



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
General Manager's Office
and
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Licensing and By-law Services Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 18, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Encampment Pilot Evaluation (HSC20038(e)/PED21188(b)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Mike Jones (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3824
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Monica Ciriello Director, Licensing and Bylaw Services Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Council approve the extension of the encampment response pilot to the end of April 2023 to be structured and funded as outlined in HSC20038(d)/PED21188(a) and PED22088 at an approximate cost of \$350,000.
- (b) That, as the pilot program for the Coordination Response Team (CRT) ended on December 31, 2022, a permanent, dedicated CRT to coordinate response and service delivery related to encampments throughout the City, on a housing-outreach first approach, supported by a secondary role for enforcement only when needed, be established;

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.

- (c) That, in order facilitate the permanent Coordination Response Team, the respective General Manager, or their designate, be authorized and directed to:
 - (i) Increase the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, Housing Services Division's budgeted complement by the following two full-time, permanent positions:
 - (1) Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach, at an annual cost of approximately \$149,000 for salary, benefits and ancillary charges;
 - (2) Project Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach, at an annual cost of approximately \$102,000 for salary, benefits and ancillary charges;
 - (ii) Increase the Public Works Department, Parks Section's budgeted complement by one full-time permanent position:
 - (1) Supervisor, at an annual cost of approximately \$124,000 for salary, benefits and ancillary charges;
 - (iii) Increase the Planning and Economic Development Department budgeted complement by two full-time, permanent positions:
 - (1) Two Municipal Law Enforcement Officers, at an annual cost of approximately \$138,500 each (\$277,000 for both) for salary, benefits, and ancillary charges;
- (d) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or designate, be authorized and directed, on behalf of the City of Hamilton, to enter into, execute and administer all agreements and documents necessary to hire the equivalent of 3.5 seconded Street Outreach Workers, at an approximate cost of \$61,500 each (total for 3.5 FTEs \$216,000) on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or designate, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;
- (e) That, based on last year's costing as an indicator, the Public Works Department's operating budget be increased by \$200,000 annually, to be used for ad hoc clean up or other costs incurred as a result of encampments on City property;
- (f) That, although the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) is willing to support for the Coordination Response Team, but it is not in the mandate of the HPS to do so,

an additional 2 FTEs (police officers) be hired to support the delivery of the coordinated encampment response at an annual cost of \$268,646 for salary, benefits and one-time costs of \$30,000 for ancillary equipment, to be fully funded by the City from Dept ID 673247; and,

- (g) That Report HSC20038(e)/PED21188(b), respecting the Encampment Pilot Evaluation, in its entirety, be referred to the 2023 Operating Budget process (February 7, 2023 GIC) for consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Encampment Coordination Team pilot and provides recommendations for future direction. The pilot, approved by Council in March 24, 2022, and which operated from April 2022 – December 2022, has been successful in its ability to prevent entrenched encampments, improve coordination of all services involved in the City's response to encampments, including internal City divisions and Hamilton Police Services, allow existing staff in the Housing Services Division and Municipal Law Enforcement to focus on other core business, and to streamline reporting to City Council through the General Issues Committee. In addition, the pilot was effective in mobilizing resources to effectively respond to complaints and requests from City Councillors and the public, and in communicating trends and updates on an ongoing basis. The pilot was also able to reduce the presence of long-term encampments within the City, although approximately 30-40 individuals continue to live in encampments and to date have not been able to be placed in housing or temporary shelter due to a variety of reasons.

When applying the Parks By-law, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) took a soft approach to enforcement, developing relationships with individuals living in encampments and engaging from a compassionate approach. Encampment Coordination Team staff and MLEOs provided Housing-focused Street Outreach (HFSO) staff with details of new encampments, and HFSO staff engaged with individuals living in encampments to better understand their needs and connect them to internal and community supports, including referrals to the emergency shelter system, health agencies, social assistance supports, specialized outreach supports, and any other relevant supports available that would improve the health and wellbeing of the person they are working with. MLEOs also engaged with Hamilton Police Services Social Navigator Program to coordinate service delivery to individuals living in encampments, as well as with the encampment engagement team to coordinate Bylaw enforcement.

The presence of encampments continues to be complex and the result of several interconnected issues, including a lack of affordable housing, subsidized housing,

and housing with supports in the community, as well as low social assistance rates, an increased cost of living, substance use, and the existence of real or perceived barriers to accessing the emergency shelter system. As a result, finding simple solutions is difficult. Since the beginning of the pilot to the end of November 2022, 12 people living in encampments have transitioned into housing directly through the efforts of Housing-focused Street Outreach (HFSO), but there are still individuals living in encampments who are not, for a constellation of reasons that are specific to each individual, currently able to transition to housing. In order to transition into housing, more support is required; such as community support, and support from other levels of government for programs that may assist people to transition to housing.

Staff from Housing Services Division (HSD) and Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE) are recommending the City continue the Encampment Coordination team with several modifications: the creation of a Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach (1.0 new Full-time Equivalent {FTE}) and Project Manager (1.0 new FTE) positions within Housing Services Division, Housing-focused Street Outreach (HFSO) staff (3.5 new FTE), Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) (2.0 new FTE), and a Supervisor within Parks Section (1.0 FTE). Existing pilot FTEs include 1 director, 1 SPM, 1 supervisor and 4 by-law officers, plus over complement Parks resources. Additionally, Hamilton Police Services will also require 2 officers to effectively support the coordination of encampment response efforts across the community. An integrated approach to encampment response will help connect individuals living in encampments to housing and other necessary services that sustain and improve health and wellbeing, while also preventing entrenched encampments.

There are several alternative encampment response options available for consideration, including taking no action following the pilot expiration on December 31, 2022, an enforcement-only approach, and a housing-only approach.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 19

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Through recommendation (a) staff are requesting the continuation of the pilot to April 2023 to ensure a continuation of service until budget deliberations are complete at an approximate cost of \$350 K funded as previously approved in Reports HSC20038(d)/PED21188(a) and PED22088.

The recommended approach to provide, on a permanent basis, a dedicated Coordination Response Team, as reflected in

recommendations (c) to (e) would require a levy enhancement of \$1,068,000 to support COH staffing and ancillary costs. As reflected in recommendation (f), an additional 2 FTEs (police officers) to support the delivery of the coordinated encampment response requires a levy enhancement of \$298,646 for salary, benefits and one-time costs. The total levy enhancement request to support the coordinated encampment response is \$1,366,646..

If recommendations (c) to (f) are approved, the budget for the coordinated encampment response will be reflected in 673247 HSD-Encampment Response Coord. The FTEs will be added to the department budgets and the actual salary and benefit costs will be recovered through the salary and budget reallocation accounts and charged to 673247.

Staffing: Recommendations (c) to (f) will be referred to the 2023 tax operating budget deliberations for Council approval as per recommendation (g). The recommended coordinated encampment response would require additional FTEs:

- 1 Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach
- 1 Project Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach
- Funding for 3.5 additional seconded FTE Housing-focused Street Outreach workers
- 2 Municipal Law Enforcement Officers
- 1 Supervisor within Parks Section
- 2 Police Officers through Hamilton Police Services

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On February 4, 2021, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC21000 Analysis of United Nations Special Rapporteur's Report on a National Protocol for Homeless Encampments.

On February 4, 2021, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20038(b) Encampment Update, providing an overview of the operationalization of the Encampment Protocol.

On March 25, 2021, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC21008 Housing Focused Street Outreach, which provided an updated overview of the role of Hamilton's Street Outreach Team within Housing Services

Division.

On August 9, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved the repealing of the By-law Enforcement Protocol.

On September 9, 2021, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report PED21188/HSC20038(c) Encampment Response Update.

On March 22, 2022, Planning Committee, Motion 11.3 directed staff to:

- a) Complete their activities under the Encampment Process, including notifying the Hamilton Police Service that a Trespass Notice has been issued, within 12 to 72 hours after staff receive the first complaint regarding unauthorized camping in a City park or public place; and,
- b) Enforce the Encampment Process 7 days per week.

On March 24, 2022, Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Encampment Response Update (HSC20038(d)/PED21188(a)) and the creation of an Encampment Coordination Team pilot to the end of 2022 with an estimated cost of \$305,000, funded first from COVID-19 Government Funds (eligible costs), then COVID- 19 Reserve (eligible costs), then departmental budgets surplus and finally by the Tax Stabilization Reserve. The pilot was created to:

- a) Improve coordination and efforts of services involved in encampment response and allow for existing Municipal Law Enforcement and Housing Service Division staff to focus on their core business, and,
- b) Streamline reporting from staff related to encampment coordination. All new reporting will be brought forward to the General Issues Committee for discussion and decisions.

On March 30, 2022, in response to Motion 11.3 Council approved Encampment Process: Staffing Feasibility/Service Levels Impacts' (PED220088) and approved four new temporary, dedicated Municipal Law Enforcement Encampment Officers (MLEO) at a total cost of \$416,673.73, to be funded through the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

N/A

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff from Planning and Economic Development (Licensing and By-law Services), Healthy and Safe Communities (Housing Services Division), Public Works (Parks Section), Legal, and Finance were consulted in the preparation of this report. Hamilton Police Services were also consulted.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

On September 9, 2021, Emergency and Community Services Committee received Report PED21188/HSC20038 (c) Encampment Response Update, which detailed a six-step process to encampment response developed by City staff, requiring participation from several teams and divisions. In 2021, there were no dedicated staff members to the City's encampment response. Staff members reprioritized workload to develop an Encampment Response Team that met daily with the objective of providing an integrated approach to achieving compliance of the City's Parks By-law and assist private property owners to remove encampments from private property. The team included staff from:

- Municipal Law Enforcement- Encampment Officers
- Housing Services Division - Housing Focused Street Outreach
- Hamilton Police Services
- Public Works – Parks Section
- Communications

On March 30, 2022, in Report PED220088 Encampment Process: Staffing Feasibility/ Service Levels Impacts', Council approved the hiring of a dedicated team of four MLEO's. Additionally, one Supervisor was funded via the Encampment Coordination Pilot on March 24, 2022, in Report HSC20038(d)/PED21188(a) Encampment Response Update, to respond 7 days a week to complaints and requests from the community regarding encampments, as well as a Director and Senior Project Manager to help provide guidance and expertise. The Encampment Coordination Team Supervisor worked directly with MLEOs to initiate first contact with individuals living in encampments within 24-72 hours of a complaint, to determine whether a violation had occurred under City By-law. In carrying out this function, MLEOs established relationships with people living in encampments and developed an understanding of the impacts of homelessness on mental and physical well-being.

After contact was made by MLEOs, Housing-focused Street Outreach would engage with individuals to offer housing-focused case management services and supports, provision of basic needs items to individuals living in encampments, referrals into emergency shelter and other housing-related programs, assistance in

accessing financial assistance programs (i.e. Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works), and maintain knowledge of the broader homelessness-serving system to actively provide referrals to organizations in the community in support of the needs of the individual (e.g. physical health, mental health, harm reduction, population-specific supports).

If an encampment was deemed to be in violation of a Parks By-law, MLEOs, in partnership from Hamilton Police Services, used a soft enforcement approach to achieve early voluntary compliance. That is, to leverage the relationships built to avoid issuing a Trespass Notice until all softer approaches were considered. When MLEOs were not able to receive voluntary compliance alone, they notified HPS and worked in partnership to receive voluntary compliance. Once the individuals had moved on from their encampment to a new location, the Encampment Coordination Team Supervisor would make Parks Section aware of whether cleanup and/or maintenance was required.

Staff from the Encampment Coordination team joined MLE, HFSO, Parks Section, Communications, and Hamilton Police Services in meeting daily to ensure a streamlined approach to coordinating encampment response. The meeting also provided an opportunity to strategize around finding operational solutions to acute issues and improve strategies to mitigate risk and improve the health and wellbeing of individuals living in encampments.

From data collected by Municipal Law Enforcement and Housing Services Division when conducting their response, Council was provided with monthly updates on the efforts made by the Encampment Response Team.
Continuous Improvement Measures

Several continuous improvement measures were introduced by the Encampment Coordination team in conjunction with the larger City-wide Encampment Response team during the pilot, aimed to improve safety and eliminate barriers for those seeking emergency shelter and/or housing accommodations.

The MLE Supervisor and two MLEO's attended an in-depth four day "Crisis Intervention Training" provided by Hamilton Police Service (HPS) to increase their knowledge and understanding of individuals with mental health and substance use challenges. The new skills learned were valuable when interacting with individuals living in encampments, to be able to build relationships and achieve better outcomes.

To put the health and safety of people first, the MLE Supervisor and four MLEO's attended a training session by Public Health Services, Harm Reduction staff on opioid overdose and response with the use of a naloxone kit. The MLEO's now carry naloxone kits to be able to administer to individuals in the event of an

overdose and have been used twice to assist unresponsive people in crisis which potentially saved their life. Also, it should be noted that MLEO's sought medical attention for several people living in encampments where it was deemed to be urgently required.

Presently, emergency shelters in Hamilton are not able to accommodate pets due to limitations with adequate funding, space, amenities, and liability issues. Service animals are already accommodated within emergency shelters. Encampment Coordination team staff have worked with internal and external partners to identify programmatic and operational best practices to mitigate pets as a barrier to emergency shelter. Several options have been identified for future consideration including, a temporary boarding option for pets of people living unsheltered to be offered in conjunction with Animal Services and other animal welfare partners, and/or a pilot to introduce pet-friendly space(s) into the existing emergency shelter system. This work will continue with the extension of the program.

City staff from the Encampment Coordination team engaged in meetings with staff from Hamilton Fire Department – Fire Prevention Division to discuss how they might offer support toward Encampment Response Team initiatives. When fire issues/concerns are identified during MLEO visits, consultation with or inclusion of Fire Prevention staff at Encampment Team meetings and/or site visits could prove beneficial. In addition, Fire Prevention can develop targeted fire safety educational messaging to support unsheltered individuals. This messaging could be provided to unsheltered individuals by city staff during encampment visits. This work will continue with the extension of the program.

Emergency shelters often impose a two-bag limit to individuals entering, which may be a barrier to those who have accumulated several items that will not fit within a two-bag limit. To mitigate this, staff have developed and implemented a process to allow individuals to temporarily store their belongings at a centrally located city facility. This program was rarely used, as individuals were often unwilling to separate from their belongings, however the program remains in effect and is led by HFSO.

To provide guidance to frontline staff as they encounter issues requiring urgent response, health & safety protocols and P&Ps were developed for MLE and HFSO management and staff. The P&Ps provide information related to staff's health and safety, incident reporting responsibilities, as well as direction for several urgent and life-threatening circumstances that staff may potentially be encountered when visiting an encampment (e.g., death, severe injury, fire, overdose, physical violence, mental health crisis, non-emergency medical needs, children and adolescents on-site, encountering someone who is pregnant, and/or potential health and safety hazards, including propane tanks and weapons). Each item

requires specific actions and responses, including ongoing support from Hamilton Police Service, both on-site and off-site, to ensure the health and safety of staff and those that reside in encampments.

To improve coordination across multiple teams and to identify gaps in service delivery, the Encampment Coordination team documented key processes and relationships.

Each team involved in encampment response provided their mandate, roles and responsibilities, and defined values they believed to be most important in successfully responding to encampments. The data shared by Encampment Response teams was used to analyze encampment response from a systems perspective, and to identify gaps in service that would inform future work.

MLEO's have been engaged with several property owners who are dealing with encampments on private property. Meetings have been held with CN Rail to discuss the numerous complaints and concerns the city receives regarding garbage and debris left on their property because of encampments. While it is the responsibility of a private property owner to clean and maintain their property, Encampment Response staff continue to provide support in an attempt to achieve voluntary compliance of encampment individuals who are trespassing. If voluntary compliance is not obtained the property owner can provide Hamilton Police Service, the authority to enforce the *Trespass to Property Act* if required.

HFSO staff visit encampments utilizing a housing first, human rights-based approach to supporting unsheltered individuals in the community after a complaint or concern has been noted by the Encampment Coordination team or MLEOs. HFSO workers engage with unsheltered individuals to better understand their needs and connect them with internal and community supports, including housing-focused case management, referrals to the emergency shelter system, health agencies, social assistance supports, specialized outreach supports, and any other relevant supports available that would improve the health and wellbeing of the person they are working with. HFSO workers also develop housing plans, connecting unsheltered individuals to the Coordinated Access System through which they are prioritized for via the By-Name List, as well as available resources in the homeless-serving system including intensive case management supports. Indigenous clients are prioritized first for resources within the homeless serving system. HFSO workers also provide direct assistance in searching for and viewing apartments, liaise with potential landlords, and assist with applicants to subsidized housing, or other forms of housing (such as housing allowances or housing benefits) that may be available. In addition, HFSO workers provide assistance with immediate needs such as providing water, and harm reduction and menstrual health supplies onsite. Overall, the goal of HFSO is to engage with and support each unsheltered individual along their housing journey, while connecting them to

services in the community that sustain and/or improve their health and wellbeing.

One component not included in the original Encampment Coordination team pilot, was resources for Parks Section. The work of Parks has been imperative to the success of the City's encampment response process, providing cleanup and maintenance of previously occupied encampments where persistent garbage and debris presented health and safety risks for staff and the public. In some cases, Parks Section staff have required the use of specialized machinery in cleanup. Without adequate resources, Parks staff were utilizing one over complement supervisor, staff overtime and contracted work to meet the demands of encampment response. Additional, dedicated resources are necessary to ensure an effective response to encampments.

A key missing component in the original pilot was the resources required by Parks, who needed to ensure the ongoing maintenance of parks. This has been addressed in the recommendation with the request for a supervisor and funding.

Hamilton Police Services were also active in supporting encampment response effort via their dedicated Encampment Engagement team, who attended daily meetings and provided onsite support at encampments as required by MLEOs. Due to staffing challenges at Hamilton Police Services, the dedicated team was discontinued on September 4, 2022, limiting their ability to support encampment response. Dedicated resources are required for the ongoing support of HPS in encampment response efforts.

Data and Performance Measurement

The following chart provides an overview of monthly data collected as of end of November 2022, for key performance indicators identified at the beginning of the pilot.

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Indicator	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Total Encampment sites investigated (incl. public and private)	76	141	112	112	116	120	68	53
Voluntary Compliance Achieved - public	31	51	67	60	66	58	42	26
Voluntary Compliance Achieved - private	7	8	16	24	23	9	10	8
Complaints unfounded - public	10	11	20	23	24	33	8	17
Complaints unfounded - private	5	18	9	5	17	20	10	8
Notices of Trespass Issued	3	0	6	9	14	11	2	14
Approximate number of unique individuals unsheltered and regularly living in encampments throughout the City	25	30	30	32	39	44	39	53
Unique individuals (both in encampments and otherwise) engaged with Outreach for supports/referrals	43	71	39	25	37	39	56	53
Unique individuals housed directly from an encampment by Outreach	2	1	0	3	1	2	1	2
Unique individuals assisted by Outreach through Housing Services OW Case Managers in obtaining or stabilizing their Social Assistance	8	9	11	3	6	6	9	9
Unique individuals accepting referral to an emergency shelter space	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	3
Number of sites cleaned and maintained by Parks Section staff	26	N/A	47	55	59	81	72	57

Several trends and insights were observable:

- The number of sites investigated by MLE peaked in May, plateaued over the summer, and is now decreasing into fall.

- Voluntary compliance was achieved by MLE staff in most interactions with individuals in encampments. When voluntary compliance was not achieved a Notice of Trespass was issued and MLEO's continued to engage individuals and were successful in achieving voluntary compliance in 59 of 62 occasions. Hamilton Police Services were asked for support in the remaining three occasions, and compliance was achieved peacefully without incidence.
- There were few unique individuals housed directly from an encampment by HFSO throughout the duration of the pilot, although this data does not reflect individuals who accepted referral into emergency shelter and were connected to housing through a separate process or community agency.
- There has been a slight proportional increase in the number of unique individuals engaged with Outreach for supports and/or referrals in the past two months. This may be a result of colder weather and/or ongoing relationship building.
- Approximately 70 sites required constant monitoring and extra resources, with MLEO's conducting both proactive and reactive inspections.
- In addition to the above, 70 locations (58 City/12 Private) were identified that received ongoing proactive inspections, resulting in 1,252 total proactive inspections. The total proactive and reactive inspections from April – October 31 was 1,997.
- Through the duration of the pilot, Parks Section staff cleaned an increasing number of sites month-over-month, peaking in September 2022, before decreasing in October and November. This data is not reflective of the time and complexity of the cleanups, which increased in October and November as sites that were less conspicuous became visible due to diminished flora coverage. Some sites required special machinery for cleanup.

Encampment Coordination Team staff met biweekly with staff from Housing Services Division and Hamilton Police Services (Analytics) to strategize around the development of data infrastructure and processes necessary to collect, analyze and report new performance metrics. Currently, performance data is shared monthly by Housing Services Division, Municipal Law Enforcement, Parks Section, and Hamilton Police Services, and is being tracked and analyzed. Additional performance measures will be necessary to better understand the success of City Divisions involved in encampment response and to assess ongoing impacts to people living in encampments.

Impacts on Staff and Resources

Locations requiring recurrent daily visits from various City departments where persistent garbage and debris presented health and safety risks for staff and the public, placed a significant burden on Parks Section maintenance staff and resources. Without continued coordinated attention to encampment in City Parks, Parks Section staff anticipate that camps will grow in size and become more

difficult to clean up, there will be more damages to the park such as compacted soils/loss of sod areas, cutting of trees, increased waste and debris including biohazardous waste and the risk of more frequent vandalism and fires.

To ensure success of the pilot, without resources allocated as part of the pilot, Parks hired one over complement supervisory staff to oversee the cleanup program and existing staff were used for clean ups. To provide the service level required for these clean ups without impacting our standard level of service, parks utilized their existing complement of staff on overtime or hired a contractor. Parks Section staff visited 397 encampment sites (including repeat sites), logging 149 work orders (102 internal, 47 contracted). This resulted in 1,798 labour hours for Parks Section staff, with 582 hours contracted out. The cost for encampment cleanups, including contracted work, was \$140,861.21, not including the cost of an over complement supervisor or waste disposal fees.

Under the rapid response model of clean up made possible through the pilot, Parks Section staff found that the work time was reduced because sites were smaller, and less waste accumulated. Responsiveness and quick action has been noted as a key success factor in the evaluation of the pilot.

As the Encampment Coordination team became more established, it became a complaint repository for all issues related to visible homelessness in the community, often for issues not directly related to homelessness. This added an additional strain on resources necessary to carry out encampment coordination and response.

While not within the formal pilot mandate, staff from the Encampment Coordination Team and other city divisions were expending inordinate time and effort addressing a few challenging locations in parks and on City property where encampments had been cleared and were no longer the main source of concern, but where people (not living unsheltered per se) congregate before and after visiting/using external, community- based services. While not related directly to encampment activity, this resulted in a strain on resources.

Impacts on People with Lived Experience

Several individuals living in encampments who stayed outdoors more frequently throughout the duration of the pilot repeatedly declined available emergency shelter space, instead cycling through sites where they felt most comfortable. This pattern became more pronounced over the course of the pilot, as people living in encampments grew more frustrated with the requirement to continually move from their existing site.

Others living in encampments moved to less conspicuous areas where they would

not be found and therefore would not need to move as frequently. This impacted the ability of HFSO staff to aid as it became more difficult for staff to find them to make necessary referrals and provide harm reduction and other basic supplies. Additionally, due to gaps between making contact with people living in encampments it became more difficult for HFSO staff to maintain continuity in providing a housing plan, as this requires ongoing interaction with staff and coordination with other services in the community.

Continuing Encampment Response in the City

The coordinated multi-disciplinary response to encampments was effective in achieving compliance with the Parks By-law and in limiting large, entrenched encampments. MLEOs also helped prevent the proliferation of encampments in the community by building relationships with individuals in encampments and receiving voluntary compliance through soft intervention. However, at the conclusion of the pilot there were still approximately 40 unique individuals known to be unsheltered and regularly living in encampments throughout the City. There are several possible contributing factors.

From March-November 2022, 12 individuals have transitioned from an encampment into housing by Housing-focused Street Outreach, not including those housed via other organizations (e.g. emergency shelters, drop-ins, and non-profit housing providers). Access to suitable, affordable housing and the corresponding wraparound supports are necessary to prevent encampments from proliferating.

Additionally, several individuals who remain in encampments have refused available emergency shelter space, which they report they have done for a variety of reasons. Their stated reasons include lack of space for couples, lack of space for pets, safety concerns, service restrictions, and policies restricting drug use in shelters. For these individuals, there are very few places to stay overnight in the community which adequately meet their needs, and they often persist in encampments as a result. Connecting individuals in encampments to HFSO workers that can assist with basic needs supports and build the necessary rapport to make effective referrals to address complex mental health issues, substance use, and other health and housing needs.

Several unique individuals continue living in encampments throughout the City for which an enforcement-based approach is not deemed to be prudent nor effective. A new housing-focused, person-centered, health-based approach would be most effective in addressing the underlying factors leading some to live uninterruptedly in encampments.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur has reported on A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada: A Human Rights Approach and has also contributed to a National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada. As an independent expert, the UN Special Rapporteur acts as a bridge between rights-holders, governments, and international organizations and institutions, offering guidance on the interpretation of international law, while reporting on situations and conditions on the ground. These reports have been utilized by communities across Canada in responding to encampments.

A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada outlines universal recommendations for how all levels of government in Canada should approach engagement with unhoused residents of encampments from a rights-based perspective to ensure dignity while negotiating the provision of adequate, affordable housing solutions that meet their needs. The following eight guiding principles are recommended:

- 1) Recognize residents of homeless encampments as rights holders
- 2) Meaningful engagement and effective participation of encampment residents
- 3) Prohibition of forced evictions of encampments
- 4) Explore all viable alternatives to eviction
- 5) Ensure that any relocation is human rights compliant
- 6) Ensure encampments meet basic needs of residents consistent with human rights
- 7) Ensure human rights-based goals and outcomes, and the preservation of dignity for encampment residents
- 8) Respect, protect, and fulfil the distinct rights the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples in all engagements with encampments

The processes utilized by City teams when responding to encampments will continue to evolve and adapt to meet the best practices identified.

An Evolving Encampment Response Strategy

The principles included in 'A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada' will be applied in conjunction with the findings from 'A Human Rights Analysis of Encampments in Canada – Case Study: Hamilton' to evolve towards a rights-based, person-centered approach to encampment response. In addition, on January 13, 2022, Motion 11.1 was approved by the Emergency and Community Services Committee, to address Comprehensive, Human-rights Based, Health-focused Housing Solutions for Residents Living Encamped across Hamilton, via facilitated sessions with cross-sectoral stakeholders and people with lived experience. Feedback received from the July 2022 facilitated sessions will also

form the basis of a report back to Council (Report HSC23009) and will also inform the development of an Encampment Response Strategy for the City.

An Encampment Response Strategy will include:

- A set of principles underpinning encampment response that are common ground among stakeholders with a strong equity, diversity and inclusion lens
- Clear mission on what problem(s) the response aims to address, and the goals
- Common definitions of terms when speaking about encampments and unsheltered homelessness
- Response to encampments that is trauma-informed, strengths based, harm reducing, housing-focused, and culturally appropriate
- Coordinated response for encampment assessments, mapping and data collection, roles and responsibilities, command centre structure, interdepartmental protocols, and coordination of community volunteers
- Communications plan that includes meaningful engagement of people with lived/living experience of unsheltered homelessness
- Strategic alignment with Homeless-serving system of care, including Outreach and resources available through Coordinated Access and,
- Evaluation framework to assess effectiveness of approaches, including a specific focus on diversity and inclusion

In the development and implementation of a successful Encampment Response Strategy, it remains essential that people with living/lived experience are empowered to inform services and hold the homelessness-serving system accountable for delivering on its promise of housing and supports. A distinct focus on Indigenous rights should be prioritized in these efforts, guided by the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the distinct rights of Indigenous peoples through engagement with unhoused residents and those residing in encampments.

All residents living in encampments will be asked to voluntarily participate in developing a personalized housing plan and to identify supports that help facilitate movement to shelter and/or permanent housing. This approach is consistent with a collective obligation to ensure that people experiencing homelessness, including encampment residents, have access to long-term, adequate housing that meets their needs.

Using the previous six step process, the Encampment Coordination team's Supervisor, MLE, was responsible for overseeing all complaints and concerns from Councillors and the community and coordinated the response of MLEOs to follow-up and apply the By-law. An updated Encampment Response Strategy will be housing-led and inform an encampment response process that transparently

details the roles and responsibilities of all teams involved in encampment response, and defines a person-centered, housing-focused, best practices process to guide contact and assessment with individuals living in encampments.

Housing Services Division, overseen by the Manager of HFSO, will adopt the responsibility of coordinating the City's response to encampments, and all daily coordination will be led by the Project Manager of HFSO. All complaints currently sent to MLE will be re-routed to the HFSO team for follow-up, and MLEOs will only respond after the HFSO team has attended the encampment. The HFSO will be responsible for making first contact with individuals living in encampments and may require the assistance of MLEOs or paid duty Hamilton Police Services.

Required Staffing

On March 30, 2022, in Report PED22088 Encampment Process: Staffing Feasibility / Service Levels Impacts', Council approved the hiring of a dedicated team of four MLEO's to support encampment response efforts via the enforcement of the Parks By-law. Soon after, on March 24, 2022 Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20038(d)/PED21188(a) Encampment Response Update and the creation of an Encampment Coordination Team made up of a Director – Response Coordination, Supervisor – Municipal Law Enforcement, and Senior Project Manager, Housing Services Division. To ensure success of the pilot, and without dedicated resources allocated, Parks Section hired one over complement supervisory staff to oversee the clean-up program and in order to achieve the service level required, parks utilized their existing complement of staff on overtime or hired a contractor.

In evaluating the pilot, it is clear that the program does not require a Director. Due to the operational nature of encampment response and the necessity for housing-focused, person-centered outcomes, a Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach (1.0 FTE) reporting to the Director, Housing Service Division is more suitable, The Manager will be responsible for utilizing existing standards, research, approaches from comparator municipalities, public consultation, and Housing Services Division's staff expertise to guide the development and implementation of an Encampment Response Strategy. The Housing-focused Street Outreach Manager will have the knowledge and expertise to provide systems-level solutions via collaboration and coordination with the broader homelessness-serving system, and across other sectors.

The Manager will also direct and support the work of the existing HFSO Supervisor and Coordinator. An additional 3.5 HFSO workers (3.5 FTE) will be necessary to ensure adequate coverage seven days a week from 8am-8pm. HFSOs ensure residents living in encampments are provided access to basic items required for

their immediate needs and well-being, are referred to the appropriate overnight services and/or housing supports, and provided case management support via referrals to services in the community that meet each resident's unique needs.

In a new housing-led approach where complaints and requests will be re-routed from MLE to HSD for response, a HFSO Project Manager (1.0 FTE) is required to manage complaints and requests made to the City regarding encampment response and maintain contact with stakeholders and Councillors Offices to ensure adequate line of sight exists between encampment response and the community. The HFSO Project Manager will also support the existing HFSO Supervisor and Coordinator by providing locations of new encampments to be visited by HFSO staff and MLEOs.

Two MLEOs (2.0 FTE) will still be required to attend encampment response team meetings, problem solve challenging and complex situations that can occur in encampments including enlisting the help of Animal Services for assistance with pets, direct field operations including clean-ups, track compliance under the Parks By-law, provide coverage for a five-day a week operation, and proactively monitor recurring sites to ensure encampments do not become entrenched.

A dedicated Parks Section Supervisor (1.0 FTE) will respond to requests from Housing Services Division to provide parks maintenance and cleanup and will coordinate to identify staff and/or contracted labour to be used in cleanups. The Parks Section Supervisor will also act as a liaison for encampment response, attending coordination meetings as necessary.

The total cost of the program considers resources, beyond dedicated staffing, for Public Works and Paid Duty Hamilton Police Services.

It is staff's recommendation that this approach be adopted in an effort to re-house individuals while preventing long-term encampments in the City. It takes into consideration the needs of the community as a whole including the housed and un-housed.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1) Council may choose to not extend the Coordination Response Team. With no dedicated staffing resources there will be limited ability to coordinate responses and service delivery related to encampments in the city.
 - Housing based street outreach would continue with reduced hours of operation; Monday to Friday until 8 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. only.
 - By-law enforcement would revert to low priority, based on availability of existing staffing resources, within normal operating hours 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday to

Friday, and with response times that may extend up to 72 hours depending on priorities. It is likely that this low service level would result in entrenched encampments becoming established at various locations across the City.

- Parks staff would continue to provide enhanced park clean ups, however if encampment sites become entrenched, it is unlikely that Parks staff would be able to provide for regular clean ups
- Although the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) is willing to support for the Coordination Response Team, but it is not in the mandate of the HPS to do so, an additional 2 FTEs (police officers) be hired to support the delivery of the coordinated encampment response at an annual cost of \$268,646 for salary, benefits and one-time costs of \$30,000 for ancillary equipment to be funded by the City.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The alternative to seize the coordinated Response Team, would require a levy enhancement of \$298,646 for Hamilton Police Services staff and ancillary costs.

If approved, the budget for the coordinated encampment response will be reflected in 673247 HSD-Encampment Response Coord. The FTEs will be added to the department budgets and the actual salary and benefit costs will be recovered through the salary and budget reallocation accounts and charged to 673247.

This alternative will be referred to the 2023 tax operating budget deliberations for Council approval.

Staffing: Two Police Officers through Hamilton Police Services

Legal: N/A

- 2) Council may choose an enforcement only approach to encampments, by creating a permanent encampment response team within Licensing and By-law Services, made up of 1 FTE Supervisor, 4 FTE MLEOs, and a Supervisor of Parks Section. This approach is likely to result in moving individuals from parks, and preventing the establishment of large entrenched encampments, but it is likely to result in fewer referrals of individuals in encampments to services that improve health and wellbeing, as well as emergency shelter and housing. This would result in an estimated annual cost of approximately \$710,365. Additionally, although the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) is willing to support for the Coordination Response Team, but it is not in the mandate of the HPS to do so, an additional 2 FTEs (police officers) be hired to support

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.

the delivery of the coordinated encampment response at an annual cost of \$268,646 for salary, benefits and one-time costs of \$30,000 for ancillary equipment to be funded by the City.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The alternative to provide an enforcement approach to encampment would require a levy enhancement of \$1,009,011 for City of Hamilton staff and operating costs and Hamilton Police Services staff and ancillary costs.

If approved, the budget for the coordinated encampment response will be reflected in 673247 HSD-Encampment Response Coord. The FTEs will be added to the department budgets and the actual salary and benefit costs will be recovered through the salary and budget reallocation accounts and charged to 673247.

This alternative will be referred to the 2023 tax operating budget deliberations for Council approval.

Staffing: The recommended coordinated encampment response would require additional FTEs:

- 1 Supervisor in Licensing and By-Law
- 4 Municipal Law Enforcement Officers
- 1 Supervisor within Parks Section
- 2 Police Officers through Hamilton Police Services

Legal: N/A

- 3) Council may choose to trial a housing services only approach to encampments, by enhancing the permanent housing-focused street outreach team with 1 FTE Manager, 1 FTE Project Manager, 3.5 FTE additional housing-focused street outreach workers, and a Supervisor of Parks Section. This approach will ensure unsheltered individuals have the ongoing assistance of housing-focused street outreach workers who will support their journey into housing while connecting them with the necessary resources to sustain and improve health and wellbeing. However, without dedicated by-law enforcement resources, the risk is that encampments will likely become entrenched, and result in ongoing health and safety issues and the occupation of public space. This would result in a levy enhancement of approximately \$592,000. Additionally, although the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) is willing to support for the Coordination Response Team, but it is not

in the mandate of the HPS to do so, an additional 4 FTEs (police officers) be hired to support the delivery of the coordinated encampment response at an annual cost of \$268,646 for salary, benefits and one-time costs of \$30,000 for ancillary equipment to be funded by the City.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The alternative to provide a trail housing only services approach to encampments, would require a levy enhancement of \$889,646 for City of Hamilton staff, operating costs and Hamilton Police Services staff and ancillary costs.

If approved, the budget for the coordinated encampment response will be reflected in 673247 HSD-Encampment Response Coord. The FTEs will be added to the department budgets and the actual salary and benefit costs will be recovered through the salary and budget reallocation accounts and charged to 673247.

The alternative will be referred to the 2023 tax operating budget deliberations for Council approval.

Staffing: The recommended coordinated encampment response would require additional FTEs:

- 1 Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach
- 1 Project Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach
- Funding for 3.5 additional seconded FTE Housing-focused Street Outreach workers
- 1 Supervisor within Parks Section
- 2 Police Officers through Hamilton Police Services

Legal: N/A

For any desired option, HPS resources would be required. Any police implications should be taken to the Hamilton Police Services Board for additional funding to support the delivery of encampment response.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

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

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A