RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the City of Hamilton enter into a Letter of Agreement with Volunteer Hamilton, to continue to provide the Hamilton Snow Angels Program, at a cost not to exceed $110,000, for the winter of 2008/09 to be funded from the 2009 Departmental Operating Budget.

(b) That approval of the Hamilton Snow Angels Program be an ongoing, annual commitment and that updates be provided to the Emergency and Community Services Committee as and when required.

(c) That the General Manager, Community Services Department, be authorized and directed to execute the Letter of Agreement, between the City of Hamilton and Volunteer Hamilton, for continuation of the Hamilton Snow Angels Program for the winter of 2008/09, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Joe-Anne Priel,
General Manager
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Since January 2006, the City of Hamilton has funded the Hamilton Snow Angels Program (refer to Reports PW03130(a)/PD03226(a), SPH05048/PW05152 and SPH05048(a)); a program that assists low-income seniors, age 65 and older and/or low-
income persons with disabilities who reside in Hamilton (with the exception of Ancaster), with the removal of snow from sidewalks, windrows and paths to doors.

Volunteer Hamilton commenced delivery of the Hamilton Snow Angels Program, for the City of Hamilton, in the winter of 2005/06. At the beginning of 2008, the Program completed its third and busiest year of operation. The first two winters were very mild with minimal snow fall (only one major snow event occurred on February 13-14, 2007). In contrast, the winter of 2007/08 featured several major snow events.

Staff is recommending that Council approve the continuation of the Hamilton Snow Angels Program with Volunteer Hamilton for the winter of 2008/09 and ongoing.

BACKGROUND:

Based on the Sidewalk Snow Clearing – Harmonization and Enforcement Report (PW03130a/PD03226a) and the Residential Snow Removal Program Implementation Report (SPH05048/PW05152), a snow removal program for low-income seniors or those having a physical disability was implemented in January 2006.

The program, now called the “Hamilton Snow Angels Program”, recruits volunteers to assist low-income seniors, age 65 and older and/or low-income persons with disabilities who reside in Hamilton (with the exception of Ancaster) with the removal of snow from sidewalks, windrows and paths to doors. Volunteer Hamilton delivered the Program during the 2005/06 winter and in August 2006 Council approved the continuation of this arrangement for the 2007/08 winter.

The City of Hamilton and Volunteer Hamilton entered into a Letter of Agreement, which set out the following:

1. Funding
   To a maximum of $100,200 issued in instalments, based on providing required documentation (e.g. statistics, financial statement, annual report, insurance, and budget reports on actual expenses).

2. Application Process¹
   Determination of eligibility for the Hamilton Snow Angels Program by confirming with applicants that:
   - they reside on and are responsible for, as owners or tenants, the property where snow is to be removed;
   - they do not share the property with others who are able to remove snow;
   - if 65 years of age or older, they currently receive the Seniors Tax Credit;
   - if they have a disability, their:

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¹ [http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/svc_snowangels.php](http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/svc_snowangels.php)
disability is documented (e.g. an Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) cheque stub, a wheelchair parking pass or a doctor’s note, regardless of age); o financial eligibility (combined gross income of the house owner and spouse is $30,170 or less); and, o liquid assets are less than $5,000 for an individual and less than $7,500 for a couple.

Volunteer Hamilton has agreed to develop and maintain a system to receive, grant or deny, and track applications for the Hamilton Snow Angels Program.

3. Provision of Service
• Volunteers are to be fourteen (14) years of age or older; volunteers, from fourteen (14) years of age to eighteen (18) years of age inclusive, are to be accompanied by a second volunteer when removing snow;
• To be a volunteer each applicant must supply at least two references to be verified by Volunteer Hamilton and a Criminal Reference Check from Hamilton Police Services;
• Upon their application being accepted by Volunteer Hamilton, volunteers must sign a Volunteer Agreement and a waiver of liability, with Volunteer Hamilton, and are required to review the safety tip sheet provided by Volunteer Hamilton;
• Volunteers are to use only their own snow removal equipment and not that of a client’s;
• Volunteers are not to have any direct contact with clients;
• Volunteers must complete an assignment card, which is to be left in each client’s mailbox, indicating the volunteer’s first name only, their commitment to the Hamilton Snow Angels Program and the approximate timing of snow removal after a snow event; and,
• Removal of snow must be completed within 24-hours of the end of a snow event.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Program Outcomes from 2007/08
During the implementation of the Snow Angels Program in 2005/06 and 2006/07, the promotion of the Program was directed at approximately 1,500 to 2,000 potentially eligible clients. There was very minimal snowfall during both of those winters and staff believes that this resulted in fewer applications for the program. The increase in snow occurrences in 2007/08 presented many challenges for the Snow Angels Program; applications increased by more than 300% over 2006/07. Unfortunately, the number of approved Snow Angels Volunteers fell short of the demand for service.

2 Amount is consistent with the 2008 Senior Tax Rebate Program.
3 “Feasibility of a Snow and Ice Removal Program” consultant report was completed by Lura Consulting in September 2005.
The following chart shows the numbers of approved applicants, volunteers and matches between the two for the last three winters; with last year’s shortfall shown by the white bars:

![Chart showing numbers of approved applicants, volunteers, and matches between 2005/06 and 2007/08]

The following is an overview of some the numbers for the 2007/08 winter:

- There were 64 Snow Angels Program volunteers\(^4\); however, only 51 were available for active service. Thirteen (13) of the new recruited volunteers did not follow through after their initial orientation; most cited reason was “no time”, some found the work too onerous and two (2) moved away.
- There were 309 applications approved for service\(^5\) or 74% of the total applications received.
- 125 (40%) of approved applicants were matched with a Snow Angels Program volunteer. Problem with “no matches” was due to lack of Snow Angels in the applicants’ neighbourhood and also the low number of registered Snow Angels available.
- 182 (59%) of the approved applicants where unmatched.
- 271 calls were received (inquiring about volunteering or receiving services).
- Highest number of requests was received in November, December and February.
- There were 16 days when snow clearing was required.

In addition to harsher weather, promotion of the Snow Angels Program was a major contributor to the increase in applications. The Strategic Services Division of the Community Services Department was instrumental in developing many promotional materials. Attached, as Appendix A to Report ECS08054, is the 2007/08 Snow Angels Snow Removal Program – Communication Plan Overview. An evaluation of the

\(^4\) 53 new volunteers recruited in 2007/08, 11 returned from the 2006/07 winter season.
\(^5\) A total of 416 applications received for service: 107 applicants were found to be not eligible; 66 were renewals from the previous winter.
methods by which people heard about the Snow Angels Program was completed and the top five were:

1. The Hamilton Spectator;
2. Word of Mouth (W.O.M.);
3. City of Hamilton (includes City Hall and City Councillors (websites, e-newsletters, etc.);
4. CHTV; and,
5. Volunteer Hamilton’s website.

The following chart exhibits “How People Heard about Snow Angels Program”:

Other: includes T.V. (channel unspecified), Hamilton Community Newspapers, health care providers, online (site unspecified), Cable 14, seniors’ organizations, school, CHML, etc.

Volunteer Hamilton has also completed numerous promotional efforts to increase the awareness of the Hamilton Snow Angels Program including:

- In-school presentations, which were targeted at high school students who are required to complete their 40-hour community service requirement (approximately 2,500 grade ten students made aware of the Snow Angels Program).
- Creation of a post-winter evaluation survey for both service recipients and volunteers to collect data that will assist in increasing the Program's effectiveness in future years.
- Advertisements for the Snow Angels Program were placed in local print media and 'spots' were broadcast on CHCH TV and local Cable 14.
- Posters were placed in local fitness clubs, schools, libraries, scout and guide organizations, recreation centres, service clubs and youth organizations.

Over the summer of 2008, a Snow Angels Program evaluation was conducted by Volunteer Hamilton. Volunteers, and both matched and unmatched service recipients completed surveys via email, telephone interviews and a small number of respondents
mailed in their responses through Canada Post. Overall, the matched recipients rated the service as good and 86% renewed their application for service.

In preparation for the 2008/09 winter season, promotion of the Snow Angels Program is underway with advertisements in the Hamilton Community News Annual Guide, in-school presentations and advertisements to Grade 10 Secondary School students along with advertisements directed to Snow Angels Volunteers. Early advertisement and engagement of volunteers is necessary and essential for the continuation of the Snow Angels Program. Evaluation shall continue to take place over the course of the Snow Angels season. Caller and e-mail tracking will evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment campaign and awareness campaign. At the end of the season, program questionnaires, will be used to evaluate the Program’s progress, assess need for policy and procedure changes and possible program enhancements.

Based on the previous review of alternative services contained in staff report (SPH05048), it is recommended that this service delivery model be continued.

Additional time is required to fully realize the benefits of the Snow Angels Program. In doing so, it is recognized that more community engagement is required to increase the number of volunteers.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The following are alternatives and budget implications, which were previously presented in Report SPH05048/PW05152 in December 2005. In order to utilize the best components found in a number of the models reviewed, the consultants had suggested that the Hybrid Model (#5 in Table 1 below) be considered by the City, as it brings together the Hamilton Snow Angels Program concept.

**Table 1:** Summary of Consultant’s Draft Program Models for a City of Hamilton Residential Snow Removal Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
<th>KEY FEATURES</th>
<th>CITY’S RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hamilton Snow Angels Program</td>
<td>✗ Totally volunteer driven ✗ Promotes being a good “neighbour” ✗ Community Development Approach</td>
<td>✗ To promote the program &amp; provide some financial support for awareness materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. City – Non-Profit Partnership</td>
<td>✗ City works with local non-profit providers to link up potential users requiring subsidy for snow removal with community agencies</td>
<td>✗ Provide financial subsidies for those eligible ✗ Liability/monitoring with non-profits to ensure program standards are met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. City Coordinated &amp; Delivered Program</td>
<td>✗ The City coordinates, administers, and delivers the program ✗ Single point of access for</td>
<td>✗ Determine eligibility and coordinate service delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents, which did not renew application indicated that their lawn service provides snow removal, moved or did not want/need the service.
### At the same time, staff from both the Community Services and Public Works Departments reviewed the Consultant’s recommendations and put forward options for the consideration of Council.

Table 2 below summarizes the options, potential costs, and pros and cons for each of the proposed options.

**Table 2:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
<th>FEATURES</th>
<th>CITY COSTS</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Hamilton Snow Angels — Link to non-profits</strong></td>
<td>Program would promote the concept of being a good neighbour and urge citizens to assist their neighbours with snow clearing Would provide linkage to non-profits through the Contact</td>
<td>It is estimated that the City would require an investment of $30,000 for the development and deliver of a communications plan</td>
<td>Totally volunteer driven Community Development Approach— would foster linkages with the Volunteer Centre, local schools etc. Makes use of services that already exist in the non-profit sector for snow clearing for</td>
<td>Demand could exceed the number of volunteers able to assist with snow clearing and the current capacity of non-profits Would require a program enhancement in 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>FEATURES</td>
<td>CITY COSTS</td>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 City Coordinated Program</td>
<td>Centre for those requiring assistance</td>
<td>Eligibility would be determined by a special income case aid position requiring an additional 1.0 full time equivalent at a cost of $59,392. As well, an additional $5,000 would be required for one-time capital investment (computer, work station, telephone etc.)</td>
<td>City would have sole responsibility for determining eligibility</td>
<td>Could have implications for monitoring complaints i.e. cases where contractors have not adequately completed the tasks, or client complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The City would determine eligibility through Public Health &amp; Community Services</td>
<td>There would be a need for a .5 full time equivalent administrator/coordinator at a cost of $30,000</td>
<td>City might be in a better position to meet demand for the service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>City would contract with local non-profit or for-profit contractors to deliver the service</td>
<td>The costs for the actual snow clearing could range from $288,000 (assuming 12 winter storm events) to $360,000 (assuming 15 winter storm events)</td>
<td>Service requests could be mapped to consolidate service delivery and increase efficiency.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service would be delivered on a per request basis dependent upon severity of snow event and client need.</td>
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3. City Wide Sidewalk Clearing Program (Ward 12 exempt) 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES</th>
<th>CITY COSTS</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City would provide sidewalk clearing on all sidewalks in the City of Hamilton</td>
<td>Eligibility would not need to be determined</td>
<td>All sidewalks would be cleared increasing accessibility</td>
<td>Cost prohibitive Option goes beyond the intended target group (seniors and persons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of a city wide program would require at least 5 full time equivalent field staff investigator/supervisor</td>
<td>City can control the quality of the work</td>
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</table>

7 Costs are based on $12.00 per household (area covered -15 meter average frontage/flankage, hours required - 8-hours per day + 2-hours transporting charge for a total of 10-hours per day, equipments costs per hour - $60.00, and total number of properties that could be completed in a day – 50 properties). $12.00 per household X 12 or 15 = $144 to $180 per season. Estimated program cost * 2,000 potential users = $288,000 to $360,000.

8 In comparison to the Program costs associated with Ward 12, a significant increase is clearly identified when accounting for the higher density urbanized neighbourhoods; where most, if not all, properties are fronted with sidewalk infrastructure. In semi-urban/rural neighbourhoods, such as some areas in Ancaster, the sidewalk inventory is sporadic in fashion and only exists in parts of neighbourhoods. However, the cost is charged to all properties in the designated zone or Ward; therefore, reducing the impact or cost per household.

9 Costs are based upon 0.25 cents per linear meter of sidewalk and 2,200 kilometers approximately of inventory city wide. 2,200 kilometers X 1000 meters = 2,200,000 meters X .25 = $550,000 per snow event.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ors and 1 full time contract coordinator or administrator for a cost of $400,000</td>
<td>with disabilities who are unable and can not afford to pay for snow clearing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The costs for the actual snow clearing could range from $6,600,000 (assuming 12 winter storm events) to $8,250,000 (assuming 15 winter storm events)</td>
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</table>

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial:**

The initial winter, 2005/06, of the Snow Angels Program was funded by the Tax Stabilization Reserve (2005 Corporate Surplus). In 2006, the program was approved on an ongoing basis as part of the annual Community Services Departmental budget. Costs have been maintained within the approved budget amounts. For 2009, the departmental budget for the Snow Angels Program will be requested in the amount of $110,000.

This amount represents an allocation for Volunteer Hamilton’s administration costs (salary, materials, volunteer expenses, accommodation expenses and insurance) and amount for market and promotion of the Program (newspaper ads, toques, lure cards, radio announcements, etc.).

**Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendations of Report ECS08054.

**Legal:**

Volunteer Hamilton is a not-for-profit agency and as such, there is no obligation to provide WSIB, as they are exempt. Under its Letter of Agreement with the City of

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Administration of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) programs is supported by “The Employer Classification Manual (ECM)” which describes the 800-plus Classification Units (CUs) used by the WSIB to classify all business activities into approximately 150 rate groups. Volunteer Hamilton has been categorized as Social Service Planning and Advocacy Agencies by application (non-covered) means that the CU includes activities that do not fall under either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2. Employers engaged in these non-covered activities can apply for Schedule 1 coverage. If the WSIB approves the application, the employer’s operations are added to Schedule 1.
Hamilton, Volunteer Hamilton will be required to provide insurance and indemnity requirements that are satisfactory to the City’s Risk Manager.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 states that municipalities must seek the advice of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) whenever the municipality provides services.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Consultation was completed with the following:

- Volunteer Hamilton;
- Community Services Department, Strategic Services Division;
- Public Works Department, Operations and Maintenance Division;
- Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration;
  Commercial/Development/Policy Section, Legal Services and Customer Services, Access and Equity Divisions; and,
- Community Services Department, Social Development and Early Childhood Services Division.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Participation in community life is accessible to all Hamiltonians. Snow Angels promotes a "good" neighbour approach to residential snow clearing for seniors and persons with disabilities

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Human health and safety are protected. Sidewalks are cleared within 24-hours to prevent potential slip and falls.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Investment in Hamilton is enhanced and supported. A small financial investment with a real return by promoting non-profit agencies and volunteerism in the City of Hamilton.
Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes □ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes □ No

Life-long learning is supported. By promoting and funding of the Snow Angels Program it provides the opportunity to residents of Hamilton (secondary and post secondary school students, neighbourhoods and extracurricular groups) an opportunity to teach youth about being a good neighbour.
# 2007-2008 SNOW ANGELS SNOW REMOVAL PROGRAM
## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Activity/Tactic</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential volunteers/service providers – schools</td>
<td>Lure cards / posters / toques - contact school boards to communicate program information and desire to connect with students and faculty - develop schedule of speaking appearances - compile materials for school presentations - give school presentations - distribute toques to recruited/approved volunteers - track interest from students</td>
<td>Volunteers representing the younger demographic, are recruited to assist with the program</td>
<td>Oct 2007– Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential volunteers/service providers</td>
<td>Lure cards / posters - distribute posters and lure cards to area City facilities (i.e. libraries and recreation centres)</td>
<td>Volunteers are recruited through some of the City's existing channels</td>
<td>Oct-Feb 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recipients</td>
<td>Postcards – a leave-behind for volunteers to leave in recipients’ mailboxes to let them know they had been there</td>
<td>Service recipients are able to confirm that a Snow Angels volunteer had provided them with the snow removal service</td>
<td>Dec 2007– Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential volunteers/service providers</td>
<td>Radio – strategic placement of radio spots on CHML and Y108</td>
<td>Potential volunteers are made aware of the program</td>
<td>Feb-Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential volunteers/service providers and recipients</td>
<td>Media relations - piggyback on impending snowfall (“trigger”) - determine photo/video footage opportunity - follow-up with print and broadcast media by telephone - Insert ad and editorial in City's Winter Safety Report (Public Works)</td>
<td>Potential volunteers and service recipients are made aware of the program</td>
<td>Nov 2007– Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and potential volunteers/service providers and recipients</td>
<td>- Electronic – renew domain name <a href="http://www.snowangels.ca">www.snowangels.ca</a> and use in all promotions - Ensure website receives updates as needed</td>
<td>Program has an online presence</td>
<td>Oct 2007– Mar 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Activity/Tactic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Current and potential volunteers/service      | - Internal communications channels (City):  
- Add message to City intranet site ‘enet’  
- Add message to City’s internal electronic newsletter Connections  
- Add message to City website Hot Topics page                                                                 | Internal stakeholders/staff are made aware of the program and the opportunity to support it through volunteerism | Dec 2007–Jan 2008       |
| providers – City staff                        |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                 |                         |
| Current and potential                           | Neighbourhood volunteer recruitment (generic letter inserted into mailboxes in areas where recipients live ‘help someone in your community’)         | Potential volunteers are made aware of the program                                                             | Jan-Feb 2008            |
| providers                                      |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                 |                         |
| n/a                                           | Data capture forms – to be used during telephone calls from potential service recipients and volunteers                                               | Data is collected so it can be compiled, analyzed and used for future program planning                          | Forms in use by Nov 2007  
(Completed forms submitted to City by June 08)                         |

NOTE: HSR bus shelter ads and branded safety vests for Snow Angel volunteers, to be explored in 2009.