




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT**  
**Housing Services Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	March 23, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Arkledun Delay Mitigation and Interim Plan for Homelessness System Service Levels for Single Women (HSC23019) (City Wide) REVISED
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035 Nadia Zelisko (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2548
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- (a) That Council approve a short-term extension of operations for 378 Main Street East (the former Cathedral Boys School) as a temporary emergency shelter for up to 100 single women from April 1, 2023 to no later than May 31, 2023, as a result of delays to the Arkledun housing project at an approximate cost of \$320 K monthly for an approximate total of \$640 K to be funded as outlined in recommendation (c).
- (b) That staff be authorized to implement an interim plan for homelessness system service levels for unsheltered single women and non-binary individuals for additional emergency system pressures in 2023 and to the end of March 2024, at an approximate total cost of \$2.87 M, as follows:
  - (i) From April 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 for \$2.152 M be funded as outlined in recommendation (c):
    - (1) Adding interim capacity of up to 20 additional beds in the women's emergency shelter system as needed, by opening 46 West Avenue

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- South as a temporary emergency shelter (run by Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton) in the approximate amount of \$952 K
- (2) Continuation of enhanced drop-in services for unsheltered women and non-binary individuals through Mission Services of Hamilton Inc. Willow's Place and The Hamilton Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Carol Anne's Place, with \$1.2 M
- (ii) From January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024 for \$718 K be funded as outlined in recommendation (c):
- (1) Adding interim capacity of up to 20 additional beds in the women's emergency shelter system as needed, by opening 46 West Avenue South as a temporary emergency shelter (run by Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton) in the approximate amount of \$318 K.
- (2) Continuation of enhanced drop-in services for unsheltered women and non-binary individuals through Mission Services of Hamilton Inc. Willow's Place and The Hamilton Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Carol Anne's Place, in the approximate amount of \$400 K.
- (c) That all such purchases outline in Recommendation (a), (b)(i), and (b)(ii) 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, Homelessness Prevention Program, any available provincial or federal funding, or 2023 in year program and/or department/corporate surplus;
- (d) 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 their designate and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A short-term extension to the temporary emergency shelter for women at 378 Main Street East (the former Cathedral Boys School) is recommended in order to adequately support the safe and gradual decommissioning of this site in conjunction with the opening of the Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton (GSCH) project at 35 Arkledun Ave.

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The Arkledun project has experienced construction delays outside of the vendor's control that have postponed the projected opening date to April 2023, with full occupancy projected by the end of May 2023.

Once open, the Arkledun project will provide low barrier housing supports for approximately 73 women, transgender and non-binary community members experiencing homelessness from Hamilton's By-Name List. Temporary extension of the Cathedral shelter site to May 31 will prevent a gap in women's services from the current approved decommissioning date of March 31, 2023 to the April Arkledun opening date, as well as providing the flexibility necessary to implement a gradual and staggered admission process to the Arkledun site. The Housing Services Division is recommending a two-month extension at Cathedral, however with the April 2023 completion date of Arkledun project the expectation is that the Cathedral site will close earlier than May 31, 2023 and will aim to decommission this site as soon as it is operationally feasible to do so.

Additionally, the housing services division is engaged in shelter rightsizing post-pandemic and has engaged the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) to provide an analysis and recommendations of additional capacity needed in the system. Capacity pressures are most significant in women's and family systems. This report will come forward to Emergency and Community Services Committee in April 2023, however implementation of recommendations will require council approval, sustainable resources and time to implement council direction.

Given the ongoing pressures in the emergency shelter system for single women, it is recommended that 46 West Avenue South, a facility currently leased by GSCH, open on an interim basis for up to one-year to add 20 additional beds in the women's emergency shelter system as needed.

In addition, it is recommended that Mission Services Willow's Place and YWCA Carol Ann's Place continue to be funded for an additional period of up to one-year. Over the course of the pandemic, drop-in services have demonstrated critical value as low barrier entry points to the homeless-serving system by providing supports that meet immediate needs, building trust and connection to additional resources, and conducting triage and assessment services that facilitate access to additional housing resources. This extension will enable providers to continue to meet immediate community need, while allowing time for staff and partners to develop a model for funding and delivery of housing-focused drop-in services in Hamilton.

These interim measures in the emergency system will work to ensure that additional emergency shelter beds and drop-in services remain available as the Housing Services Division assesses final recommendations for the ongoing optimal sizing of the emergency system moving forward. A report detailing these recommendations is

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scheduled to be presented to Emergency and Community Services Committee for approval in 2023.

**Alternatives for Consideration – N/A**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: Recommendation (a) requests funding of \$640 K to support up to 2 months of extended Cathedral operations from April to May 2023 to facilitate the completion of the Arkledun housing project.

In addition, \$2.87 M to implement an interim plan for homelessness system service levels for unsheltered single women and non-binary individuals for additional emergency system pressures for a new 20 bed temporary emergency shelter location at 46 West Ave South and the continuation of Mission Services Willow's Place and YWCA Carole Anne's Place drop-ins for up to 12 months from April 2023 to March 2024.

Funding will be from the following: Reaching Home, Homelessness Prevention Program, any other available Provincial or Federal funding, or within Housing Services Division approved 2023 budget and/or department/corporate surplus.

Cost for both recommendations will be captured within the Housing Services Division Emergency COVID Dept ID 625038. As funding sources are identified as indicated in recommendation (b), eligible costs will be allocated accordingly.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Arkledun project, acquired by GSCH in October 2021 with the assistance of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding provided by the City of Hamilton, will provide low barrier housing supports for approximately 73 women, transgender and non-binary community members experiencing homelessness from Hamilton's By-Name List.

On December 9, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020(d) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 4. This report outlined actions related to the continuation COVID-19 response measures for people experiencing homelessness, including transitioning the overflow shelter at the former Cathedral Boys School into a temporary shelter for women.

On July 7, 2022, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020(e) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 5. This Report outlined an initial transition strategy to work toward ensuring that the City is no longer reliant on hotels for emergency shelter overflow, including sector-based actions under way to support this transition, including identification of the West Ave. S. site as a mid-term emergency sheltering solution, and provided a summary of pre-COVID service levels compared with expanded service levels during COVID-19.

On August 11, 2022, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC20020(f) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 6. This Report outlined an interim plan for homelessness system service levels to the end of March 2023, including extension of four drop-in services supporting women, men, youth: The Living Rock Ministries, Mission Services of Hamilton Inc. Willow's Place, The Hamilton Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Carol Anne's Place, and Wesley Urban Ministries Wesley Day Centre.

On August 11, 2022, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC22047 Housing with Supports for Women, Transgender and Non-binary Community Members (Arkledun), including recommendations to provide a grant to address gap funding for capital costs required to renovate 35 Arkledun Ave., as well as additional funding to support program support costs for a 12-month period beginning with initial occupancy date of December 2022.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

None

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

In July 2022, the Housing Services Division contracted with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to support a review of post-pandemic emergency sheltering needs and recommendations, which focusses initially on the optimal number of emergency shelter spaces for women, youth, men and families, with options for responding to couples. The Housing Services Division has received initial recommendations based on the consultation and is in the process of reviewing the content and developing a long-term implementation plan to be brought forward to Emergency and Community Services Committee for review.

Engagement with clients accessing shelter and drop-in services July through December 2022 has confirmed that individuals experiencing homelessness see drop-in services as

a critical resource. Many clients of drop-in services report having nowhere else to go during the day and may not be able to access shelters. Community consultation with service providers throughout 2022 has reinforced the role of drop-ins as a vital low barrier service in meeting basic needs for the most vulnerable while serving as a point of connection to additional housing supports.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The temporary women's emergency shelter overflow beds at the former Cathedral Boys School have acted as a critical resource within Hamilton's homeless-serving system in response to unprecedented needs of unhoused residents through various phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan to decommission this site remains contingent on the opening of 73 units of permanent housing at Arkledun Ave. This overlap between sites is necessary in order to support a gradual transition for residents out of shelter overflow and to ensure that adequate plans are in place to support impacted residents.

The time-limited extension of the Cathedral site is required due to unforeseen construction delays to the Arkledun project above and beyond the original schedule outside of the vendor's control, further shifting the projected opening date from December 2022 to March 2023, and now to April 2023. Although the facility may be ready for occupancy earlier, GSCH must still arrange for several tasks including: final cleaning of the building; room preparation, including furnishings and other activities related to making the units habitable; staff training on the various building systems; and final tenant selection. It remains the goal of the Housing Services Division to decommission the temporary Cathedral shelter site as soon as operationally possible, while at the same time supporting a well-planned, safe and operationally feasible opening of the Arkledun site. It is anticipated that the Cathedral site will close sooner than the latest identified date of May 31, 2023, however a provisional 2-month extension from the original March 31, 2023 date allows for necessary flexibility.

In addition to the 2-month transitional extension to the Cathedral site, staff is also recommending adding interim capacity of up to 20 additional beds in the women's emergency shelter system by opening 46 West Avenue South as a temporary emergency shelter for up to one-year. This site, currently leased by GSCH, will be run by Good Shepherd Women's Services and adds necessary flexibility in the emergency shelter system to better meet the needs of unhoused Hamiltonians. This interim solution will allow for necessary moderate enhancements to baseline emergency sheltering solutions for single women as the Housing Services Division seeks to finalize and implement plans to right-size shelter capacity, while also balancing housing priorities along the continuum.

As of January 31, 2023, there were approximately 63 single women in the temporary emergency shelter located at the former Cathedral Boys School, and 46 single women

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in emergency shelters. The Arkledun site is critical as it represents an opportunity to expand permanent housing with supports and is the first of its kind to be directly linked to housing people in Hamilton's homeless serving system. It remains a keystone in the interim shelter strategy to decommission the Cathedral site and transition to more sustainable long-term solutions, while providing the support required to get people who have been in the emergency system for extended periods of time into a home.

Temporary funding for drop-in services is scheduled to end March 31, 2023 with the end of pandemic and municipal COVID-19 funding sources. In September 2022, Wesley Urban Ministries announced their intention to cease providing drop-in services as of March 31, 2023. Continued funding for drop-in services for women and non-binary individuals for up to an additional one-year will enable providers to continue meeting immediate need and allow time for staff and partners, including the health sector, to develop an optimal role and model for funding and delivering housing-focused drop-in services within the broader homeless-serving system in Hamilton. This includes an assessment of how to address the service gap resulting from the planned closure of the Wesley Day Centre. Drop-in services for youth will remain available through the City-funded Notre Dame Community Resource Centre.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION – N/A**

**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.

**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 – N/A**