



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 10, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Emergency Shelter Services for Single Homeless Women (HSC20037) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 ext. 8035
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At its February 20, 2020 meeting, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved a motion (Item 1):

“That correspondence from Janice Lewis-Deeley, Board President, Native Women’s Centre, respecting Mountainview Emergency Shelter Operations, be received and referred to staff for action and to report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee, and referred to the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee for information.”

INFORMATION

In February 2020, the Board of Directors of the Hamilton Chapter of Native Women’s Centre notified the City of Hamilton that they had made the strategic decision to move away from emergency interventions and focus efforts primarily on housing stabilization and supports. As a result, the Mountainview emergency shelter was scheduled to cease operations as of June 30, 2020.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board agreed to extend operations until September 30, 2020 to ensure there was not a negative impact on providing vital

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services to vulnerable women and provide the system the ability to concentrate efforts on pandemic response.

Mountainview provides 15 emergency shelter beds for single homeless women experiencing crisis. The closure of Mountainview does not include or impact operations at the Native Women's Centre Violence Against Women shelter or Honouring the Circle Transitional Housing Program.

The City supports Indigenous-led solutions to homelessness and housing stability within the Urban Indigenous Community. The City will explore alternative options to ensure there is no loss of emergency shelter beds for single homeless women and non-binary individuals, while respecting the advice of partners such as the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative (WHPC).

In addition to Mountainview, Mary's Place and Womankind operate emergency shelter beds for single homeless women and non-binary individuals. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has also operated additional shelter beds in hotel overflow spaces, allowing for physical distancing within shelters and expanded shelter capacity.

The City has completed initial consultation with WHPC to explore alternative operations of the 15 shelter beds, which in turn has provided three recommendations. These include two where community agencies are willing to operate a shelter program, and a third where hotel spaces can be utilized as an interim program until a permanent program can be determined. The third recommendation of utilizing temporary hotel spaces will be adopted. It is important to note that these new temporary spaces are in addition to the hotels spaces that have been used throughout the pandemic ensuring that there is no loss of spaces for those requiring shelter.

A Call for Applications (CFA) will be launched in October 2020 to seek a permanent solution for emergency shelter services for cis women, trans feminine and non-binary adults. This will ensure a full, transparent process open to all community partners is followed. In addition, it will allow other possible options to materialize through the CFA and an opportunity to consult with the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women and Transgender Community Sub-Committee.

In addition, the CFA will provide an opportunity to explore historical capacity limitations within the women's homelessness system and clarify needs. This process will provide opportunity to outline possible considerations for addressing those pressures and any financial implications, if any.

For the fiscal period April 2020 to March 2021 \$520 K was allocated to Mountainview from CHPI base funding. Given the closure in September, \$260 K has been committed

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to Mountainview, with \$260 K available for the period of October 2020 to March 2021.

Staff will provide an update to Council on the results of the Call for Applications once complete.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None