



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 3, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 3 (HSC20020(c)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Council approve the authority of the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate to continue to enter into contracts necessary to secure access and purchase of service for continued enhancement of supports for Hamilton's homeless-serving system during COVID-19 including:
- (i) Continued operation of 378 Main Street East (the former Cathedral Boys School) as a temporary shelter for men at an approximate cost of \$1.5 M for the period of July 1, 2021 to no later than December 31, 2021;
 - (ii) The rental of hotel rooms for expanded temporary housing, staffing and additional supports, cleaning, food and associated services in the approximate amount of \$7.1 M for the period of July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and in the approximate amount of \$3.6 M from January 1, 2022 to no later than March 31, 2022 from vendors and providers satisfactory to

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

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the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate;

- (iii) Continuation of COVID-19 related supports for the homeless-serving system, including but not limited to security services, enhanced cleaning, food and associated services in the approximate amount of \$2 M for the period of July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and in the approximate amount of \$1 M from January 1, 2022 to no later than March 31, 2022 from vendors and providers satisfactory to the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate;
 - (iv) Continuation of operation of COVID-19 isolation services for people experiencing homelessness in the approximate amount of \$1.1 M for the period of July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and in the approximate amount of \$540 K from January 1, 2022 to no later than March 31, 2022;
 - (v) Continuation of enhanced drop-in services including but not limited to The Living Rock Ministries, Mission Services of Hamilton Inc., Wesley Urban Ministries Inc. and The Hamilton Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in the approximate amount of \$1.5 M for the period of July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and in the approximate amount of \$740 K from January 1, 2022 to no later than March 31, 2022;
- (b) That an evidence-based transition plan for Hamilton's emergency shelter system through post-COVID recovery be approved, with full costing and implementation details to be brought forward for review and approval by Committee and Council at a future date. The transition plan includes the following items for approval:
- (i) Temporarily increase the women's emergency shelter system capacity by up to 70 beds over and above the two existing women's emergency shelters (26 beds at current reduced capacity), by:
 - 1. Opening Emma's Place for up to two years (15 beds) at an approximate cost of \$1.45 M allocated as follows; one-time renovation cost of approximately \$400 K, and operating cost of \$310 K for a total of \$710 K in 2021 and operating cost of \$744 K in 2022; and,
 - 2. Continue to temporarily extend hotel and case management operations for up to 55 beds up to March 31, 2022, funded as per recommendation (a)(ii), while completing a further needs assessment for alternative solutions for ongoing support;

- (ii) Further investigate transitional adaptations to the emergency shelter system through COVID-19 recovery, including: temporarily increasing the men's emergency shelter system capacity for up to two years through hotels while conducting a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify alternative solutions for ongoing support; investigate increasing the family emergency shelter system capacity; and completing a further needs assessment for ongoing support for couples in the emergency shelter system.
- (c) That all such purchases and grants outlined in Recommendations (a) and (b) pertaining to Budget Year ending December 31, 2021 be funded from any available source jointly deemed appropriate by the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department and the General Manager of the Finance and Corporate Services Department including, but not limited to, one or more of the following sources: Reaching Home, Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, any available provincial or federal funding, or in year program and/or department/corporate surplus;
- (d) That all such purchases and grants outlined in Recommendations (a) and (b) pertaining to Budget Year ending December 31, 2022 be included in the 2022 Operating Budget for Council deliberation through the 2022 Budget process;
- (e) One-time investment of \$2 M for housing allowances for clients of City funded Intensive Case Management (ICM) programs as well as additional staffing support to assist in the administration of the new allowances that will serve up to 93 individuals or households over 4 years;
 - (i) That one additional temporary staff be included in the Housing Services Division complement at an approximate annual cost of \$70 K to support the administration services required to deliver the program as outlined in Recommendation (e) and within the funding as stipulated in Recommendation (e);
 - (ii) That Recommendation (e) and (e) (i) be funded annually over the 4 years, from the Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252, and if necessary, from in-year surpluses of the division and or department;
 - (iii) That any in-year Housing Services Division surplus not required to fund Recommendations (a), (b) and (e) be transferred into the Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252 to a maximum of \$2.28 M.

- (f) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate be directed and authorized, on behalf of the City of Hamilton, to enter into, execute and administer all agreements and documents necessary to implement the purchases and grants outlined above on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or his designate and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Hamilton, in collaboration with a wide range of community partners, continues to support the implementation of the COVID-19 response framework to support the adaptation and transformation of services for people experiencing homelessness. The recommendations within this report articulate the mid- and long-term actions within this response framework and support the continuation of COVID-19 emergency supports through a transition to a more responsive, resilient, sustainable and housing-focused homeless-serving system in alignment with the outcomes and strategies within Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

Housing Services Division's COVID-19 response framework initially projected the need for isolation services, drop-ins, and hotel rooms for expanded temporary sheltering during COVID-19 to June 30, 2021 based on projected available funding at the time; however, there is a demonstrated need in the community to have the option to maintain these responses to March 31, 2022 in order to continue to respond to immediate and ongoing needs during COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness. Through the availability of existing and additional Federal and/or Provincial homelessness funding for COVID-19 response it is expected that the City would be able to continue these supports; however, in the absence of additional funding there may be an impact to the City Reserves and or levy.

While there is a need to ensure enhanced emergency supports continue during COVID-19, Housing Services Division will continue to work alongside community stakeholders to identify and address the long-term actions needed to support adaptation within Hamilton's homeless-serving system. Reliance on hotels for emergency sheltering is an unsustainable response in our local context and it is necessary to develop an evidence-based approach to sustainably address ongoing needs in the emergency shelter system. This includes an assessment of needs related to transitional and long-term core capacity, availability and continued need of isolation spaces, drop-in programs and their contribution to system-level outcomes and the availability of housing-focused supports including enhancement of housing affordability programs.

The Housing Services Division continues to prioritize a transition toward a sustainable, responsive, and outcome focussed homeless-serving system informed by lived experience, evidence-based research and best practice that is effectively integrated into

the broader social safety net. This includes supporting opportunities for enhancements to local prevention and permanent housing supports, understanding that the adaptation of the local homeless-serving system will continue to be a necessity through post-COVID recovery. In ongoing development and adaptation of systems-level responses, Housing Services Division will continue to prioritize the work alongside Indigenous partners to develop connections to housing and supports that are culturally appropriate, rooted in the spirit and actions of reconciliation that recognize the values of autonomy and self-determination.

Concurrent with all activities recommended in this report is an on-going vaccination strategy within shelters and other programs for individuals experiencing homelessness. Hamilton's Public Health Services and the Shelter Health Network are leading the vaccination strategy in partnership with service providers and the Housing Services Division.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 11

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The recommendations in Report HSC20020(c) support the implementation of the COVID-19 response framework and continuation of COVID-19 emergency supports. To date, Housing Services Division has received \$12.3 M in Social Services Relief (SSRF) Phase 3 Funding to assist with costs related to serving the homeless population during the pandemic from March 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Council has approved funding of \$4.6 M from the Municipal Safe Restart Reserve in the 2021 budget.

The expected additional COVID-19 related costs from April 2021 to December 2021 are \$21.4 M. This includes the \$13.9 M in the Recommendations (a) and (b), as well as other costs for staffing and previously committed costs up to June 2021 of \$7.5 M. These costs exceed current approved funding by \$4.5 M. COVID-19 related costs up to March 2022 are expected to be \$6.6 M and do not have an approved funding source. The total unfunded COVID-19 costs from July 2021 to March 2022 is \$11 M.

Housing Services Division request that Recommendations (a) and (b) be considered for funding through available Municipal Safe Restart Reserve funds while continuing to explore other financial options to support the COVID-19 response framework.

Recommendation (e) does not qualify for COVID funding as is not included in the chart below. The estimated cost to fund the Housing Allowances and staff over 4 years is approximately \$2.28 M. Housing Services Division requests that Recommendation (e) be funded from Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252, and if necessary, from in year surpluses of the division and or department.

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In 000's	Forecast July 2021 to December 2021	Forecast January 2022 to March 2022	Total
Recommendation (a)(i)	\$1,500	-	\$1,500
Recommendation (a)(ii)	7,100	3,600	10,700
Recommendation (a)(iii)	2,000	1,000	3,000
Recommendation (a)(iv)	1,100	540	1,640
Recommendation (a)(v)	1,500	740	2,240
Recommendation (b)(i)(1)	710	744	1,454
Other Costs	200	-	200
Costs committed April - June	7,300	-	7,200
Total Forecasted Expenditures	\$21,410	\$6,624	\$28,034
Total SSRF Funding Available	(\$12,302)	-	(\$12,302)
<u>Municipal Safe Restart</u> 2021 Approved Budget	(4,637)	-	(4,637)
Levy Pressure	(\$4,471)	(\$6,624)	(\$11,095)

When the 2021 Preliminary budget was prepared the costs related to hotels, case management and isolation services were significantly less. As the pandemic emergency response continued and positive case levels increased, agreements were renegotiated to account for more beds and at an increased cost.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On January 16, 2020, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved recommendations outlined in Report HSC20004 Recommended Projects from Coming Together to End Homelessness: Call for Applications 2019.

On June 19, 2020, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020 Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness, outlining COVID-19 related adaptations to Hamilton's emergency shelter system until June 30, 2021.

On July 13, 2020, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved recommendations outlined in Report HSC20020(a) Adaptation and Transformation of Services Update 1. Housing Services Division purchased services of rental hotel rooms

and associated services, such as cleaning, security and food provision to meet the needs of homeless individuals, couples and families. Women's emergency shelters and other emergency shelter providers received additional financial support to increase staffing capacity.

On December 4, 2020, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved recommendations outlined in Report HSC20061 Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options.

On February 4, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020(b) which authorized an additional grant to a maximum amount of \$673,166 to the Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton to continue to operate 378 Main Street East (the former Cathedral Boys School) as a temporary shelter for 45 men to June 30, 2021.

On March 31, 2021, City Council approved the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Service Manager Service Agreement motion, authorizing the General Manager, Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, to implement funds provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the continued delivery the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The Housing Services Division continues to participate in regular meetings and consultation with the sector planning tables including the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative, the Men's Emergency Services Coordination Committee, as well as an ad hoc sector group representing community partners in the health and housing sector. These groups continue to advise that shelter capacity must be maintained to address current needs and potential rise in demand for emergency shelter supports through the pandemic. There remains ongoing support for continuing and expanding responses that allow for maximizing physical distancing to enhance safety for both shelter residents and agency staff.

While the focus of this report is decreasing dependency on temporary shelter, Housing Services Division will continue to communicate and engage with the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership, partner organizations and sector planning tables to look for ongoing permanent solutions to address system pressures.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

At the onset of COVID-19, the Housing Services Division developed a framework to guide its transition from emergency response to adaptation and transformation of its services through post-COVID recovery. In the short- and medium term, a key component of the framework and response has been maintaining the appropriate number of emergency shelter beds currently available while COVID-19 cases in the community continue to rise, while also ensuring that individuals and families are able to isolate if they test positive for COVID-19.

The agreements in place with hotels and the establishment of the temporary shelter at the former Cathedral Boys School allowed the City to ensure that additional emergency beds are available for families, men, women and couples throughout the pandemic. These actions were guided by health and safety considerations around the need to reduce capacity in existing shelters so that residents could safely stay while observing physical distancing guidelines recommended through consultation with Public Health Services. These expanded supports remain critical in order to be able to maintain expanded service levels where possible in the event of COVID-19 outbreaks within the emergency shelter system.

In 2020, Hamilton's emergency shelter system saw an 18% increase in length of stay and a 7% decrease in unique individuals served, with length of stay primarily driving occupancy pressures. As of March 2021, there were 503 emergency shelter spaces in Hamilton, an increase in 162 beds over pre-COVID capacity of 341. An analysis of 2020 shelter bed use shows that to effectively maintain available options during the transition period an increase in capacity is required. As such, the recommendation is to further investigate options for transitional and long-term adaptations to the emergency shelter system through COVID-19 where necessary, including how to facilitate the temporary increase standard emergency shelter capacity above pre-COVID levels. Implementation of this transition plan through post-COVID recovery will be evidence-based and informed by intersectional, culturally safe and trauma-informed approaches.

The proposed COVID-19 transition plan for the women's emergency shelter system accounts for the outcomes of the Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options RFP process completed in November 2020. The RFP process was undertaken to enhance gender-specific emergency shelter beds for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults and was initiated following the closure of Native Women's Centre Mountainview shelter in September 2020, a 15-bed city-funded emergency shelter for women. The RFP evaluation committee identified two viable projects: 1) Good Shepherd's Emergency Shelter proposal; and 2) Mission Services' Emergency Shelter proposal. The COVID-19 transition plan recommends leveraging the work completed through this RFP process by working with Mission Services through

Emma's Place (15 beds), in addition to extending hotel and case management operations for up to 55 beds up to March 31, 2022 while Housing Services Division completes a further needs assessment for alternative solutions for ongoing support, including the viability of the previously approved Good Shepherd proposal.

In the implementation of the transition plan for Hamilton's emergency shelter system through post-COVID recovery, Housing Services Division will also continue to work with Public Health Services to determine feasibility of safely returning men's emergency shelters to pre-COVID capacities. An RFP process will then be conducted as needed to identify alternative solutions for ongoing support. This RFP process will allow the City to identify key components of emergency shelter service design informed by community in order to ensure that proposed service delivery and operations are in alignment with applicable service standards. In all upcoming emergency shelter projects, Housing Services Division will also explore the viability of long-term isolation spaces on site within these facilities.

The temporary continuation of COVID-19 emergency supports through 2021-22 allows for the City to maintain these interventions while working toward a transition away from a reliance on hotel usage toward more sustainable emergency shelter and permanent housing solutions required to meet long term needs. During this transition, Housing Services Division will continue to evaluate and assess the impact and effectiveness of these interventions, including expanded drop-in services, in order to assess long-term strategic alignment and contributions to systems level outcomes. Increased investments to support permanent housing placements and in-home case management supports approved through the 2019 Call for Applications process continue to support individuals and families with housing placements and in maintaining current tenancies and will be further supported through the expansion of housing allowances.

Higher Level Supports

There remains 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. This need has continued to be highlighted locally through the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably by the rise in, and visibility of, unsheltered homelessness and encampments. The City's Encampment Response Team utilizes the Encampment Protocol, approved by Council in September 2020, which outlines the actions taken when addressing reported encampments. This includes assessment of "acuity" in order to assist in connections to appropriate supports that meet individuals' needs and preferences.

In order to expand the availability of higher level supports, staff continue to explore further partnerships to meet this local need. To this end, in January 2021 the City of Hamilton entered into a strategic partnership with St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and

the Canadian Mental Health Association Hamilton on a pilot project that aimed to stabilize the housing of 15-20 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with high acuity mental illness and/or substance use disorder through coordination of clinical and non-clinical supports. This included the integration of peer support, clinical health and addictions services, and existing City-funded Intensive Case Management (ICM) program support, as well as access to market rent units through CityHousing Hamilton and housing allowances through Housing Services Division. The pilot was guided by principles of trauma-informed and person-centred care and aimed to provide links to comprehensive primary care to facilitate management of concurrent health and social needs through new mechanisms of collaboration to ensure health and housing resources are accessible and appropriate to meet needs of highly acute individuals.

In order to continue to support the development of innovative partnerships to enhance the availability and accessibility of supports to those experiencing chronic homelessness with complex needs, staff continue to engage with sector partners and remain in talks with the province, the Hamilton Health Team and community agencies to explore further partnerships for the development of a permanent supportive housing solutions. Staff also continue to advocate for additional investments from other levels of government to adequately support those with complex needs in our community.

Housing Services Strategic Alignment

Extended length of stay at emergency shelters points to a need for continued efforts to support the long-term actions in the Housing Services Division's COVID-19 response framework, in alignment with Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, as well as Federal and Provincial direction for housing and homelessness initiatives. Specific Action Plan strategies linked to outcomes ensuring that people have the individualized supports they need to obtain and maintain housing include:

- improved coordination of access between homelessness programs and housing support services;
- increased housing supports that help tenants remained housed;
- increased integration and coordination of support, social service, and health care programs and services to increase client access to programs and services and better serve all people in need; and,
- development of new person-centred and innovative supportive housing models based on the identified needs of people with living experience.

It is anticipated that as we transition away from emergency supports provided in response to the pandemic, a greater focus on movement into permanent housing will allow for reduced pressure on capacity for those staying longer within the shelter/hotel system and allow us to transition to lower sheltering capacities in the system. The recommendation to fund an expanded Housing Allowance program has the potential to

expedite this transition in the emergency system through a focus on immediate permanent housing solutions.

As proposed, the new Housing Allowance program would greatly assist City-funded Intensive Case Management Programs to facilitate housing placements (currently these programs have a combined yearly target of 344 housing placements). The recommended \$2 M Housing Allowance budget at an average of \$450 per month per allowance, would support 93 individuals over four years.

Staff, in consultation with City Departments and housing providers within the community, will also continue to develop an active and comprehensive portfolio of housing opportunities within the community that represent 'shovel ready' projects ideally placed to benefit from future permanent housing funding opportunities.

Actions outlined in the recommendations support the further implementation of these strategies alongside ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes to assess outcomes. Housing Services Division will continue to assess policy, program and capital components linked to future investment and the potential ongoing financial impacts associated, understanding that the adaptation and transformation of the local homeless-serving system will continue to be a necessity through post- COVID recovery.

Equity Considerations and Approach

Prioritizing the meaningful engagement and effective participation of people with living/lived experience in processes to inform services and the development and adaptation of systems-level responses remains critical in our local context. Within this work there is a distinct recognition of the systemic over-representation of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness and the need to prioritize consistent approaches that acknowledge autonomy and self-determination as key pillars of engagement alongside Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Community.

Policies and guidelines, as well as subsequent systems responses and quality assurance processes linked to the implementation of recommendations for the homeless-serving system through COVID-19, should explicitly reference diversity and inclusion considerations and implications on program structure, implementation and operation as to consistently explore who may be impacted (i.e. considerations around gender, gender identity and expression, race, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, socioeconomic status, etc.), how they are impacted and why.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Should any of the recommendations not be supported, a 30-day provision should be included from date of decision to allow for a transitional wind-down of programs to adequately support clients, partner agencies, and their staff in closing these services.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Healthy and Safe Communities

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

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A