




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
DATE:	November 15, 2023
SUBJECT:	Encampment Response Update – October 2023 (HSC23066(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Mike Jones (905) 546-2424 ext. 3824 Danielle Blake (905) 546-2424 ext. 3731
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On August 18, 2023, Council ratified an Encampment Protocol to be used by City staff to respond and manage encampments, tents, or temporary structures within public lands in the City of Hamilton.

To provide ongoing accountability and transparency to the City's encampment response program and the implementation of its encampment protocol, staff were directed to communicate with Council and Ward Councillors regarding the Encampment Protocol through monthly, ongoing Information Reports to General Issues Committee and include data and trends, operational updates, and any continuous improvement measures implemented to further efforts toward providing ongoing accountability and transparency to the City's encampment response program and the implementation of its encampment protocol.

INFORMATION

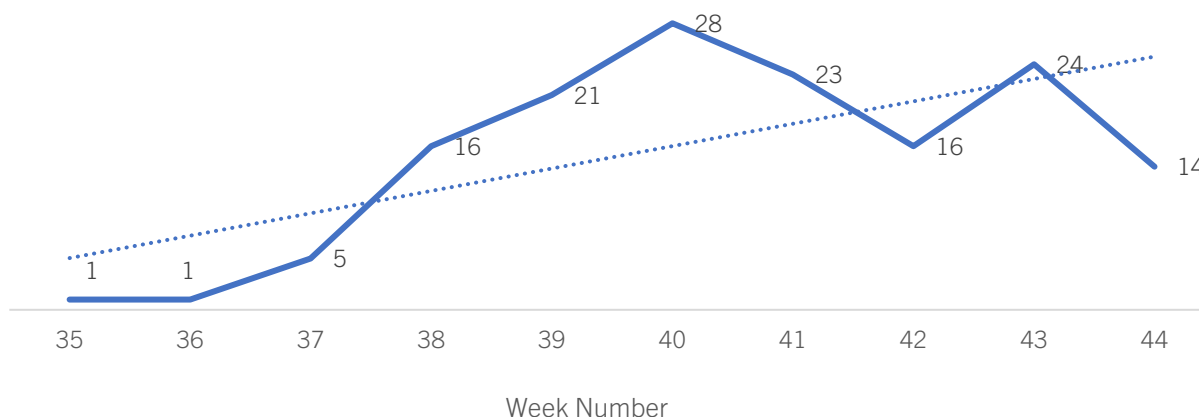
New Encampments Identified by Housing Focused Street Outreach by Week

Since the Encampment Protocol was ratified in Week 34, the number of complaints and service requests regarding new sites has increased steadily. As demonstrated in the

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chart below, the number of complaints and service requests peaked in Week 40 but has maintained a relatively consistent trend in the number of new sites received since. This is likely due to individuals formerly living in larger, previously established encampments in non-compliant spaces moving to new spaces throughout the City.

When engaging with individuals living unsheltered, Housing Focused Street Outreach identify compliant sites and options in the community in proximity to their supports, but ultimately the decision of where to go is made by the individual(s) living unsheltered. Regardless, it is expected that unless there is a meaningful influx of new individuals living unsheltered, the total number of new sites identified may plateau as more people find themselves established within compliant spaces.



Initial Engagement Outcomes

Once a complaint or service request is established by Housing Focused Street Outreach staff, the team coordinates to ensure Outreach staff attend the location within the service levels designated in the Encampment Protocol. To date, Housing Focused Street Outreach has attended 185 sites since the ratification of the Protocol.

Of the 185 sites attended by Housing Focused Street Outreach, the following are the five most frequented outcomes:

- 36% of complaints and/or service requests resulted in no tents being observed
- 12% of sites attended were compliant on first visit
- 10% were located on private property
- 10% were located in too close proximity to a playground
- 5% were located in too close proximity to a private property line

The 36% of complaints and/or service requests which resulted in no tents being observed may be the product of several circumstances, including:

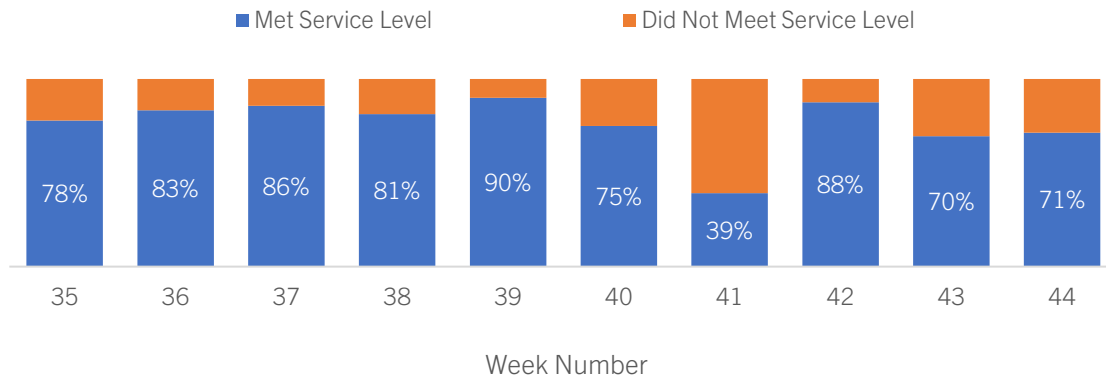
- Garbage and debris were located without an active or established encampment
- Individual(s) who may have been staying at the site previously vacated the site within the time period of when the complaint service request was made, and Housing Focused Street Outreach attended
- Not enough detail was provided in the initial complaint and/or service request to locate the encampment. Maps and pinned locations are instructive when identifying a site for Housing Focused Street Outreach to attend.

Service Levels

Housing Focused Street Outreach

The ratification of the Encampment Protocol established a three-day service level for response to complaints and/or service requests related to encampments. As such, Housing Focused Street Outreach has three days to visit the site and engage with the individuals at the site to inform them of the Encampment Protocol.

Including both existing and new encampments, the following chart reports on Housing Focused Street Outreach’s ability to meet service levels by week.



Since the Encampment Protocol was ratified, Housing Focused Street Outreach has met its service level 74% of the time. Increased demand resulting from an influx of new sites, time spent identifying and resolving land ownership, and making multiple attempts to engage with individuals at a site to inform of the Protocol and discuss potentially

compliant areas to move to, have resulted in slower response times in escalating sites to Municipal Law Enforcement.

Notably, the number of new sites where a first visit to engage is made within the service level is above 80%.

Municipal Law Enforcement

As per the Protocol, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will determine compliance timelines depending on the presenting circumstances, for the issuance of notices or actions to be taken in respect to the encampment, temporary shelter, or tent, within a maximum of four (4) total days from the issuance of notice, unless exceptional circumstances exist.

In October, Municipal Law Enforcement has met its service levels at 22 out of 25 escalated sites (not including sites from the end of October that still fall within the service level time period), or 88% of the time.

Access to Washrooms and Showers Update

The washroom program currently located in Myrtle Park will move to its new winter location in Corktown Park on November 15th and will ensure that washroom access is available to individuals who are unsheltered throughout the winter months.

Weekly data on access of individuals who are living unsheltered washroom programs is presently being reported on in the Weekly Encampment Dashboard. Since the program began at each site in September 2023, a total of 81 individuals experiencing homelessness have accessed the shower programs.

Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters Update

City staff continue to work with Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters to explore potential opportunities and will keep the public informed about progress with respect to the Tiny Homes initiative through monthly General Issues Committee Encampment Response Updates.

Encampment Compliance Update

In October there were 86 different sites that were identified through various modalities to Housing Focused Street Outreach. As per the Encampment Protocol and a housing-led approach, Outreach staff attended each location to engage with individuals living at

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the site to provide education around the protocol, provide supports and resources and make a preliminary assessment on the site's compliance with the Encampment Protocol.

Of the 86 sites identified to Housing Focused Street Outreach, there were 50 (58%) locations that were compliant on first visit, of which 36 sites did not have a tent present upon first visit, and 10 were already in compliant areas.

As such, a total of 30 (39%) sites were escalated to Municipal Law Enforcement for investigation and the potential issuance of trespass orders requiring individuals to move to a compliant site or area. At the 30 escalated sites, trespass orders were issued at 10 sites, for a total of 58 trespass orders.

Additional Trends and Data

Volume of Complaints

In October, the number of complaints decreased from a year-to-date high of 897 in September, to 680 in October, which is slightly below the year-to-date average.

Comparing to September's data, in October there was a slight decrease in number and proportion of complaints and/or service requests regarding reported encampments and requests to enforce the protocol at encampments, while the number of follow-ups and requests for remove garbage and debris slightly increased. All other types of complaints and/or requests for service were stable month-to-month.

Total Unique Individuals Living in Encampments

In October, Housing Focused Street Outreach interacted with an approximate total of 343 unique individuals. This number continues to increase and is substantially higher than the totals recorded in previous months. This is consistent with an increase in the number of interactions to provide supports to individuals living unsheltered.

Supports for Individuals Living in Encampments

With the increased number of sites being identified in the community and in wanting to be a support for individuals who are moving to new sites, the total interactions by Housing Focused Street Outreach staff continues to increase compared to previous months.

Total interactions within individuals living unsheltered remain high, as Housing Focused Street Outreach staff continue to engage across the city to provide basic needs

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materials, services, and supports in the form of referrals and information to assist individual in getting what they need.

In addition, Housing Focused Street Outreach staff continue to review the categories in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) available to Outreach staff that describe the outcome of an interaction, with the intent to provide greater clarity and specificity in reporting.

Escalated Complaints

There were a combined 30 total escalated complaints in October, which is slightly above the year-to-date average. Notably, encampments on private property were also higher than the year-to-date average.

As new, smaller encampments begin to settle throughout the City within compliant areas, it is expected that this number will remain lower than the high totals in August and September.

Cleaning and Maintenance

In October, the total number of sites cleaned and maintained by Parks Section staff was the highest it's been this year at 105 sites or areas. With encampments moving to new locations across the city, and a broader awareness of the Encampment Coordination Team and its roles and responsibilities, more requests for garbage and debris pickup are being made.

An increase in smaller, compliant sites results in more locations that require garbage and debris pickup across the city, and Parks Section staff work proactively with individuals at all sites to provide ongoing garbage pickup and ensure that sites are maintained on an ongoing basis.

Indicators

The following indicators have been established to assess the success of the program on an interim basis and will be reported on regularly to provide accountability to the public and people with lived experience, and transparency regarding the City's approach to encampment response.

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Indicator	Category of Measurement	Oct 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Oct 2022
Total complaints and/or requests for service requiring response or follow-up by Housing Focused Street Outreach (HFSO)	Volume of complaints and/or requests for service	680	897	708	N/A
Number of unique individuals/households reached who are unsheltered and/or regularly living in encampments throughout the City (defined by connection to HFSO), who have provided consent to have their personal information stored in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).	Total unique individuals living in encampments	87	77	85	44
Number of unique individuals/households reached who are unsheltered and/or regularly living in encampments throughout the City (defined by connection to HFSO), who have not yet provided consent to have their personal information stored in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).	Total unique individuals living in encampments	343	203	111	N/A
Number of interactions where individuals received support (from HFSO) with their basic needs per month	Support basic needs of individuals living in encampments	240	57	108	43
Number of interactions where individuals received support (from HFSO) with their housing needs per month	Support housing-related needs of individuals living in encampments	367	365	228	101

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.

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Indicator	Category of Measurement	Oct 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Oct 2022
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on public property	Volume of Escalated complaints	19	28	19	N/A
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on private property	Volume of Escalated complaints	11	6	8	N/A
Total number of Trespass Notices issued on public property	Response type to escalated complaint	58	75	87	N/A
Total number of Trespass Notices issued on private property	Response type to escalated complaint	0	0	0	N/A
Number of instances where compliance was achieved immediately on public property, without issuing of Voluntary Compliance Notice	Response type to escalated complaint	4	4	4	N/A
Number of instances where compliance was achieved immediately on private property, without issuing of Voluntary Compliance Notice	Response type to escalated complaint	0	0	0	N/A

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Indicator	Category of Measurement	Oct 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Oct 2022
Number of encampment sites cleaned and/or maintained by Parks Section staff or a designated contractor	Park cleaning and maintenance	105	87	84	72

All indicators meet the criteria of being valid and reliable and can be replicated by City staff and reported monthly.

Please direct any inquiries to Danielle Blake, Manager, Housing Focused Street Outreach, at (905) 546-2424 ext. 3731, or by email at Danielle.Blake@hamilton.ca.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A