



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 9, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 4 (HSC20020(d)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035 Nadia Zelisko (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2548
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (a) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or their designate be authorized 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 and 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:
- (i) Transitioning 378 Main Street East (the former Cathedral Boys School) into a temporary shelter for women (approximately 80-100 beds) at an approximate cost of \$1 M for the period of January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022;
 - (ii) Adding approximately 28 temporary emergency shelter beds as men's system overflow at an approximate cost of \$350 K for the period of January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022;

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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- (iii) That the establishment of a funding source of up to \$500 K to support independent agencies and community entities (e.g. community collaboratives/churches/social clubs, etc.) who may be interested in supporting vulnerable residents through the winter months until March 31, 2022 but who may not have the operational funds to be viable, be approved;
- (iv) That the creation of an Emerging Needs Fund to prevent and address homelessness experienced by Indigenous community members of Hamilton to respond to needs arising as a result of COVID-19 in the amount of \$500 K for the period of January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022 be approved;
- (b) That an additional grant in the approximate amount of \$500 K to the YWCA Hamilton for capital renovations required to continue to operate Carol Anne's Place as a temporary drop in program for 22 single homeless women until June 30, 2022, funded from the projected 2021 Housing Services Division surplus through the Tax Stabilization Reserve #110046 and if necessary, from in-year surpluses of the department; any unspent Housing Services Division 2021 surplus be transferred to the Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252 be approved;
- (c) That an additional grant in the approximate amount of \$150 K to the Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton for capital renovations required to continue to operate Cathedral as a temporary shelter for women until June 30, 2022, funded from the projected 2021 Housing Services Division surplus through the Tax Stabilization Reserve #110046 and if necessary, from in-year surpluses of the department; any unspent Housing Services Division 2021 surplus be transferred to the Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252 be approved;
- (d) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or their designate be authorized to enter into contracts necessary to hire and retain a consultant to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a New Westminster style bylaw in Hamilton to deal with the issue of 'renovictions' in the approximate amount of \$100 K, funded from the projected 2021 Housing Services Division surplus through the Tax Stabilization Reserve #110046 and if necessary, from in-year surpluses of the department; any unspent Housing Services Division 2021 surplus be transferred to the Housing Supplement/Housing Allowance Reserve, #112252 be approved;
- (e) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or their 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; and,

- (f) That the item respecting Encampment Response Update be identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendations within this report build on previously approved actions to support COVID-19 emergency supports, through a transition to a more responsive, resilient, sustainable and housing-focused homeless-serving system. The option to continue the operation of isolation services, drop-ins, and hotel rooms for expanded temporary sheltering during COVID-19 to March 31, 2022, provides necessary flexibility to execute the agreements as the Housing Services Division continues to work with a range of local partners in responding to immediate and ongoing needs during COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness. Additional recommendations further local efforts to support Indigenous led solutions to addressing homelessness, support community agencies in winter response efforts, and directly explore local solutions to the issue of 'renovictions'.

Costs for the period of April 2022 to December 2022 have been included in the 2022 preliminary budget for Council deliberation. The Housing Services Division continues to advocate for COVID-19 related provincial and federal funding. Should no new resources be received from the provincial or federal government, the City of Hamilton would need to explore other financial options to support the on-going homelessness needs addressed in the recommendations above as well as future funding required to support the delivery of homeless services in a COVID-19 recovery environment.

In order to maintain stability within the Homelessness Serving System through the transition to the next phase of pandemic response, it remains necessary that adequate supports be maintained to support health and safety recommendations made through ongoing consultation with the local Public Health unit. Although provincial COVID restrictions continue to be lifted, detailed discussions with health partners have informed our ongoing approach to health and safety through emergency supports as we continue to operate within adapted environments for congregate settings. These interventions continue to carry a significant cost, and at this time no additional Federal and/or Provincial COVID-19 response funding is anticipated; therefore, these supports are expected to have an impact on City Reserves and/or Levy. The Housing Services Division will continue to advocate to Provincial and Federal partners for additional COVID-19 funding to mitigate impacts on the City.

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Expanded COVID-19 emergency services and supports may not be needed for the full timeframe outlined, and as more permanent solutions are brought online and as existing facilities are able to transition back to pre- COVID-19 capacity, temporary COVID-19 solutions will be gradually decommissioned. As the Housing Services Division implements previously approved actions within Hamilton's COVID-19 response framework to support the adaptation and transformation of services for people experiencing homelessness, we continue to work alongside community stakeholders to identify and sustainably address the long-term evidence-based actions needed to support adaptation within Hamilton's homeless-serving system.

In ongoing development and adaptation of systems-level responses, the Housing Services Division continues to prioritize collaborative work with local Indigenous leadership 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. The proposal of an Emerging Needs Fund for the urban Indigenous Community of Hamilton is a direct result of this work to support Indigenous led solutions. The Emerging Needs Fund will provide the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL) with financial support to address immediate, time sensitive needs which will serve to directly prevent and address homelessness experienced by Indigenous community members of Hamilton.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 10

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The recommendations in Report HSC20020(d) support the continuation of the COVID-19 response framework and emergency supports. To date, Housing Services Division has received \$13.8 M in Social Services Relief (SSRF) Phase 4 Funding to assist with costs related to serving the homeless population during the pandemic from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Table 1 below summarizes the recommendations proposed in this report and the funding sources identified.

The expected COVID-19 related costs from January 2022 to March 2022 for HSC20020(d) total \$2.35 M. These costs are to be funded by \$350 K from SSRF Phase 4 and \$2 M from CHPI base. CHPI base available surplus of \$2 M was projected within the internal fiscal year August forecast. HSC20020(d) recommendations (b) through to (d) total \$750 K and the Housing Services Division is proposing to use its projected 2021 surplus as the funding source. The distribution of the 2021 Housing Services Division surplus is detailed in table 2.

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Table 1

Recommendation	HSC20020(d) Jan 2022 to Mar 2022	HSC20020(d) Jan 2022 to June 2022
HSC20020(d) (a)(i) Women's Temp Shelter	1,000,000	
HSC20020(d) (a)(ii) Men's Temp Shelter	350,000	
HSC20020(d) (a)(iii) Community Collaborations	500,000	
HSC20020(d) (a)(iv) Emerging Needs	500,000	
HSC20020(d) (b) YWCA Capital		500,000
HSC20020(d) (c) Good Shepherd Capital		150,000
HSC20020(d) (d) Consultant Fee		100,000
Total Costs	2,350,000	750,000
SSRF Phase 4 Funding to Mar 31, 2022	352,850	
CHPI Base Funding to Mar 31, 2022	1,997,150	
2021 Housing Services Division Surplus		750,000
Total Funding	2,350,000	750,000

Table 2

Recommendations	Amount	Explanation
August Projected Surplus	3,500,000	
Rent Ready Approved Motion	(1,000,000)	Rent Ready program using \$1M of the 2021 surplus. Carry forward any unspent funds into 2022
Remaining unallocated surplus	2,500,000	
HSC20020(d) (b)	(500,000)	YWCA Hamilton for capital renovations required to continue to operate Carol Anne's Place
HSC20020(d) (c)	(150,000)	Emerging Needs Fund to prevent homelessness experienced by the Indigenous community
HSC20020(d) (d)	(100,000)	Consultant to deal with the issue of 'renovictions'
Transfer to Reserve #112252	(1,750,000)	As per recommendations HHSC20020(d) (c) (d)
Remaining unallocated surplus	-	

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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

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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 Report HSC20020(a) Adaptation and Transformation of Services Update 1. The 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 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.

On June 3, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020(c) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 3, outlining further adaptations of Hamilton's emergency shelter system as a result of COVID-19.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The City of Hamilton, Housing Services Division is the designated Community Entity (CE) responsible for local implementation of the federal Reaching Home strategy and related investments. This is done in partnership with the CE for the Reaching Home Indigenous funding stream, the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL). CHIL is a collaborative of Indigenous organizational leaders that works to address

community needs and support member agencies through improved resources and advancement of Indigenous voices in Hamilton.

The proposal of an Emerging Needs fund for Hamilton's urban Indigenous community has been directly recommended through ongoing consultation with CHIL, and the design and implementation of such an initiative will be Indigenous led.

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 rise in demand for emergency shelter supports as we concurrently implement long-term solutions.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The agreements in place with hotels and the establishment of the temporary shelter at the former Cathedral Boys School have allowed the City to ensure that additional emergency beds are available for families, men, women and couples throughout the pandemic. These actions continue to be guided by health and safety considerations around the need to reduce capacity in existing shelters so that residents can safely stay while observing physical distancing guidelines recommended through consultation with Public Health Services.

As the men's emergency shelter system safely transitions back to pre- COVID-19 capacity, use of hotels for emergency sheltering will be reduced and eventually phased out. At the same time, there remains a commitment to enhance gender-specific emergency shelter beds for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults. The previously approved Mission Services' Emergency Shelter proposal (Emma's Place – 15 beds) is now online, and the conversion of the former Cathedral Boys School to an emergency women's shelter until June 30, 2022 would allow for reduced reliance on hotel usage, while also continuing to explore the viability of the previously approved Good Shepherd proposal (Women's Shelter and Support Investment Options RFP process completed in November 2020).

To further support emergency 2021/2022 winter response needs in Hamilton, the Housing Services Division is also proposing the creation of a flexible fund to support independent agencies and community entities (e.g. community collaboratives/churches/social clubs, etc.) who may be interested in supporting vulnerable residents but who may not have the operational funds to be viable. Housing Services Division staff would work to ensure all potential funded interventions are

coordinated and delivered in a structured and comprehensive manner and will conduct an evaluation of the rollout and implementation.

The Housing Services Division, as the designated mainstream Community Entity (CE) responsible for local implementation of the Federal Reaching Home strategy and related investments, continues to work toward core requirements that help strengthen an evidence-based and integrated approach across the homelessness sector (outlined in Report HSC21044 - Reaching Home: Canada's Homeless Strategy Community Homelessness Report 2019-2020, 2020-2021). In determining the ongoing needs through COVID-19 to strengthen this evidence-based and integrated approach, we continue to assess the appropriate level of ongoing support for couples in the emergency shelter system, as well as the role of expanded drop-in services. Evaluation and assessment will further seek to determine the impact and effectiveness of these interventions as it relates to long-term strategic alignment and contributions to systems level outcomes

Equity Considerations and Approach – Indigenous Led Solutions

Coming Together to End Homelessness: Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework outlines our strategic local approach to preventing and ending homelessness, which must account for the systemic over-representation of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness. The Housing Services Division is committed to ongoing coordination with urban Indigenous leadership to ensure that approaches to service coordination and provision are culturally appropriate, safe and built on principles of relationship, trust and informed consent.

Ongoing dialogue with CHIL regarding equitable access to resources to support the urban Indigenous community of Hamilton highlights the need for Indigenous led capital solutions; housing is the primary need identified and is recognized as a foundational element required to address inter-generational trauma and the colonial legacy of homelessness among Indigenous peoples in Hamilton. In response to achieving this goal, there has been an identified need to build capacity within the sector. As such, Housing staff are committed to exploring a number of options to address this issue in collaboration with CHIL. This will include identifying and providing in kind mentoring and learning opportunities of the development and pre-development process. These opportunities will include requiring mentoring programs to be provided for Indigenous agencies by those successful applicants of any Rapid Housing funding, as well as, to explore the possibility of mentoring and support programs provided by City Staff, on the development process.

An Indigenous led drop-in in the downtown core to provide a culturally safe space for wholistic support is also identified as a long-term need within the Indigenous

community. The Housing Services Division continues to explore options with CHIL and Indigenous partners to support this vision.

In the immediate term, CHIL has identified the need for an Emerging Needs Fund to prevent and address homelessness experienced by Indigenous community members of Hamilton. Examples of how this fund may be used include: support for first and/or last month's rent; short term rental assistance; basic needs, etc. This fund is projected to support a minimum of 250 Indigenous households with the deepest of needs, representing approximately 1.5% of Hamilton's Indigenous population. In 2013, the Housing Services Division contracted with a consultant to review the relationship between the City of Hamilton and the urban Indigenous community with respect to federal homelessness funding. Given the continued overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples among those experiencing homelessness, the City continues to allocate 20% of federal homelessness program funding to the Indigenous community. This report highlighted that 43% of Hamilton's Indigenous population live below the LICO, while up to 63% have had to give up important things such as buying groceries in order to meet housing costs.

The Housing Services Division and CHIL have co-designed two concepts submitted for potential federal funding: Indigenous Data Liaison and the development of an Indigenous Cultural Capacity Training and Accountability Framework. These initiatives will support continual capacity building in the homeless sector to better respond to, and consistently meet the needs of, Indigenous individuals and families. The Data Liaison will result in increased knowledge of Indigenous specific data to inform policy and practice, while decolonizing mainstream data through principles such as OCAP® principles of ownership, control, access, and possession of Indigenous data by Indigenous peoples. The proposed concept will include ongoing accountability mechanisms for data quality at program and municipal levels. The Indigenous Cultural Capacity Training and Accountability Framework will define a clear path of progression for non-Indigenous homeless serving organizations to achieve a high level of cultural awareness, sensitivity and capacity. In doing so, non-Indigenous agencies across Hamilton's homeless-serving system will be better positioned to contribute to preventing and addressing Indigenous homelessness. The implementation of these approaches account for and directly respond to the systemic over-representation of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness by working toward implementing Indigenous led solutions through meaningful engagement, trust building and strengthened partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless-serving organizations.

Snapshot of Housing and Homelessness in Hamilton

On September 9, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee directed, "That staff be requested to provide a comprehensive snapshot of housing and homelessness in Hamilton on a quarterly basis, outlining all programs that have been

utilized and the different resources that are available in collaboration with partners in community, the shelter health network.”

This first quarterly snapshot attached as Appendix “A” to Report HSC20020(d) reports key data on the state of homelessness and actions towards preventing and ending it to the end of September 2021 (Quarter 3). It is intended to support evidence-informed action and improvement within Hamilton’s Housing & Homelessness Serving System. Data in this snapshot have informed the recommendations made in this report to ensure ongoing accountability to addressing immediate unmet housing needs while establishing permanent solutions to housing pressures.

Subsequent quarterly and annual reports are likely to evolve as additional data needs and reporting capabilities are determined.

Housing Affordability and Eviction Prevention

The Housing Services Division is investigating numerous policy and program interventions to help address the issue of evictions. To date the main programmatic solutions have been the expansion of the Tenant Defence Fund (TDF) to support tenants who are utilizing the Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) to contest an N13 notice related to renovations, and the creation of the Rent Ready program that helps tenants remain housed by supporting the payment of rental and utility arrears.

The TDF has supported two households to date in their applications in the amount of \$1,904 and has three pending applications to support households through the LTB process. The Rent Ready program supported 185 households in remaining housed by October 7, 2021 through paying rent and/or utility arrears. Further work is being completed with a report back to Council about a jurisdictional review of programs related to renovations such as the New Westminster BC bylaw. Given the challenges around jurisdictional differences among provinces and the legal challenges the bylaw has overcome, staff are recommending a consultant complete a thorough analysis of the options for implementation of an approach similar to the New Westminster, BC bylaw in Ontario. This analysis would also review other jurisdictions and levels of success dealing with renovations through a municipal policy lens. The results of the analysis, with recommendations related to renovations, will be presented to Council in Q2 2022.

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

Appendix “A” to Report HSC20020(d): Housing and Homelessness in Hamilton:
Quarterly Data Snapshot Q3 2021