



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT**  
**Housing Services Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	November 20, 2024
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Reducing Homelessness and Managing Encampments (Report HSC24027(d)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Rob Mastroianni, 905-546-2424 X 8035 Al Fletcher, 905-546-2424 x4711
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Michelle Baird, 905-546-2424 X 4860 Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	<i>Michelle Baird</i>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (a) That Council approve the discontinuation of the following annualized seasonal programs and the redirection of funds to support initiatives as outlined in the recommendations within Report HSC24027(d):
  - (i) The operation of one Hamilton Transit warming bus, along with on-site support staff, initially approved in the 2024 Budget at a cost of \$150,000 and \$67,550, respectively;
  - (ii) The additional operating hours at three designated recreation facilities on statutory holidays and other days they are regularly closed, initially approved in the 2024 Budget at a cost of \$103,660;
  - (iii) The extended operating hours at the Hamilton Public Library (HPL) Central Location, initially approved in the 2024 Budget at a cost of \$10,070.

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- (b) That Council approve annualized funding to create 45 permanent emergency shelter beds (35 at Mission Services and 10 at the Salvation Army) serving men and gender-diverse individuals, operating twelve months of the year, at an approximate cost of \$1,302,535, effective December 1, 2024, (annualized cost of \$1,202,340) to be funded as follows:
  - (i) For the period of December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024: \$100,195 be funded from in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);
  - (ii) For the period of January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025: \$300,585 be funded first at approximately \$166,450 from the 2025 in year savings from the approval of recommendation a) and the remaining \$134,135 be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve # 110046;
  - (iii) For the period of April 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025: \$901,755 to be referred to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget for deliberation and approval.
  
- (c) That Council approve an additional 25 permanent evening drop-in spaces at Mission Services, After Hours Resource Outpost & Drop-In Space, serving all genders, at an approximate cost of \$160,875, effective December 1, 2024, (annualized cost of \$128,700) to be funded as follows:
  - (i) For the period of December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024: \$32,175 be funded from in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);
  - (ii) For the period of January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025: \$96,525 be funded from the 2025 in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);
  - (iii) For the period of December 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025: \$32,175 to be referred to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget for deliberation and approval.
  
- (d) That Council approve a one-time additional capital investment of \$88,150 to address a capital shortfall at Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), as previously approved by Council on September 25, 2024, for the creation of 20 temporary shelter bed spaces, to be funded as follows:
  - (i) For the period of December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024: \$21,500 be funded from in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);
  - (ii) For the period of January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025: \$66,650 be funded from the 2025 in-year savings be funded from in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);

- (e) That Council approve the conversion of one Housing Services Division Clerk position to a Housing Services Case Aide, partially funded through the Ontario Works cost-sharing agreement, with net required cost of \$6,615 to be funded as follows:
  - (i) For the period of January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025: \$1,655 be funded from the 2025 in-year savings from the approval of Recommendation (a);
  - (ii) For the period of April 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025: \$4,960 to be referred to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget for deliberation and approval.
- (f) 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 negotiate, enter into, execute and administer any and all contracts, agreements and other documents necessary to implement Recommendations (a) through (f), 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**

The goal of the City of Hamilton is to provide for a housing continuum which includes a “permanent housing roof” for all residents of the city. The City of Hamilton, community organizations and housing providers have not been able to keep up with the increasing demands for housing throughout the entire housing continuum. As a result, the City of Hamilton shelter system is currently operating at capacity limiting the ability of residents to find a permanent roof and supports resulting in increases seen within the encampments throughout the City.

To assist in some limited temporary housing solutions, in September 2023, Council approved Emergency & Community Services Committee Report HSC23012(a), which expanded the Homeless Serving System to provide better access to emergency services through March 2024 with these measures extended under the General Manager’s authority through November 30, 2024. This report seeks to continue these temporary measures through December 2025.

Through this report, staff will provide an analysis and recommendations in the following areas:

### **End Seasonal Response**

With the provision of the recently approved temporary shelter beds, options exist for residents to get out of the cold and into a facility with supportive services. Staff are

recommending reducing the seasonal response items which were approved annually through the Annual Winter Response Strategy report HSC23012(a) and in effect over the past 2023/2024 winter season. The evaluation of the services provided in the 2023/2024 winter found the resulting impact of these uses was not as successful as anticipated. A high number of both clients and program staff reported that funded programs should focus on providing space to warm up/ get out of the cold, safe space to sleep/rest, and provision of meals/snacks services as the highest priorities. Recreation Centres and the warming bus programs were not able to provide all these services as a minimum services standard. As a result, staff are recommending the discontinuation of the use of the warming bus, recreation centres and extended hours at the library.

Through the savings from the ending of these services, staff are recommending the funding be reallocated to the provision of 45 additional permanent shelter beds as outlined in Recommendation (b) of Report HSC24077(d).

### **Permanent System Programming Initiatives**

Based on the temporary/seasonal system program initiatives approved within the July 8, 2024, Report HSC23012(c), which are currently operating at capacity, staff are recommending these initiatives be made permanent until housing needs are fulfilled in other actions:

- Making 45 temporary shelter beds permanent options within the homeless serving system

The implementation of the above is \$1.202M in annual operating and \$88K in one- time capital costs.

### **Temporary Shelter Bed Capacity Increases**

- Within Report HSC24027(b)/FCS24028/PED24162, approved by Council on September 25, 2024, Council approved funding for the Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA) for the provision of 20 temporary shelter beds.
- During the drafting of the report an updated capital costs quote for the required facility renovations to implement the 20 beds resulted in an increase from \$70,000 to \$158,150 which was missed due to timing of the report.
- An additional \$88,150 in one-time capital investment is required.

### **Position Reclassification**

- To better serve the residents within the new temporary shelter beds, Housing Services Division is seeking to reclassify an existing funded Housing Services Clerk position to a Housing Services Case Aide position.

- As this is a change from a grade F to a grade H, two pay grades between positions, the reclassification requires council approval.
- The total financial impact of the reclassification is \$13,220, with 50% to be funded through the Ontario Works cost-sharing agreement, and the remaining \$6,610 as the net impact.

**Alternatives for Consideration – see page 11**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:**

Spending for the period of December 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 totals \$153,870 to be fully funded from the discontinuation of \$331,280 in saving from Winter Response Strategy, as per recommendation a) of Report HSC24027(d). This includes recommendations: (b)(i) \$100,195 for additional permanent emergency shelter beds at Mission Services and the Salvation Army; (c)(i) \$32,175 for additional permanent evening drop in spaces at Mission Services; and (d)(i) \$21,500 one-time capital investment in YWCA.

Spending for the period of January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025 totals \$465,415. This will be partially funded from the discontinuation of \$331,280 in savings from the Winter Response Strategy as per recommendation a) of Report HSC24027(d) and the remaining \$134,135 will be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve, #110046. The total spend of \$465,415 includes recommendations: (b)(ii) \$300,585 for additional permanent emergency shelter beds at Mission Services and the Salvation Army; (c)(ii) \$96,525 for additional permanent evening drop in spaces at Mission Services; (d)(ii) \$66,650 in one-time capital investment in the YWCA; and (e)(i) \$1,655 for additional staffing costs.

Spending for the period of April 1, 2025 to December 31 2025 totals \$938,890 which is being referred to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget. This includes recommendations: (b)(iii) \$901,755 for additional permanent emergency shelter beds at Mission Services and the Salvation Army; (c)(iii) \$32,175 for additional permanent evening drop in spaces at Mission Services; and (e)(ii) \$4,960 for additional staffing costs.

The total annualized cost of \$1.338M is offset by the savings from the discontinuation of the Winter Response Strategy of \$331,280 leaving a net levy impact of approximately \$1.0M.

This results in a levy rate increase of approximately 0.08%.

**Staffing:** Recommendation (h) will result in a pay grade change of two (2) levels, from a Housing Services Clerk (grade F) to a Housing Services Case Aide (grade H).

**Legal:** Legal Services support is needed for contract development.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

On September 13, 2023, Council approved that staff implement a Homeless Serving System Expansion Strategy, from December 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, through Emergency & Community Services report HSC23012(a) to support vulnerable individuals within the homelessness serving system. This was the first time that enhanced services were provided daily, regardless of the cold alerts, from December 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

On March 26, 2024, staff provided Communication Update #4 Regarding the 2023-2024 Expansion Strategy communicating that in recognition of the continued need for service and ongoing capacity pressures within the homelessness serving system, a temporary extension of services had been approved by the General Manager, from April 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This was facilitated by extending existing contracts within General Manager's delegated authority, for a total expenditure of \$2,460,070.

On June 19, 2024, staff provided a Recommendation Report Reducing Homelessness and Managing Encampments (HSC24027(a)) where Council approved enhancements to the homeless-serving system and a commitment to report back with the results of a Call for Information on the feasibility and costs associated to create new shelter beds with 25% being pet friendly, in the following bed numbers: Men's singles: 110, Women's singles: 50, Couple's: 55, in addition to other additions and extensions to the Homeless Serving Sector.

On August 6, 2024, Mayor Horwath issued a Mayoral Directive for staff to undertake research respecting options for the manufacture and installation of temporary shelter structures within Hamilton including costs, identification of funding sources, potential vendors, and potential sites.

On August 12, 2024, staff responded to a Motion by providing Analysis of Sanctioned Site Models Information Report (HSC24031) sharing a summary of the results of a previously completed jurisdictional scan and operating model analysis of sanctioned site options.

On September 25, 2024, Council approved Reducing Homelessness and Managing Encampments (Report HSC24027(b)/FCS24028/PED24162) which approved the provision of 192 temporary shelter beds within existing facilities and the creation of an 80-person temporary outdoor shelter.

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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.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

N/A

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

City staff have solicited advice, experience, and information from various service providers internal to the City, as well as external partners to determine how to best leverage resources available. This includes the Hamilton Public Library Board, Hamilton Street Railway, City of Hamilton Recreation Division, CityHousing Hamilton, shelter and drop-in providers, front-line staff at partner organizations, and people with lived and living experience of City programs. This included a survey of staff members working in emergency expanded services and the clients using them for a total of 140 clients, and 169 staff and volunteers.

Staff have also formally connected with service partners in an urgent Call for Applications for immediate expansion of services, as well as the ongoing Call for Information to inform the capital and operating costs associated with permanent system expansion.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Staff are aware of a growing number of individuals living in encampments, and that the current capacity of the homeless serving system is not sufficient to resolve these instances. While the solution to homelessness continues to be housing, staff are recommending a permanent expansion to the system to address lack of capacity and prepare for City expansion over the coming decades.

Through the September 25, 2024 Council approval an updated costing from YWCA was provided but not included within the report due to timing. This report seeks to approve the increased costs to reflect the YWCA estimated costs.

The above shelter spaces and drop-in programs are critical to bringing clients inside, however enhancements to program offerings are an important tool in supporting clients in their journey towards permanent housing. With the council approved temporary shelter beds coming on stream, and some limited opportunities for drop in spaces, staff feel there are options for residents to get inside during adverse weather/temperature situations thus not requiring all seasonal locations/services to continue. As many of these services were annualized in the budget, staff are recommending the reallocation of these funds to the other permanent enhancements recommended within this report.

Staff did a comprehensive evaluation of the 2023-2024 seasonal programs that were approved. In this evaluation staff looked at both qualitative and quantitative data that looked at client at staff feedback, a review of daily service usage data and information

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on overall project coordination. The warming bus was not well-suited to have clients rotate on and off and both recreational centres and the warming bus programs did not provide what both clients and staff felt were essential to a winter response program beyond a space to warm up / get out of the cold, which was a safe space to rest / sleep, and provides meals / snacks.

Service demand for recreational centres located outside of the downtown core or neighbouring wards to offer extended hours as part of a winter response program was extremely low and Hamilton Public Library was only open as a winter response program during statutory holidays and cold alerts. Based on this feedback and analysis an alternative program model that can have greater impact and better meet the needs of clients than the current Recreational Centres and the Warming Bus was recommended.

Within the Homelessness & Housing Supports team, two (2) permanent FTE Housing Services Clerk positions exist and funded through OW Cost sharing agreement. With the changes demand for support and services to better meet the need of individuals and families accessing the homelessness system overall, staff are recommending one (1) of the Housing Services Clerk positions be converted to a Housing Services Case Aide. The Housing Services Case Aide will support a multi-disciplinary team which serves individuals through the housing continuum, by offering intensive case management and housing focused supports. This position will better complement the staff team and enhance case management, referrals, and access to social assistance for precariously housed and unhoused individuals.

Due to recent staff movement, this position is currently vacant so there is no direct impact on an existing staff person, making it an ideal time to proceed with this conversion.

#### **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

N/A

#### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

N/A