



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 9, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Encampment Update - Expenses (HSC20038(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable

INFORMATION

The emergence of larger encampments of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, in combination with the prolonged Superior Court injunction regarding encampments on public property, has resulted in an increased demand placed on existing City services to respond. As a result of the increases to City service provision to encampment areas during COVID-19, additional expenses have been incurred within the Housing Services Division, as well as other City departments and sections connected to this response. This includes additional expenses related to security, waste collection and outreach, as well as legal costs related to the injunction.

While additional costs have been incurred since April 1, 2020, these have been largely due to an increased demand on existing resources. Within the Housing Services

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.

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Division, additional funding was allocated to facilitate encampment response coordination through a dedicated full time Supervisor, as well as increased outreach provision with two additional full time street outreach staff. The Hamilton Paramedic Service, waste removal and security have all had increased demand in services related to the encampment response. As outlined in the table below, the increase in costs associated with encampments has largely been driven by:

- an increase in paramedic calls to the FirstOntario Centre (FOC) between April 1, 2020 and August 26, 2020;
- an increase in paramedic calls to the Ferguson Street encampment between July 1, 2020 and August 26, 2020, and,
- extra costs to the City in the amount of \$60,000 per month related to security and waste collection.

External legal costs incurred by the City were related to the Superior Court injunction, in place from July 30, 2020 to October 6, 2020, which temporarily restricted the City's authority to enforce bylaws that prohibit camping on public property. During this period, dedicated supports were required to assist with the growing encampment response, primarily through the Healthy and Safe Communities and Public Works Departments. While there may not have been increased funding needed in these areas, it did require a shift in focus from other City business from staff at supervisor, manager, director and general manager levels.

Increases in City Service Provision to Encampment Areas During COVID-19:

City Services	Area of Service	Time Frame	Total Calls	\$ or % Increase Compared with Previous Year
Paramedic	FOC Encampment	April 1, 2020 to August 26, 2020	275	86%
Paramedic	Ferguson Encampment	July 1, 2020 to August 26, 2020	81	13%
Additional Waste Removal and Security	FOC and Ferguson Encampment areas	April 2020 to August 2020	N/A	Approximately \$60,000
Outreach Supervisor; 1 FTE	Encampment Response; City Wide	August 2020 to June 2021 (projected)	N/A	\$106,136
Street Outreach; 2 FTEs	Encampment Response; City Wide	August 2020 to June 2021 (projected)	N/A	\$96,264
External Legal Services	Encampment Injunction Litigation	July 30, 2020 to October 6, 2020	N/A	\$133,919

Enhanced Service Coordination and Support

The rise in unsheltered homelessness during COVID-19 continues to highlight ongoing systemic health, social and economic inequities. While the City has incurred costs related to the encampment response during this time, additional efforts have been prioritized and undertaken to increase service coordination and support to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These efforts have included:

- enhancing consultation with the existing internal cross-departmental Encampment Response Working Group;
- establishment of an encampment case-conferencing table with sector partners;
- establishment of an Encampment Task Force;
- increased street outreach intervention resources;
- increased prioritization of those in encampments for permanent housing and intensive case management support programs;
- additional resources to enhance drop-in services;
- increased availability of emergency shelter options with appropriate physical distancing measures, including FirstOntario Centre, hotels and additional options for couples; and,
- multi-sectoral discussions to enhance permanent housing with supports options.

The Housing Services Division, in consultation with internal and external partners, continues to coordinate services and supports related to local encampment response during the COVID-19 pandemic. This work has focused on aligning available resources, assessing and responding to potential health and safety risks, and facilitating person-centred engagement opportunities and individualized housing plans through connections to community-based supports. To date, this has led to engagement with 378 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, while 241 individuals have been assisted to move to safe sheltered locations. Additionally, from April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020, City-funded programs have housed 131 Individuals and 17 families. This includes 17 individuals from encampments.

Moving forward, there continues to be a need to support those experiencing chronic homelessness with complex needs through a permanent supportive housing intervention, which combines housing, intensive case management and clinical health services. To this end, staff are in talks with the province, the Hamilton Health Team and community agencies to explore further partnerships for the development of a permanent supportive housing intervention that serves those with complex needs from the By-Name List. Staff continue to advocate for additional investments from other levels of government to adequately support those with complex needs in our community.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A