



Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS)
Proposal & Request

**City of Hamilton Emergency &
Community Services Committee**
February 17th 2022

Attention:

The City of Hamilton, Emergency and Community Services Committee
Angela Burden, General Manager, Healthy & Safe Communities
Edward John, Director of Housing
City of Hamilton, City Councillors

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Introduction:

The Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters is a community-led initiative of Hamilton residents and organizations that seeks to deliver a novel approach to providing stability and a temporary home for residents experiencing homelessness.

Communities across North America are experimenting with the concept of stabilizing unhoused people in small, 'sleeping cabins' with supports to aid the progress of vulnerable individuals along the housing continuum. Although the HATS initiative is inspired by Kitchener's 'Better Tent City' program, we hope to build on the evidence-based successes of similar programs that are based on a housing-first, human rights approach. Ours is a made-in-Hamilton model; collaborating with service providers and community members. The aim is to provide those currently unhoused with:

- regular connection to services and healthcare
- stability and structure to help those experiencing homelessness to move along the housing trajectory more successfully
- to move them from dangerous conditions on the streets into a safer and stable setting that provides protection from the environment, and regular connection to services and healthcare on a path to stable housing

Foundational principles guiding the vision for HATS include, but are not limited to, the following:

- low barrier access to occupying a cabin
- design and operations informed and envisioned by persons with lived experience and those occupying the space
- ongoing consultation with persons and organizations currently serving the unhoused and precariously housed population
- collaborations with transitional housing programs and housing providers
- independent living with individualized person-centered supports, provided by the service organizations currently providing outreach to this demographic.

In addition:

- this initiative does not constitute "housing"
- this initiative is not permanent
- the initiative is exempt from the *Residential Tenancies Act*
- this initiative informed and guided by "housing first" principles—first provide a person with shelter/housing and then supports as needed to sustain that housing

Concept:

- Vision/Mission statement

We plan to involve those with lived experience of homelessness and community agencies to finalize our Vision/Mission statements.

In the interim, we aim to provide warm, safe accommodation for those experiencing homelessness in Hamilton, Ontario.

Our Goal:

Our goal is to help stabilize people, and act as a stepping stone to move them along the housing continuum at their pace.

To set up 10 cabins **in April 2022** to stabilize and protect those experiencing homelessness, in warm safe and supportive accommodation and to act as a bridge to permanent housing. And to expand as soon as possible to another 10 cabins.

Program Details:

- Using donated land (currently SJAM is on offer)
- Erect 8'x10' cabins (with accessible ramps if required)
- Cabins equipped with electricity, heat, a bed, a microwave, mini fridge
- An additional cabin on-site exclusively to be used as an office/meeting space for support services to meet with community members
- On-site washrooms with regular servicing
- Regular garbage pickup and site cleanup, with residents with residents responsible and paid for ongoing tasks
- On-site supervisors, anticipating 2 full-time employees to begin with

HATS plans to build our program in a way that leads to permanent housing.

As an example, 50% of residents at a similar project in Seattle have moved to permanent housing.

Our program offers residents a more stable, and safe environment: once they have greater stability, a place they can call their own, and their health needs are met, they can begin to move along the housing continuum.

One local housing provider told us that their tenants are much more successful when they come from some kind of structured program that helps them prepare for housing, rather than coming directly from sleeping rough.

Organizational Structure:

The current organizational structure is still evolving with ongoing engagement with unhoused persons and other community stakeholders.

HATS holds regular, weekly team meeting, in addition to interim team meetings, as needed. Our meetings are minuted and our operations include regular reporting.

The city has a long-standing relationship and financial commitments to the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, which is a key HATS partner.

The current steering committee leading this initiative includes the following entities:

- Social Planning and Research Council, represented by Deirdre Pike
- The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty, represented by Tom Cooper
- Ted McMeekin, citizen
- Ed Fothergill, citizen
- Julia Kollek, citizen
- Tony D'Amato Stortz, past Kitchener-Waterloo "Better Tent City" site manager
- Bill Johnston, representing the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton
- Hamilton Community Legal Clinic

Accountability rests with our Board of Directors, as listed below: the initiative is in the midst of incorporating and applying for charitable non-profit status with the following details:

- Julia Kollek, President
- Bill Johnston, Secretary
- Tom Cooper, Treasurer

Any of the above will act as the point of contact for HATS.

Demographics:

HATS aims to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness who for various reasons are unable to access the traditional shelter system, including unhoused persons living with disabilities, and who are likely to stabilize and thrive in this environment.

We are engaging with individuals through questionnaires, focus groups and facilitated conversations, including at warming centres such as the Hub and Wesley. At early discussions,

people experiencing homelessness expressed overwhelming support for HATS. Participants cried at the prospect of being able to stay in a warm cabin.

Eligibility:

Unhoused and outside of the shelter system. Beyond those broad criteria, we are designing a referral process with unhoused members of the community and support service providers that engage with unhoused persons.

The application process is also in process as we continue to consult with stakeholders.

Couples would be eligible; each would be assigned a cabin case the relationship breaks up. We don't know yet if couples would be a priority.

We acknowledge the barrier in the shelter system for people with pets – and the difficulty they have accessing shelters. We will take this into account when we design our eligibility criteria.

Our work to develop eligibility will be informed by a gender and equity lens. We are also consulting with the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, the Native Women's Centre and the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative, among others.

We envision scenarios where individuals we view as eligible for a cabin are also on the city's By-Name list. Once they are in the cabin community, residents will have the autonomy to choose and decide which agencies to connect with, and the services that help them transition. We would be delighted if those we first identify for a cabin can instead be successfully and permanently housed in a community housing setting, but we are aware that there are more than 1,000 people the city has identified as unhoused who could benefit from a cabin. We will certainly co-operate with the city and other housing providers as they engage with cabin residents about permanent housing.

We note that this has been the case for half the residents of a similar project in Seattle.

Residents' Signed Commitment Statements:

We are developing, with services providers and people with lived experience, a statement of expectations and commitments that residents would sign to become a member of the cabin community. A significant violation of the agreement could result in residents having to leave.

Residents would be involved, in ways that would evolve on the operation of the site.

Support Services:

We will encourage service providers to include our site in their rounds; each outreach agency has the autonomy to choose their method of delivery of service and each resident has the autonomy to decide how they engage with the supports offered.

We have been advised that existing support services who respond to the needs of the unhoused community would continue to do so, and some will coordinate an extension of their services to the site itself. Those services geographically close to the SJAM site may remain off-site.

A group of support services will be providing a direct report to council through Jennifer Bonner, Director of The Hub.

The following existing supports are being coordinated by the service providers themselves, some of which is being coordinated by Jennifer Bonner, Director of The Hub.

These include and are not limited to:

- medical care
- pharmaceutical delivery
- substance abuse supports
- harm reduction
- housing system navigators
- social work support
- art therapy o vocational support
- income support,

In addition to other support agencies, we will have professionally-trained onsite staff, engaging with the residents of the cabins. On-site staff will be responsible to the board of HATS.

In addition, we have secured the pro bono services of an HR consultant who will guide staff evaluation, as well as ensuring the staff are provided with the opportunity to give their feedback on suggestions they may have to improve the project's operations.

Security & Safety:

Erecting tents will not be permitted on the property and this will be enforced. If someone tries to erect tents on the site, staff on site would ask the person to leave and issue the no trespass order from the landlord against them.

The residents of the cabin community might also work together to ensure tents aren't erected, knowing an encampment could impact the continued use of the property for cabins.

As a last resort, staff or volunteers would call the Social Navigators.

Supporting agencies and persons with lived experience are developing protocols regarding police interaction on site.

We anticipate hiring 2 site supervisors at first, working in shifts on-site, with financial support from the City of Hamilton.

The landowners will have issued a standard no trespassing document against any individual not entitled to be on the property.

Visitors will be allowed but with limited overnight. Exact policies are being developed with services providers and people with lived experience.

Once policies, procedures and the formal organizational structure are established, we will make public the point persons to contact based on sub-committees in support of this initiative including liaison with the city, fire, police and neighbours, as well as on-site consultation and inspection by the Electrical Safety Authority.

Engagement With Unhoused Persons:

Unhoused persons and eventual residents of this community will drive the evolution of this program to ensure that their needs are being met and that we are supporting them in solidarity. We are currently collecting raw data from questionnaires and focus groups with unhoused persons. Tony D'Amato Stortz has been collecting data in collaboration with Jennifer Bonner from The Hub, and other organizations working directly with unhoused people.

Focus groups have taken place with people using the Hub drop-in center and its emergency overnight shelter, and with Wesley Urban Ministries. Ongoing engagement will continue and extend to persons currently encamped. Unhoused persons have been and will continue to be invited to direct the initiative.

Insurance:

HATS will shortly be incorporated and will be applying for insurance through [the Co-Operators insurance broker](#) who specializes in non-profits, and was used by A Better Tent City.

The Sir John A. Macdonald Site

In approving the Sir John A. Macdonald site, the school board set certain conditions, listed below with our responses:

1. This would have to be a short-term solution (this winter) as the Board will need to move forward with the next steps for the SJAM property.

We are aware of this. Our cabins can be moved. And we are actively searching for a second site. We understand that we must ensure the site is returned to the conditions in which we found it when we leave.

2. The discussions have been had centred around using SJAM as transitional support. There should be a clear plan on where the permanent location will be for any transition location.

We are actively looking for a secondary site, and welcome suggestions from city council and staff.

3. Any similar initiatives that have been successful in other municipalities state that one of the key success criteria are the supports that are available 24/7 to the residents. These supports include mental health and social service supports. There should be funding and a plan identified for these supports.

We are actively working on agreements with service providers, a number of whom have assured us that if their clients are in our cabins, they will provide them with services. Other than hiring staff to help manage the site, we will not be providing support services but will provide a fixed location where support services providers can serve their clients.

4. In addition, similar initiatives have 24/7 security in order to ensure the safety of residents and the community. There should be funding and a plan identified for these supports.

We would be interested to know about similar initiatives that have used 24/7 security on their sites: in our conversations with other programs, this was not the case.

As mentioned above, supporting agencies and persons with lived experience are developing protocols regarding police interaction on site.

We anticipate hiring 2 site supervisors at first, working in shifts on-site, and – as initiated in other similar programs - staff would contact the Social Navigator program if necessary, a program which is already active where they are needed across the city.

5. Many of the inquiries have wanted to use the actual SJAM building to provide certain services. There are costs related to getting the building that has not been in use ready for use again. It is the Board's expectation that these costs would be covered. Depending on the areas of the building that would be accessed, it could range from \$30,000 to \$125,000.

We will not be using the building.

6. The Board would have to ensure that appropriate insurance coverage is available.

We have arranged to acquire insurance from the insurer used by the A Better Tent City in Kitchener. We will complete that as soon as we are incorporated as a non-profit, which will happen in the next few days.

In addition, due to the number and variety of organizations/representatives that have come forward, the Board has asked all the advocates to work through the City of Hamilton in order to ensure that there is collaboration related to the unhoused situation.

We are working together with city councillors, staff, and collaborating with other organizations to provide temporary accommodation with support services, as well as creating plans that will enable housing providers to meet with residents.

Donations & In-Kind Offers:

Our charitable flow-through partner is The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

HATS is applying for charitable non-profit status at which point, our organization will take donations and issue charitable tax receipts.

To date we have received approximately \$11,000 in donations, made in the past week with a formal fundraising strategy planned going forward.

In addition, we have been flooded with offers from professionals, businesses, schools and volunteers to help build and support our program.

Community Outreach

HATS organizers initiated a virtual community information session on Thursday, February 10th. Flyers delivered the previous week to houses around the SJAM neighbourhood provided details about the meeting to enable local residents to learn more about the vision for the project; Ward 2's Councillor was invited to attend and speak. More than 50 residents participated in a briefing session followed by breakout rooms where we heard back from residents. HATS would like to continue community engagement sessions as this project unfolds to keep residents updated about the project.

Program Measures of Success:

These are our preliminary measures of success, subject to change, and following further consultation (including those with lived experience):

- 1) Residents are protected from the elements, and from the risk of weather-related injuries
- 2) Residents have the stability in being in a fixed, known, approved location – allowing the maintenance of supports which is currently disrupted when people are constantly on the move
- 3) Residents have less stress and worry about where's a safe place to stay every night
- 4) Residents have regular access to healthcare
- 5) Residents have opportunities to enhance their skills
- 6) Residents are assisted to move, at their own pace, toward more permanent housing
- 7) Residents have respect and dignity, safety, and a reduced feeling of isolation
- 8) Residents indicate satisfaction with HATS program
- 9) Residents have the opportunity to develop leadership and life skills
- 10) Residents feel a greater sense of personal autonomy

Request of the City:

- \$100,000 in funding for staffing - from the \$500,000 Emergency Needs Fund outlined in the Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 4 (HSC20020(d)) (City Wide) report dated December 9, 2021 - or whichever fund is deemed most appropriate
- Non-Enforcement of the density bylaw, that does not allow for an emergency shelter to be within 300 metres of another; and non-enforcement of the requirement to hook up to municipal sewer and water services
- Exemption from the site planning process and fees; and
- Expedition of any zoning amendments or requests sought on a case-by-case basis
- To assist with ongoing operational funding, we will be requesting cabin residents to contribute their portion of Ontario Works or ODSP shelter allowance and will request assistance with the Ontario Works office to coordinate this contribution
- We have been relying on privately donated land, however we encourage the City to consider donating or allocating land for the expansion and/or continuation of this program.

Motions to Consider

To be sent separately.

HATS Draft Budget

including breakdown of estimated operational budget, anticipated staffing costs; heat and hydro; supplies; site maintenance – is attached.

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Appendix "A" to Report HSC22015

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HATS HAMILTON 2022

ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

	NOTES	EST. ANNUAL INCOME (10 Cabins)	EST. ANNUAL INCOME (20 Cabins)	ITEM	10 Cabins	12 Cabins
INCOME						
DONATIONS						
	current approx to date	9,000				
Donations pledged (once site established)	current additional donation pledged	10,000				
Purchase of cabins pledged (once site established)	current (more expected)	50,000	50,000			
Residents Contributions (OW & ODSP)	OW	2,681		OW	5,362	
	OSDP	1,669		OSDP	3,338	
Purchase of cabins pledged (once site established)	Total (with 10 cabins)	73,350	Total (with 20 cabins)			58,700

EXPENSES

					10 Cabins	12 Cabins
Utilities				Water & Septic (if required)	36,000	43,200
				Electricity	13,200	15,840
Internet and computer	HWSDB offered zero				1,200	1,440
Property rental					0	
Garbage removal					1,900	2,000
Sharps Removal					1,900	2,000
Portable toilets rental & service					13,200	19,800
Pest control	in-kind from city?				500	500
Snow removal	Funding from a grant?				6,600	6,600
Daily stipends for residents					4,800	5,760
Insurance					5,000	5,000
Professional fees				Legal - annual	0	0
				Accounting/tax	2,000	2,000
Repairs & maintenance	We have potential offer of donations				2,400	3,000
Food and supplies					25,000	30,000
Extraordinary:						
Professional fees				Any?		
Future Moving & set up					4,000	4,800
Major capital repairs					1,500	1,800
Sub-Total expenses					119,200	143,740
15% for miscellaneous					17,880	21,561
				Subtotal	137,080	165,301
Wages details:	Have submitted application to United Way					
Tony (Program Manager)*				Base salary (\$60k)*	7,000	7,000
Consultant, self-employed				Benefits	0	0
Site Superintendent 1				Base salary (\$48k)	48,000	48,000
				Benefits	480	480
Site Superintendent 2				Base salary (\$48k)	48,000	48,000
				Benefits	480	480
				Subtotal salaries and benefits	103,960	103,960
ESTIMATED TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS				TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS*	241,040	269,261
* NOTE: This does not include items in red, listed on Sheet 2						
Plus ESTIMATED SET UP CAPITAL COSTS (Sheet 2)				ESTIMATED SET UP CAPITAL COSTS (Sheet 2)	123,075	215,233
SUB TOTAL 1 YEAR OPERATING COSTS + CAPITAL COSTS					364,115	484,494
Minus Estimated Income					73,350	58,700
TOTAL 1 YEAR OPERATING COSTS + CAPITAL COSTS					290,655	425,794

HATS - ESTIMATED SET UP COSTS

Cabins	cost of these may be donated	10 Cabins	12 Cabins
Cabin construction* x 9 (1 of 10 was offered free by cabin builder)	*price may increase due to increased cost of materials	45,000	54,000
Fire retardant spray from USA	USD 295 approx	375	375
Plywood for 4 walls		3,850	4,647
Plywood for beds/shelving		6,000	7,200
Pressure-treated logs for base support (4ftx8ft)		715	856
Cement blocks for base support		500	600
	Subtotal	56,440	67,678
Cabin Interior construction (Threshold?)	Donation already pledged		
Delivery to site* (free from cabin builder)		0	0
Fire Dept consult		0	0
Public Works (for water if needed)		0	0
Insulation*	(Free from cabin builder?)		
Set up	Offers for this already pledged		
Heaters - Baseboard or oil radiators?		500 1,130	600 1,356
Electrical Sockets with reset switches		350	385
GRK screws		80	96
Lightbulbs		40	48
Light fittings		550	660
Fire extinguishers		3,800	4,560
Microwaves		800	960
Bar fridges		1,500	1,800
Mattresses/sheets/pillow/bedding/blankets	Anticipate Donations	0	
Door Lock & Key			
HASP LATCH ON OUTSIDE OF DOOR		125	150
THICK NECK PADLOCK + KEY		400	480
SLIDING BOLT INSIDE		120	144
EXTERIOR DOOR HANDLE		800	960
SUB-TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL COSTS	SUB-TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL COSTS	66,635	147,555
	TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL COSTS*	123,075	215,233

***NOT INCLUDED:**

- Kitchen Facility Rental
- Kitchen equipment
- Laundry facilities
- Laundry equipment
- One extra cabin for communal gathering?
- Showers - Trailer rental?
- Guard around oil radiators
- Electrician on-site consult
- Alectra on-site consult
- Electrician on-site setup
- Exterior electrical materials
- interior electrical materials
- Heaters - installation
- ESA inspection (electrical inspection fee)

\$0