



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
DATE:	February 21, 2024
SUBJECT:	Winter Response Strategy Update (HSC23012(b) (City Wide))
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Robyn Perry (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7801 Shannon Honsberger (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6524
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On September 13, 2023, Council approved that staff implement an annual Winter Response Strategy (HSC23012(a)), from December 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024 to support vulnerable individuals within the homeless-serving system.

On November 27, November 30, and December 18, 2023, Housing Services Division provided Communication Updates about enhancements to the Council approved Winter Response.

INFORMATION

This report provides an update to Council on the results of advocacy for higher levels of government to contribute to the financial pressures of responding to unsheltered homelessness, especially during the increased risk of wintertime.

To support communities in keeping people experiencing unsheltered homelessness safe this winter, Infrastructure Canada has allocated a one-time top-up of \$100M to Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy for 2023-2024. Hamilton's allotment is \$1,496,028.

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.

The total cost of Hamilton's Winter Response Strategy for 2023-2024 is approximately \$2,180,257. The Federal Reaching Home contribution can fully fund the Council approved Winter Response. Therefore, the funding from the Tax Stabilization Reserve #110046, approved for \$1.5M, is not required and will reduce the pressure on the reserve in 2024. The remaining \$684,229 will be funded through the existing Provincial Homeless Prevention Program budget.

In summary, funded services within Hamilton's Winter Response Strategy run from December 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, and include:

- Warming Bus through Hamilton Transit operating nightly from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., including onboard support through social service staff (all populations)
- 45 additional overnight warming spaces (serving women, trans- and non-binary people)
- 50 additional overnight warming spaces (serving men, trans- and non-binary people)
- 40 additional overnight drop-in spaces (serving women, trans- and non-binary people)
- 100 additional day-time drop-in spaces (all populations)
- 45 additional emergency shelter beds (serving men)
- Extended hours of operation at 3 designated Recreation Centres to act as a warming space (all populations)
- Extended hours of operation at the Hamilton Public Library Central location to act as a warming space (all populations)

Housing Services Division staff continue to work with partners to explore options to enhance services and address pressures across the system. One such measure is the dedication of staff resources to respond to inquiries and concerns related to winter strategy locations. Updates will be provided as these services are finalized.

Details on the Winter Response Strategy can be found on the City of Hamilton's website at the following page: www.hamilton.ca/WinterResponse

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A