



City of Hamilton Report for Information

To: Mayor and Members
General Issues Committee

Date: March 19, 2025

Report No: HSC25006

Subject/Title: Everyone Counts 2024 – Canada’s National Point in Time Count: Hamilton Results

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

- 1) That Report HSC25006 respecting Everyone Counts 2024 – Canada’s National Point in Time Count: Hamilton Results and attached appendices **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to update Council on the outcomes from the 2024 Point in Time Count which was conducted in November 2024.
- The City and Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership collaborated to administer and analyse results of the Point in Time Count.
- Completion of the Point in Time Count fulfilled requirements the Federal government’s Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy.

Financial Considerations

Not applicable

Background

From November 4 to 18, 2024 the City of Hamilton participated in Everyone Counts, the fourth nationally coordinated Point-in-Time Count in Canada. This initiative, referred to locally as the Point in Time Connection (PiTC), is a joint planning effort of City of Hamilton’s Housing Services Division and the local Indigenous community through the

Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL). The survey and enumeration data are the result of over 130 staff from 21 housing and homelessness programs engaging with 807 individuals experiencing homelessness for the 2024 Point in Time Count.

Appendix “A” to Report HSC25006, Point in Time Connection Results 2024, provides detailed results and key findings from the enumeration and the 807 surveys that were completed at emergency shelters, Violence Against Women shelters, drop-in programs, community agencies, and in unsheltered locations. An Indigenous led magnet event was led by the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership and delivered by Indigenous sector staff in Beasley Park on November 8, 2024 to provide an opportunity for Indigenous community members to participate in a more culturally safe and appropriate environment.

The 2024 Point in Time Connection complements existing local efforts to collect and report on key data on the state of homelessness to inform decisions aimed at preventing and ending homelessness. The initiative is focused on hearing directly from unhoused Hamiltonians to further support evidence-informed action and improvement within Hamilton’s housing and homelessness serving system. The survey included 15 core questions recommended by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and required by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, as well as several of the sub-set questions from the same source. The questions asked about demographic information, causes of most recent housing loss, support needs, and barriers to finding housing. The full survey can be found in Appendix “A” to Report HSC25006 - Point in Time Connection Results 2024.

Survey participation was voluntary, and clients were explicitly informed that non-participation would not impact the services received from the program through the consent process. Clients invited to participate in the survey were offered a \$15 gift card as an honorarium for participating.

Between Point in Time Connection initiatives, the Housing Services Division has worked with community partners to strengthen local reporting on key data related to the state of homelessness and actions towards preventing and ending it. As a part of these broader efforts, the Point in Time Connection remains a valuable tool to further support evidence-informed action and improvement within Hamilton’s Housing and Homelessness Serving System.

Indigenous Analysis

In keeping with the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty, as directed by the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (ICAB), the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership led the analysis of Indigenous respondent data. The City of Hamilton will not use this data without the approval of the Indigenous Community Advisory Board. The analysis of the Indigenous data is attached as Appendix “B” to Report HSC25006 - 2024 Point in Time Count Indigenous Responses.

Housing Services Division continues to prioritize collaborative work with local Indigenous leadership to develop connections to housing and supports that are culturally

appropriate, rooted in the spirit and actions of reconciliation that recognize the values of autonomy and self-determination.

Analysis

Due to a variety of factors, such as changes in services available, population changes, and adjustments to definitions, comparison and analysis of detailed results across multiple Point in Time Connection initiatives remains a challenge. However, detailed analysis has been completed of current findings, and some notable changes and consistencies were found between the results from the 2021 and 2024 surveys.

Survey results continue to demonstrate that homelessness is exacerbated by intersecting challenges and individuals experiencing homelessness have diverse identities and histories. Key findings have been included below, and in-depth information on the survey results and recommendations can be found in Appendix “A” to this report.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

Overall, the survey responses align with our existing knowledge of the state of homelessness in Hamilton and the key recommendations below are consistent with initiatives which are in progress or a recognized need.

- **Key Finding #1:** On the night of November 4, 2024, 1216 unique individuals were identified as homeless in the City of Hamilton represents a 31% increase from the previous Point in Time Connection in 2021 which recorded a total of 927 individuals. The reasons for this increase are complex and include an overall increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness as well as a more successful Point in Time Connection process which resulted in our enumeration more accurately reflecting the status of homelessness in Hamilton.
- **Key Finding #2:** Many individuals continue to inflow into homelessness and are newly experiencing homelessness. 26% of respondents identified being homeless for 1-3 months in the past year. 33% of respondents reported being between the ages of 16-24 when they first experienced homelessness. There is an ongoing need for programs that offer housing stability, homelessness prevention, and early intervention supports.
- **Key Finding #3:** A significant proportion of our homeless population are identified as recently, or throughout the year, living unsheltered or in encampments and not accessing emergency shelters. A higher proportion of survey respondent staying in encampments at the time of the survey (6% in 2021 to 20% in 2024). Ongoing efforts to prevent homelessness, expand the shelter system capacity and support the quality and safety of local programs should be continued.
- **Key Finding #4:** Indigenous people continue to be overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in the city of Hamilton. The proportion of survey respondents identified as Indigenous or as having Indigenous ancestry is

almost unchanged from the results of the 2021 Point in Time Connection (23% in 2021, 24% in 2024). There remains a clear need to develop and provide culturally appropriate supports to address Indigenous homelessness.

- **Key Finding #5:** In addition to those who identify as Indigenous, those who speak neither English or French, those who identify as a member of a racialized group, and those who are not Canadian citizens are also overrepresented. In addition to broad population-based approaches, efforts to support targeted and culturally appropriate programming should continue.
- **Key Finding #6:** Many individuals experiencing homeless rely on income sources provided by different levels of government yet also identify income and cost reasons for losing housing and barriers to housing. Insufficient income continued to be the most common reason most recent housing loss (24% in 2021, 22% in 2024), and many survey respondents also noted financial challenges (high rents and low income) as barriers to finding housing. Efforts to advocate for increases to assistance rates and provide support programs that aim to improve access to income and benefits (i.e. income support applications, tax filing supports) should be continued.

Key Finding #7: Many individuals are experiencing chronic homelessness and/or have complex needs. Higher proportion of survey respondent reporting being homeless for every day of the past year (35% in 2021 to 45% in 2024). The City of Hamilton should continue to coordinate services across systems and sectors locally and build relationships across sectors.

- **Key Finding #8:** The proportion of survey respondents who arrived in Hamilton within the last 12 months did not significantly change from the results of the 2021 Point in Time Connection (21% 2021, 24% 2024). The most frequent response to the length of time in Hamilton remained “always been here” (36% in 2021, 37% in 2024), followed by 5+ years (31% 2021, 24% in 2024). The 2024 survey included a new question about reasons for moving to Hamilton. Responses to this question found a higher proportion of respondents who have been in Hamilton for 12 months or less reported that they came here to access emergency shelters compared to respondents who have been in the Hamilton for more than one year. Efforts to coordinate service availability across neighbouring communities should be continued, as well as provincial and federal counterparts to ensure funding reflects population growth in Hamilton.

Methods

The City of Hamilton managed the data collection methods, including enumeration processes and templates, technical survey set up, surveyor training, surveyor administrative support, overall data management and overall results analysis.

Several changes to enumeration and survey methods initiated for the 2021 Point in Time Connection were continued in 2024 due to their impact on coordinating a successful project. Additional improvements implemented for 2024 included:

- holding information sessions for people experiencing homelessness to learn about the project and how they can participate in advance of the survey period starting,
- city staff offered and attended two sites to complete surveys to programs that were struggling to meet targets, and
- providing additional time specifically for engaging with individuals experience unsheltered homelessness.

The Indigenous Magnet Event and the focus on data collection from individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness were highly successful in reaching these targeted and priority populations in 2024.

Next Steps

Once this report is received by City Council, Housing Services Division will report back on the Point in Time Connection findings to sector leadership and people experiencing homelessness through tables including, but not limited to the

- Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Planning Group, including CHIL;
- Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative;
- the Street Youth Planning Collaborative;
- the Men’s Emergency Services Coordination Committee; and
- the Emergency Shelter Coordination Table.

In addition, an infographic of key findings to be posted in emergency shelters, violence against women shelters, indigenous service sites, and drop-in services to ensure that people who participated in the survey can learn about the project findings. Through this ongoing engagement and collaboration, it is our goal to continue to use the Point in Time Connection results and further analysis to ensure that recommendations on system enhancements are evidence based.

Alternatives

Not applicable

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This recommendation will improve the City of Hamilton’s ability to respond to the priority of Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods: 2.1. Increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing and reduce chronic homelessness. The Point in Time Connection data enhances our ability to develop appropriate and effective interventions to meet Hamilton’s unique community needs related to the demographics of people experiencing homelessness and the barriers faced when attempting to exit homelessness.

Previous Reports Submitted

- [HSC22021: 2021 Point in Time Connection Results](#)

Consultation

Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership

Emergency Shelter Coordination Table

Street Youth Planning Collaborative

Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix “A”: Point in Time Connection Results 2024

Appendix “B”: 2024 Point in Time Count Indigenous Responses

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