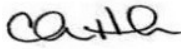




**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	October 19, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee Funding Request (HSC23072) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Colin McMullan (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3538 Mark Weingartner (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6095
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Chris Herstek General Manager (Acting) Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the funding request made by the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee/Hamilton Food Share in the amount of \$1.25 million, be referred to the 2024 Tax Supported Operating Budget Process; and,
- (b) That the annual funding request by the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee/Hamilton Food Share be referred to the General Manager of Community Services, or their delegate, for review.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On September 21, 2023, members of the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee Hamilton<sup>1</sup>, made a presentation at the Emergency and Community Services Committee meeting. They requested \$1.25 million annually to address the ongoing crisis in Hamilton's emergency food system.

The proposed distribution would include \$625,000 to purchase food by Hamilton Food Share, and \$625,000 to address staffing and infrastructure expenses at partner food

<sup>1</sup> The Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee is a collection of 16 local organizations that operate 23 hunger-relief programs (emergency food banks and hot meal programs) through the Greater Hamilton Area.

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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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bank agencies. These funds would flow through Hamilton Food Share to partner agencies. All parties would report annually on the disbursement and impacts of the funding.

Staff recommend that this funding request be referred to the 2024 Tax Supported Operating Budget Process, and that the annual funding requests be referred to the Grants Sub-Committee for review.

**Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

On September 21, 2023, Hamilton Food Share and Welcome Inn, representing the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee Hamilton, made a presentation and a financial request at the Emergency and Community Services Committee meeting.

They reported that food insecurity has steadily increased and that in the past year, the number of people accessing food banks and hunger relief programs has increased by 39 percent. In addition, donations to food banks via Federal and Provincial funding, grants from foundations, and donations from the public have declined by 60 to 80 percent. As a result, in order to meet this increasing need, Hamilton Food Share and partner agencies are required to spend more to purchase food.

The Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee Hamilton/Hamilton Food Share has requested \$1.25 million annually to address the crisis in the emergency food system. The proposed distribution would include:

- \$625,000 to purchase food by Hamilton Food Share
- \$625,000 to address staffing and infrastructure expenses at partner food bank agencies
- Funds will flow through Hamilton Food Share, and Hamilton Food Share will report annually on the disbursement and impacts of the funding

The Emergency and Community Services Committee instructed staff to consider this request and return with recommendations.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

There are no policy implications or legislated requirements associated with Report HSC23072 at this time. There may be policy implications when considering this request in the context of the 2024 Tax Supported Operating Budget Process and the 2024 Community Enrichment Fund process.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Staff in Finance and Corporate Services and Government Relations and Community Engagement were consulted.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Many residents of Hamilton continue to struggle with housing and other basic needs. This has been exacerbated in recent years by higher interest rates, a significant increase in the cost of groceries, and decreasing availability of safe and affordable housing.

The emergency food system is an important part of Hamilton's support system and a vital part of homelessness prevention. People often have to choose between paying the rent and purchasing food for themselves and their families. Hamilton Food Share reports a 39% increase in household visits over 2022, and a 39% increase in children served<sup>2</sup>.

In their September 21, 2023 presentation to the Emergency and Community Services Committee, Hamilton Food Share reported that the food security system is in crisis and food banks need support. Prior to the Pandemic, Hamilton Food Share's annual food purchasing budget was approximately \$200,000. To meet demand and ensure member agencies can continue to operate in 2023, Hamilton Food Share estimates it will cost them \$1.4 million to purchase food. The primary driver of this crisis is increased need and a decrease in donations and funding.

This phenomenon is not isolated to Hamilton or even Ontario. Food Banks Canada reports similar poverty and food insecurity challenges across the country<sup>3</sup>.

The City of Hamilton is responding through numerous strategic and planning initiatives as well as direct funding contributions to community partners. In 2023, the City of Hamilton invested \$908,635 to support Hamilton Food Share and the broader emergency food

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<sup>2</sup> Hamilton Hunger Report 2023, Hamilton Food Share

<sup>3</sup> Poverty Report Cards 2023, Food Banks Canada

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system (see Table 1). Many of these contributions have been one-time or through an annual granting process as noted below.

Table 1: City of Hamilton 2023 funding to support Hamilton Food Share and the Emergency Food System.

Organization	Program	Funding Source	Amount
Hamilton Food Share	Emergency Food Assistance	Housing Services (annual)	135,730
	Menstrual Products	Early Years Reserve Fund (one time)	91,000
	Food Procurement	Community Enrichment Fund (annual, application required)	56,200
Food Bank Partner Agencies	Community Enrichment Fund	Community Enrichment Fund (annual, application required)	265,200
EarlyON Child and Family Centre Operators	Food Insecurity Projects for Families	Early Years Funding (100% provincial) (one time)	360,500
Total 2023 Funding			\$908,635

Staff recommend that the Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee Hamilton/Hamilton Food Share's request be considered in the context of similar funding requests, other investments in food security and the Community Enrichment Fund process.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

None