Council Direction:
Not applicable

Information:
The intent of this information report is to provide an update on the Snow Angels Program.

Background

- In December 2005, council approved a snow removal program that would later be called the Snow Angels Program. The program was intended to assist low-income seniors and the disabled with snow removal in situations where they were either unable to do the work themselves or unable to obtain assistance from family members or others.

- In January 2006, the City of Hamilton signed a Letter of Agreement with Volunteer Hamilton to administer the program. Administration included marketing the program, assessing eligibility of applicants, recruiting volunteers for snow removal, and matching volunteers with eligible applicants.

- In November 2008, council approved the program to be an ongoing, annual commitment and requested that updates regarding the program’s impact be provided to the Emergency and Community Services Committee.
In May 2009, the Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division completed a program evaluation that was presented to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on August 20, 2009, as an appendix to report ECS08054(a). The evaluation concluded that the investment in the program would continue to build capacity for increasing volunteerism in the community.

**Update**

In the 2010/2011 winter season, the City of Hamilton experienced twice as many snow events (12) as the previous year (6). The Snow Angels program also experienced a significant increase in both the number of people calling to inquire about the program and the number of applicants to the program.

As indicated in Figure 1 below, both the overall demand for the program has increased each year and the number of clients served by the program (matched with a volunteer).

![Matched and Unmatched Clients](image)

**Figure 1**

Volunteer Hamilton has increased its volunteer recruitment and retention efforts to try to keep pace with the increased demand. The total number of active volunteers has nearly doubled since 2008/2009. In 2010/2011, Volunteer Hamilton was able to retain 96% of their volunteers from the previous year. Figure 2 below shows the increase in volunteers over the past three years.
Despite Volunteer Hamilton’s efforts to increase the numbers of volunteers, the demand continues to challenge the program’s capacity. Figure 3 below shows a comparison of the demand for and capacity of the program over the past three years.
Conclusion

The Snow Angels program is the only program of its kind in the community. While there are other organizations in the community offering low-cost alternatives to the private/for-profit snow removal services, none offer a free, volunteer-driven service to those most vulnerable in our community. The chart below compares the alternatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Cost and Payor</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph’s Home Care</td>
<td>- Seniors and adults with disabilities living independently in their own homes or apartments</td>
<td>- $24 per hour (one hour minimum requirement) - Paid for by the client</td>
<td>- None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Creek Senior Outreach Services (SC SOS)</td>
<td>- Seniors (age 60 or older), and People with Disabilities. - Must be a resident of the former city of Stoney Creek.</td>
<td>- $10 to $30 per snow event paid for by the client - Cost of travel and gas reimbursed to subcontractor by SC SOS</td>
<td>- Size of job and location (travel time from providers home base)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private, for-profit, Snow Removal Companies</td>
<td>- None</td>
<td>- $25 to $40 or more per snow event, or - $200 to $400 per season, or - Combination of a per season rate and a per event rate - All costs are paid for by the client</td>
<td>- Size of job and location (travel time from providers home base) - Number of clients in a given neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on last year’s total of 238 clients served on 12 snow events, the cost to administer the Snow Angels program for each snow event was $35 per client.

The quality of Snow Angels volunteers is evident in the fact that snow was removed within 24 hours in 99% of the snow events and Volunteer Hamilton has registered no complaints from service recipients in the past two years.

Volunteers from high schools, Mohawk College, McMaster University, and elsewhere in the community participated in the program. As well, in February/2011 a team of volunteers from Katimavik, a Canada-wide community service exchange program for youth, participated in the program after a particularly heavy snow event.
As indicated in report ECS08054 (a), the Snow Angels program:

- Creates a sense of community and neighbourhood by encouraging direct civic involvement through service to neighbours
- Engages volunteers in meaningful service ensuring that those less fortunate in our community have access to their community
- Contributes to the reputation of the City of Hamilton as a city that cares.