housing Services Division will improve the wider social housing system by integrating other housing options and supports for individuals. It will also improve the ability to closely monitor how social housing providers are selecting households and ensure compliance with local rules and legislation.

Direct Delivery Model – Housing Access & Supports

On June 24, 2015, Council approved, in principle, the transfer of the ATH social housing waitlist service from a third party delivery agent to direct delivery by the Housing Services Division (Report CES14052(a)). The contract with the current delivery agent

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expires on March 31, 2018. Direct delivery of the coordinated social housing access system by Housing Services is designed to:

- better align housing options with the needs of individuals and families require housing assistance in Hamilton;
- connect individuals and households with existing homelessness and emergency housing system workers;
- integrate other existing housing supports, such as housing allowances;
- improve client information so that individuals and families can make better choices about housing that suits their needs;
- improve data collection and application to inform better policy and program planning;
- develop program enhancements (such as front end assessments and move-in readiness programs); and,
- establish the service as a key element for broader human service integration.

A key component of the direct delivery of the wait list service is the introduction of program enhancements to better support applicants and help them meet their needs not only related to housing but also by helping applicants identify and get referrals to other supports such as income support, child care and broader social supports. The program enhancements will better guide applicants through the social housing application process and will provide information about other suitable housing options, connect applicants to the available City and community resources and supports that can better position people to obtain and maintain market housing.

Program administration will initially focus on maintaining the legislated service but it will also introduce two new service enhancements: Front-end Assessments and Move-in Readiness.

Front-end Assessments will transform the intake process for accessing housing. It will involve a brief intake interview to:

- Review the housing needs of the applicant (e.g. size, type, building and neighbourhood amenities);
- Discuss the applicant's history of housing stability (on a voluntary basis);
- Discuss any additional supports that might be required to achieve housing stability, if any; and,
- Make referrals to or coordinate with other support options, City services or community agencies, as agreed upon.

Move-in Readiness (MIR) is an enhancement designed to ensure that applicants' are ready to accept an offer of housing when it is likely that an offer will be forthcoming. This

helps to respond to issues that stand in the way of applicants being able to accept offers, such as:

- not being able to give sufficient notice to their existing landlords;
- not being able to access funding or resources for the moving process;
- making any necessary arrangements regarding child care or school choices;
- making repayment plans or resolving issues around previous arrears with social housing providers, as may be disclosed through the provincial arrears database; or,
- in the case of cooperative housing, having an opportunity to understand how the cooperative functions and getting pre-approval from the board.

The MIR also provides another opportunity for an applicant to review their housing choices, needs and preferences. For example, the household's accessibility needs or family composition may have changed since the last update to their application.

This initial period will also integrate other existing housing support programs currently offered through the Housing Services Division. Rent Supplements and Housing Allowances provide an alternative source of housing support administratively similar to social housing. These programs rely on data and information obtained from the current wait list.

Once the initial transition has occurred, the system can then focus on the application processes and improving information and data. In addition, it will introduce greater accountability through client satisfaction surveys and annual reporting to the community and Council.

By applying a continuous improvement lens, the intended outcome for the wait list is a flexible, responsive and integrated system that focuses on appropriately meeting the needs of individuals and households. It will also focus on quality data and applying this data to support broader human services system planning.

Staffing Requirements

The service will continue to fall within the responsibility of the Manager of Social Housing within the Housing Services' Division of the Community and Emergency Services Department. Housing Services currently oversees the functions that are the legislated duties of the Service Manager on behalf of the City. These include the administration of a system for accessing social housing as well as many other services and systems designed to address homelessness and emergency housing situations.

The new delivery model calls for a total of five additional full time permanent positions to ensure (i) continued service without interruption; and, (ii) planning and implementing the

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initial enhancement initiatives. The current system is delivered by DMS with five staff (one manager, four clerks). The recommended new positions are:

- Supervisor, Housing Access and Supports (1 FTE);
- Housing Access Clerks (3 FTE) to handle the day-to-day administration and front line service delivery; and
- Housing Support Worker (1 FTE) to assist in case management of provisions of the enhanced services housing applicants and assist in crisis intervention.

By leveraging an existing vacant 0.5 position, this only requires an increase to the Housing Services Division's budgeted complement of 4.5 additional full time permanent positions.

The Supervisor will also be responsible for four existing staff delivering rent supplement and housing allowance programs and supports. These programs are administratively and operationally similar to the wait list service. By aligning the proposed new staff and existing staffing resources, all programs can be optimally supported at or above existing service levels by planning appropriate coverage and specific work activities around peak program times.

Location

An assessment of the needs for the delivery of the wait list service as it currently stands requires 3,200 square feet of space for filing areas, public areas, work stations, accessible washrooms and counters, staff areas and mailing stations. Utilizing existing features (such as washrooms, public space, interview rooms) in the current Housing Services Division space brings that square footage requirement down to a minimum of about 2200 square feet.

The current office space occupied by Housing Services is about 8,400 square feet and is occupied and utilized to its maximum capacity. Housing Services leases this space from CityHousing Hamilton for \$15 square foot net of costs. There is approximately 2,400 square feet of commercial/office space available immediately adjacent to the current Housing Services' office. The existing lease agreement with CityHousing Hamilton can be amended to include this available space.

This is the most cost effective option available at this time because it minimizes the cost of capital improvements to achieve an appropriate, accessible front facing service area and leverages other existing features such as interview rooms, accessible washrooms and staff lunch facilities.

However, the service can still be delivered on an interim basis beginning April 1, 2018, from within the existing office space for the Housing Services Division while this additional space is appropriately renovated. This will require a temporary relocation of

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one section of the Housing Services Division to alternative unused office space within the City's current leased portfolio.

The proportionate cost of the additional space that will be attributed to the wait list service annually is approximately \$36K (2,400 square feet at \$15 per square foot). This cost will be funded from the current levy supported budget for wait list administration. Accordingly, there will be no additional levy impact to achieve the additional space needed for the wait list.

Estimated capital costs for the tenant fit-up renovations have been provided by staff in the Energy, Fleet and Facilities Division, as set out in Table 2 to Report CES14052(d).

Table 2 – Estimated Capital Costs

Description	Budget
Consultants (Architect & Engineers; Designated Substance Surveys; Testing & Inspection)	\$92,702
Permits & Approvals	\$6,770
Furniture and Equipment	\$97,707
Miscellaneous Expenses (moving)	\$2,500
Construction	\$677,018
Construction Contingency	\$101,553
Overall Project Contingency	\$24,456
Project Management (internal)	\$54,161
Subtotal	\$1,056,867
Taxes	\$18,604
Total Project Budget	\$1,075,468

The estimated capital costs can be funded from existing provincial/federal capital program and administration funding with no additional levy impact. Specifically, three 100% provincial/federal sources of funding have been identified.

Social Housing Reserve Fund (\$700K)

The Social Housing Reserve Fund (Reserve) was established for the one-time funding that the Province provided to the City at the time of devolution of social housing. The original funding was provided to help with costs of building reviews, capital repairs and other social housing purposes. The original funding was \$3.7M and the reserve currently has an approximate balance of \$781K. The capital costs associated with delivering the legislated services are permissible uses of this funding.

The Reserve was established to support emergency capital repairs in the social housing stock. It was last accessed in 2015 to help unit turnover maintenance for McGivney Homes and the addition of 8 new units of housing at Halam Park Co-operative Homes.

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Since 2015, there has been significant funding available for social housing capital repairs from all levels of government. The City funded building condition assessments in 2015 to help ensure priority repairs were identified and since that time funding has been directed to support identified priority repairs. Current funding and planned projects will continue to be prioritized to health and life safety issues.

Social Housing Improvement Program (\$300K)

In 2016 and 2017, the Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) allocated federal funding of \$11,597,400 to support capital repairs in Hamilton's social housing stock. Up to 5% of this funding (\$578K) may be used at the City's discretion to support costs of social housing program delivery.

Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (\$100K)

Beginning in Q1 2018, the City of Hamilton has been confirmed a minimum funding allocation of \$8.4M (up to \$12,448,133) for year one of the Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHAIP) (2017/2018) and up to \$16,929,236 for years two through four of the SHAIP (2018/2019 through to 2020/2021). Up to 5% of the confirmed overall allocation may be used at the City's discretion to support costs of program delivery.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are no alternatives being recommended for consideration in Report CES14052(d).

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None