



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 19, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2021 Point in Time Connection Results (HSC22021) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Nadia Zelisko (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2548 Greg Tedesco (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7168
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

INFORMATION

From November 15 to 19, 2021, the City of Hamilton participated in Everyone Counts, the third nationally coordinated Point-in-Time Count in Canada. This initiative, referred to locally as the Point in Time Connection (PiTC), is a joint planning effort of the Housing Services Division and the local Indigenous community through the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL). Completion of the PiTC fulfilled requirements of both the Federal government's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

City of Hamilton Point in Time Connection Results 2021 (Appendix "A" to Report HSC22021), provides a summary of results and key findings from the 545 surveys that were completed at emergency shelters, provincially administered Violence Against Women shelters, drop-in programs, community agencies, and in unsheltered locations. An Indigenous led magnet event was also held in Beasley Park on November 17, 2021 to provide an opportunity for Indigenous community members to be surveyed by Indigenous surveyors.

The 2021 PiTC complements existing local efforts to collect and report on key data on the state of homelessness to inform homelessness prevention and reduction efforts. The initiative is focused on hearing directly from unhoused Hamiltonians to further

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support evidence-informed action and improvement within Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Serving System.

Indigenous Analysis

In keeping with the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty, as directed by the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (ICAB), CHIL will continue to lead the analysis of Indigenous respondent data and the City of Hamilton will not use this data without the approval of the ICAB. Full analysis of Indigenous respondent data, completed by CHIL and approved by the ICAB, is provided in Appendix "B" to Report HSC22021 and an infographic summary of the results is included in Appendix "C" to Report HSC22021. 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.

Summary of Results

Survey results continue to demonstrate the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness (23%), while also highlighting a demographic shift in the profile of respondents with an increase in women identified respondents (53%) compared to 2018 (32%) and 2016 (28%) PITC initiatives. Key barriers to maintaining or obtaining housing were also clearly highlighted through the results, including impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, housing affordability, low income/low income assistance, landlord/tenant conflict, poor housing conditions, discrimination and low credit score.

A majority of respondents reported that they had most recently stayed in an emergency shelter (298) or a City funded hotel/motel (68). Additional highlights include:

- the majority of respondents identified that they were staying alone when surveyed (79%), while 21% reported that they had either a partner, other adults or non-adult dependents staying with them that night;
- most respondents (74%) were between the ages of 31 and 64;
- 73% of all respondents reported that they had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year;
- 39% of respondents identified as members of racialized groups, with the largest percentage identifying as First Nations (with or without status), Métis or Inuit (23%). 10% of respondents identified as Black;
- 10% of all respondents identified as 2SLGBTQ+;
- 79% of respondents identified having been in Hamilton for one year or more, including those who reported as always been in Hamilton (36%);
- 3% of all respondents experiencing homelessness reported ever serving in the Canadian Military or RCMP;
- 40% of those surveyed reported having a chronic illness or health condition;

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- 270 respondents had been to an emergency room (ER) in the last 12 months, with a cumulative total of 787 ER visits.

Comparison and analysis of detailed results across multiple PiTC initiatives remains a challenge given the varying contextual factors from year to year. Between PiTC initiatives, the Housing Services Division has worked with community partners to strengthen local reporting on key data related to the state of homelessness and actions towards preventing and ending it. As a part of these broader efforts, the PiTC remains a valuable tool to further support evidence-informed action and improvement within Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Serving System.

Methodology Updates and COVID-19 Safety Measures

Given the context around the COVID-19 pandemic, adaptations to methodology were made available to communities to support the implementation of Point-in-Time Counts in order to reduce health and safety risks, as well as additional burden on participants and front-line staff in the homeless serving sector. 2021 PiTC adaptations included:

- expansion of surveying timeline from one to five days;
- use of 24-hour online survey submission for the first time;
- no additional community volunteers recruited - surveying was conducted exclusively by community social-service agency and City of Hamilton staff;
- full training module shared and completed online; and,
- focus on sheltered sites (emergency shelter, drop in, etc.) and a targeted approach to connect with unsheltered individuals and families in the community in known locations through the City's Housing Focused Street Outreach team, alongside partners from local Indigenous housing organizations.

Next Steps

The PiTC remains an important local initiative and a demonstration of Hamilton's commitment to work collaboratively to prevent and end homelessness. As Service System Manager (SSM) and Designated Community Entity (DCE) for the provincial and federal governments respectively, the Housing Services Division remains committed to working in partnership with urban Indigenous leadership to build a coordinated housing and homeless-serving system in deep collaboration with community partners to ensure everyone in Hamilton has a home.

Enhanced gender-specific responses and housing options for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults remains an important local priority, and the Housing Services Division continues to consult with the sector planning tables on an ongoing basis including: the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative; the Street Youth Planning Collaborative; and the Men's Emergency Services Coordination Committee. Through this ongoing engagement and collaboration, it is our goal to continue to share

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PiTC results and further this analysis, while discussing next steps to further centre the voices of unhoused residents in our collective responses.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report HSC22021: City of Hamilton Point in Time Connection Results
2021

Appendix “B” to Report HSC22021: 2021 Point in Time Count Hamilton – Indigenous
Responses

Appendix “C” to Report HSC22021: 2021 PiT Infographic – Indigenous Respondents