



City of Hamilton
City Hall, 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario,

January 12, 2023

To: The Chair and Members of the Emergency and
Community Services Committee

From: The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

**Re: Support for the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters
Program**

The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) highly recommends that the City investigate ways of supporting the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS) program, as it fills a gap that is not currently being met in the shelter system with regards to persons with disabilities and our need for special accommodation. Our research has shown that even if the City was able to provide a shelter space for every homeless person currently living on the street, we would still have a large percentage that would prefer to live rough, given their limited options.

In speaking with the Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (RFPR), HAMSMaRT, City of Hamilton By-Law and Licensing staff, and the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, ACPD's Housing Working Group (HWG) has learned that persons with disabilities account for an unusually high percentage of the homeless population. We have looked at numerous reasons for this high number and have found an overall theme no matter what type of

housing we are speaking of: whether it be RCFs, Shelters or Transitional Housing, they are all highly regulated and don't offer much in the way of flexibility and, as such, individualized accommodation becomes impossible.

The HATS program allows for an individualized approach and can accommodate a variety of needs not being currently met. As there has been much success in other municipalities we feel confident that this pilot project will be successful in helping to house the most vulnerable and assist them when they eventually transition into more stable forms of housing.

We recommend looking at sites in each ward so that all of Hamilton can assist in making this program a success. While these sites are meant to be "temporary", we would suggest moving them as little as possible to provide residents with continuity.

When addressing community concerns, we recommend a head-on approach. Identify the people most in opposition and ask them how we can address their concerns while still providing a safe environment for the most vulnerable. Suggest that if the community shows new HATS residents warmth, kindness and understanding, they can provide an excellent example of being a good neighbour and looking after one another.

While the HATS program is comparatively small and won't make a significant dent in the homelessness issue, it does provide previously unavailable options while adaptable enough to be modified on an individual basis.

In conclusion, the ACPD is in full support of the HATS program and recommends that it be implemented as soon as possible. We would be pleased to work with the HATS team on this program to help ensure accessibility issues are addressed.