



CITY OF HAMILTON
Healthy and Safe Communities Department
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 6, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Family Shelter System (HSC23041(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Vanessa Parlette (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3863 Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That up to \$1.852M be funded from a reserve determined appropriate by the General Manager of the Corporate Services Department and the General Manager of Healthy and Safe Communities Department with \$784K in 2024 and \$1.068M in 2025 and referred to the 2024 Tax Operating budget for Council consideration to extend temporary emergency supports between April 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024 and continuing to December 31, 2025 in order to address urgent program and staffing needs within Housing Services Division and Good Shepherd Hamilton related to family homelessness.
 - (i) \$247K in 2024 and \$353K in 2025 for 2.0 Emergency Shelter Case Managers and 1.0 Supervisor Hotel Overflow with the City of Hamilton
 - (ii) \$537K in 2024 and \$715K in 2025 for enhanced staffing and case management at Good Shepherd Family Centre Shelter and Hotel Overflow
- (b) That staff be directed to conduct a new Call for Applications with a longer timeline and expanded parameters to build capacity and address pressures in the Family Shelter System through December 2025 with report back for Council approval of recommended projects in Q2 2024.

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- (c) That staff be directed to report back by Q3 2025 to assess need for continued investment in enhanced staffing for the family shelter system.
- (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

Hamilton continues to experience a crisis of unmet need and over-capacity in the Family Shelter System. This report recommends extension of temporary staffing supports within the existing Family Shelter and Hotel Overflow System that were approved through Emergency & Community Service Committee Report HSC23041(a). These enhanced staffing supports are currently approved through March 2024. Extension through December 2025 will ensure staffing resources are aligned with service demand to help stabilize the shelter environment and offer families supports in securing housing and navigating with additional community resources. There is additional need to develop and invest in immediate and long-term solutions to family homelessness, including additional shelter spaces and/or permanent housing for families. An initial Call for Applications conducted in October 2023 did not yield any successful proposals that would expand shelter capacity or flow-through to permanent housing options for families. This report recommends launching a subsequent Call for Applications in December 2023 to enable a longer timeline for applicants to develop proposals.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Staff are requesting that temporary enhanced staffing in the Family Centre shelter and hotel overflow be extended from April 2024 through December 2025, for a total of \$1.852M, to be funded from a reserve deemed appropriate by the General Manager of the Corporate Services Department and the General Manager of Healthy and Safe Communities Department and referred to the 2024 Tax Operating Budget for deliberation and approval. This is in addition to the currently approved funding to March 2024 received through report HSC23041(a) that requested \$1M funded by the COVID-19 reserve.

Additional costs associated with successful proposals to the Call for Applications will be referred for Council approval in Q2 2024.

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Recommendation	2024	2025	Total
(a)(i) 3 temporary FTEs	\$247,000	\$353,000	\$600,000
(a)(ii) Good Shepherd enhanced staffing	537,000	715,000	1,252,000
Total	\$784,000	\$1,068,000	\$1,852,000

Staffing: Implementation of recommendations in this report require the extension of three temporary FTE within Housing Services Division: 2.0 Emergency Shelter Case Managers, 1.0 Supervisor at an estimated cost of \$247K in 2024 and \$353K in 2025 for a total of \$600K.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On March 23, 2023, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved Report HSC23021 Ending Chronic Homelessness, outlining a comprehensive approach and investments required to end chronic homelessness in Hamilton.

On April 19, 2023, the General Issues Committee received and approved Report HSC23028, the Housing Sustainability and Investment Roadmap, which outlined actions to be taken to address the housing crisis.

In April 2023, City Council declared a state of emergency related to homelessness, mental health, and opioid addiction.

On September 13, 2023, Council approved General Issues Committee Reports HSC23041 and HSC23041(a), outlining the pressures in Hamilton’s emergency shelter system, particularly the Family Shelter System, and investments required to support outflow to permanent housing solutions. Council directed staff to conduct an immediate Call for Applications to identify innovative and cost-effective solutions from the community to address the issue of family homelessness, including the creation of new emergency shelter or transitional housing spaces for families, and/or provision of services and supports to address root causes of family homelessness and/or create flow through the system to permanent housing.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

An initial Call for Applications was issued in October 2023 in alignment with Procurement By-Law No. 20-255 Schedule B Exemptions (3)(a)(ii). This clause applies to emergency sheltering and exempts this category of services from the requirements of the Procurement Policy, save and except for Policy # 2 – Approval Authority and Policy #13 – Authority to Execute Contracts (HSC23041(a)). In most cases, standardized City procurement practices require an authorized online Purchase Requisition to initiate a Purchase Order and/or formal Contract process. If there is to be an evaluative

component involved in the determination of where funds are to be allocated, Procurement recommends a Request for Proposal be initiated through them. However, the Request for Proposal process typically takes a minimum of 6 months to see through completion. Due to the urgency of addressing the crisis of family homelessness, the standard Request for Proposals process does not enable timely selection and operationalization of supports. A subsequent Call for Applications is required to enable applicants more time to secure potential sites to offer family shelter and housing units that can be operationalized in 2024.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Housing Services Division routinely engages funded agencies within Hamilton's homeless-serving sector to understand and address evolving needs of individuals experiencing homelessness across family, women's, men's, and youth systems. Due to ongoing and escalating pressures in the Family Shelter System, City staff have further consulted with frontline staff and leadership who provide services to families experiencing homelessness to identify root causes and potential solutions. In October 2023, City staff ran a public Call for Applications for Family Shelter Solutions, the results of which are outlined below.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

General Issues Committee Report HSC23041(a) outlined the current state of crisis experienced in the family shelter system. The Family Shelter System continues to see unprecedented demand, leading to families being turned away from shelter along with conditions of over-crowding and insufficient staffing in the existing Family Shelter.

Continued Unprecedented Need Beyond System Capacity

The Good Shepherd Family Centre is currently the only permanent emergency shelter providing housing-focused shelter and support for families experiencing homelessness, offering 20 units for a total of 80 beds funded through Housing Services Division. The City is also contracting two hotels to provide shelter overflow space totalling 52 rooms, providing support for as many families as can be accommodated within those 52 rooms based on individual family size. Both permanent shelter beds and hotel spaces are over-capacity, leading to frequent turn aways from shelter. As of October 2023, there were 65 families staying at the Good Shepherd Family Centre or in an Emergency Overflow Hotel. This is more than double the space and staffing capacity of the permanent family shelter system.

Stabilizing Shelter and Staff Capacity

On September 13, 2023 Council approved investment of up to \$1M in temporary emergency supports between September 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024 in order to address urgent program and staffing needs within Housing Services Division and Good

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Shepherd Hamilton related to family homelessness. Extension of these supports through December 2025 is essential to stabilize the shelter environment, improve staff retention, and ensure sufficient staffing capacity to meet the complexity of needs experienced by families accessing the shelter system.

The investment of \$1.852M to extend supports from April 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025 will include the following:

- Two City of Hamilton Emergency Shelter Case Managers and a Supervisor to support the Family Shelter sector and work with families to connect them with income supports and the broader homelessness system.
- Four additional staff at the Family Centre Shelter to enable dedicated support for families in completing housing plans and applications, system navigation, and money management resources to support successful move-ins to long-term tenancies.
- Seven staff dedicated to supporting families staying in hotel overflow, offering on-site case management seven days per week to assist families in finding and securing housing as well as connection to additional community resources. This program will also include an on-site Child and Youth Worker five days per week.

Pursuing Long-term Solutions to Family Homelessness

Shelter staff and case managers in the Family System routinely speak to challenges securing housing for families due to the lack of deeply affordable units and units of a size appropriate for large families. This accounts for increasing lengths of stays in family shelters. In 2022, 26% of 206 (n=54) families accessing the shelter system experienced chronic homelessness of six months or more. There is an urgent need to secure new Family Shelter spaces to address immediate needs and permanent housing solutions to address the large bottleneck of people currently stuck in the shelter system.

Housing Services Division ran a Call for Applications from October 6 through October 21, 2023 seeking proponents to address family homelessness, as a way to consider new and innovative opportunities to expand system capacity to:

- serve up to an additional 50 families in emergency shelter or transitional housing through March 31, 2025
- provide services and supports that address root causes, complexity of need, and create flow through the shelter system to permanent housing

The timeline for applicants to respond to this Call for Applications was extremely short in order to allow sufficient time for report back to Council. As a result, only one application was received and there were no applications evaluated as successful at meeting the objectives of creating space in the Family Shelter System and/or flow-through to permanent housing solutions.

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It is recommended that staff be directed to run a subsequent Call for Applications with a longer submission window and inclusion of capital as an eligible expense. This would allow proponents more time to identify and secure potential building locations that could serve as potential temporary or long-term family housing. Staff would open the Call for Applications by the end of December with report back to Council by the end of Q1 2024.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

N/A

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A