




## INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	October 18, 2023
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Encampment Response Update – September 2023 (HSC23066(a)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Mike Jones (905) 546-2424 ext. 3824 Danielle Blake (905) 546-2424 ext. 3731
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

### 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

#### Operational Updates

##### Site Tracking

## **SUBJECT: Encampment Response Update – September 2023 (HSC23066(a)) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 9**

---

To support a housing-led approach, Housing Focused Street Outreach has reviewed its internal processes to identify all new sites via the unsheltered inbox and voicemail and has developed data infrastructure to facilitate an expedited response and to escalate all non-compliant sites to Municipal Law Enforcement within the three-day service period. Additionally, a shared database has been created to ensure all Coordinated Response Teams have access to up-to-date and relevant information daily.

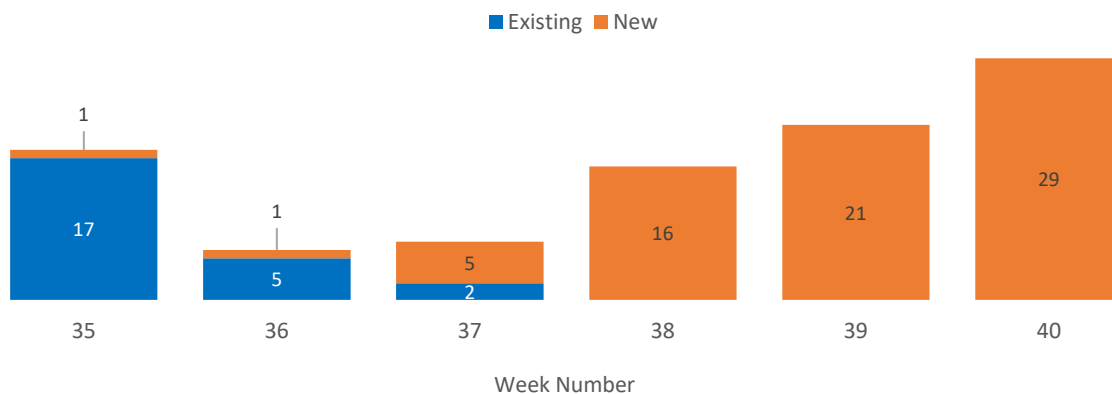
### **Identifying Public vs Private Property**

For sites where there is uncertainty around private or public ownership (i.e., leased land), Housing Focused Street Outreach works directly with Municipal Law Enforcement staff to determine land ownership associated with each site. As a result of the additional time required to clarify ownership, staff may exceed the required service levels to ensure the correct approach is being taken, involving the appropriate parties.

### **Increase in New, Smaller Encampments**

The following chart details the types of encampments that have received complaints and/or requests for service and have been visited by Housing Focused Street Outreach staff who engage onsite with individuals who are unsheltered and may escalate the site for enforcement to investigate if there are clear presenting concerns.

When the Encampment Protocol was ratified in August, the encampments that existed at that time were often larger and more entrenched. After enforcement was taken on the larger sites, it has likely led to an influx of new, smaller sites throughout the community. This is evidenced by the increase of new sites identified via complaints and/or service requests, as per the chart below.



## Compliance Decisions

As part of a housing-led approach, Housing Focused Street Outreach staff are the first responders to all encampment-related complaints and requests for service. To ensure that resources are only deployed when necessary, Housing Focused Street Outreach will conduct an immediate assessment of any notable presenting concerns related to a site's compliance.

If a determination is made by Housing Focused Street Outreach that there may be issues concerning a site's compliance, staff will make all attempts to engage with the individual(s) at the site to provide appropriate referrals to services and supports in the community and will inform them that they may be in a location that is in contravention to the Encampment Protocol, and likely to result in Municipal Law Enforcement investigating in the near future.

As part of this conversation, Outreach staff will begin to assist the individual(s) at the site to identify new, compliant sites they may be able to move to. It is important to note that Housing Focused Street Outreach can only discuss and recommend compliant areas within the City; the final determination of where to go will be made by individual(s) who are unsheltered.

Once a site has been escalated to Municipal Law Enforcement for investigation, they assume responsibility of determining a site's compliance.

## New Encampments at Previously Cleared Sites or Areas

As per the processes outlined in the Encampment Protocol, there is a clear approach to addressing new encampments. In the event an encampment is in a non-compliant location and an enforcement process has been initiated and finalized, the encampment is to be cleared by Parks Section staff.

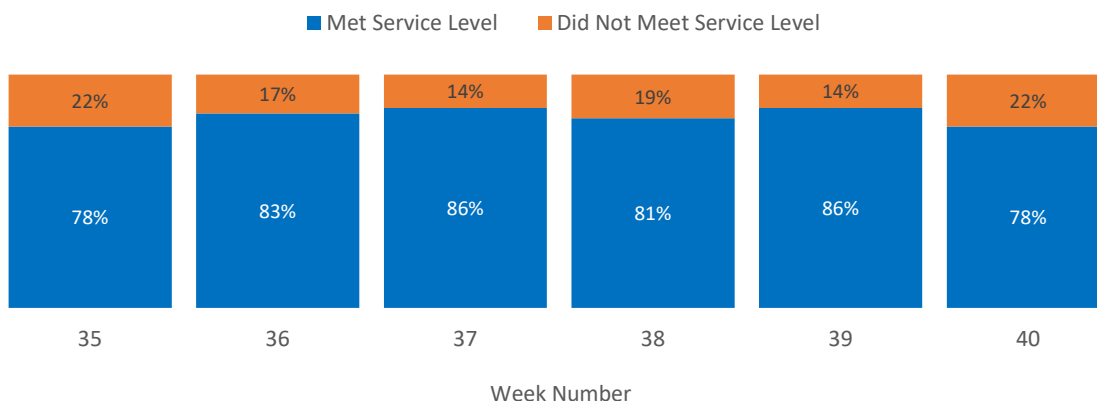
Occasionally after a site is designated by staff as cleared, different individual(s) may move into the same location and erect a new tent. To maintain clarity and ensure individuals are given an opportunity to be informed of the Encampment Protocol, anytime new tents are discovered on a site or in an area that has been previously cleared, the entire process will restart with Housing Focused Street Outreach attending to engage. This will also be reflected in the reporting of sites.

## **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 decide on whether the site should be escalated to Municipal Law Enforcement for further enforcement.

Including both existing and new encampments, the following chart reports on Housing Focused Street Outreach's ability to meet service levels by week (note, weeks are identified in the chart by the numbered week, i.e., , since the protocol has been ratified. On average to date, Housing Focused Street Outreach has met its service levels 81% of the time, responding to complaints and/or requests for service at 100 different new and existing sites since the Protocol was ratified on August 18, 2023.



## **Access to Washrooms and Showers Update**

Data on shower programs will be reported in the weekly report to Council beginning October 3, 2023.

## **Encampment Compliance Update**

In September, there were 68 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 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 68 sites identified to Housing Focused Street Outreach, there were 35 (51%) locations that were compliant on first visit, of which 26 sites did not have a tent present upon first visit, and 9 were already in compliant areas.

As such, a total of 31 (46%) 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 31 escalated sites, trespass orders were issued at 18 sites, for a total of 75 trespass orders.

### **Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters Update**

After doing their due diligence on the proposed Strachan site, Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters has decided not to proceed at this location.

Although no alternative sites are being proposed at this time, City staff will continue to work with Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters and will keep the public informed about progress with respect to the Tiny Homes initiative through the monthly General Issues Committee Encampment Response Updates.

### **Additional Trends and Data**

#### **Volume of Complaints**

Housing Focused Street Outreach staff have created a tracker to log all complaints and follow-ups that are sent to the unsheltered mailbox. Currently, voicemails are not being logged as part of the monthly complaint or service request totals, but a process is being developed to do so.

In September, the number of complaints increased from 799 in August, to 897. This increase is likely related to the dispersion of larger encampments in the City that existed prior to the ratification of the Protocol. As a result, individuals who are unsheltered, with the support of Housing Focused Street Outreach, are seeking new compliant areas of the City to stay. The number of new sites that has been identified via complaints and requests for service has increased in September.

#### **Total Unique Individuals Living in Encampments**

In September, Housing Focused Street Outreach interacted with an approximate total of 280 individuals. This number is substantially higher than the totals recorded in past

months. This is consistent with an equal increase in the number of interactions to provide supports to individuals living unsheltered.

The higher totals in September may also reflect a more refined, systematic process to identifying new sites for engagement by Housing Focused Street Outreach and prioritizing the recording of all interactions with individuals at encampments.

#### 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 increased substantially compared to the total from last month.

As movement continues to occur throughout the community, and with greater interaction occurring at entrenched sites prior to the issuance of trespass notices, it is expected that these totals will continue to be high for the foreseeable future.

In addition, Housing Focused Street Outreach staff with the support of other units in the Housing Services Division, are reviewing the categories available to staff after an interaction to provide greater clarity and specificity in reporting. It is anticipated that changes to the current reporting structure as it relates to interactions will be updated prior to end of year.

#### Escalated Complaints

The total escalated complaints were higher in September than the year-to-date average. This is likely due to an increase of new, smaller encampments throughout the City that became visible after the larger, entrenched encampments were issued notice.

#### Cleaning and Maintenance

Parks Section staff continue to take direction from the Encampment Coordination team on sites where encampment-related garbage and/or debris require cleaning. This includes cleaning of abandoned sites, as well as proactively working with individuals at compliant and non-compliant sites to provide ongoing garbage pickup and ensure that sites are maintained on an ongoing basis. In September the number of sites cleaned by Parks Section staff is consistent with previous months.

#### 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

**SUBJECT: Encampment Response Update – September 2023 (HSC23066(a)) (City Wide) - Page 7 of 9**

and people with lived experience, and transparency regarding the City's approach to encampment response.

Indicator	Category of Measurement	Sept 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Sept 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	897	799	713	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	77	69	84	55
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	203	53	81	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	57	106	81	47

**SUBJECT: Encampment Response Update – September 2023 (HSC23066(a)) (City Wide) - Page 8 of 9**

Indicator	Category of Measurement	Sept 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Sept 2022
Number of interactions where individuals received support (from HFSO) with their housing needs per month	Support housing-related needs of individuals living in encampments	365	183	200	100
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on public property	Volume of Escalated complaints	28	36	18	N/A
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on private property	Volume of Escalated complaints	6	11	7	N/A
Total number of Trespass Notices issued on public property	Response type to escalated complaint	75	137	99	33
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	3	N/A

---

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.



**SUBJECT: Encampment Response Update – September 2023 (HSC23066(a)) (City Wide) - Page 9 of 9**

---

Indicator	Category of Measurement	Sept 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	Sept 2022
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
Number of encampment sites cleaned and/or maintained by Parks Section staff or a designated contractor	Park cleaning and maintenance	87	94	74	81

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](mailto:Danielle.Blake@hamilton.ca).

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

N/A