TO: Chair and Members
Emergency & Community Services Committee

COMMITTEE DATE: February 10, 2014

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Renewal of Homelessness Partnering Strategy (CES14005) (City Wide)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: City Wide

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SUBMITTED BY: Vicki Woodcox
Acting General Manager
Community and Emergency Services Department

SIGNATURE: 

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized to enter into and execute an Agreement with Service Canada to:

(i) Become the Community Entity for the facilitation and administration of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Program and;
(ii) Execute any further documents or agreements as may be required to give effect to the foregoing, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

(b) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized:

(i) To approve funding for those projects that have been selected through either the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Program Call for Applications or as identified within the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Plan;
(ii) To enter into and execute agreements with the agency(s) responsible for the delivery of those projects and;
(iii) To execute any further documents or agreements, as may be required, to give effect to the foregoing, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

(c) That the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Agreement between the City of Hamilton and Service Canada be effective April 1, 2014 until March 31, 2019.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Service Canada announced in December, 2013 that the City of Hamilton will receive $21,141,270 in Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding. The funding is for five years from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019 and aims to prevent and reduce homelessness in Hamilton. The annualized funding amount is $4,228,254 which is consistent with the annualized amounts from previous iterations. The fourteen-year history of federal homelessness funding has created a considerable legacy of innovative projects in the City and has increased the community’s capacity to provide a coordinated response to homelessness.

Since 1999, Hamilton has received nearly $55 million in federal funding to support local projects to address homelessness. In consultation with a range of community stakeholders and with the advice of a Community Advisory Board, the City has defined priorities and allocated funds to support 195 different projects in the community.

Service Canada requires that a Community Entity administer the program at the local level. The City has served as the Community Entity for the federal homelessness funding since it began. Administration of the program requires the following activities:

- Community planning;
- Ongoing community engagement activities;
- Conducting the Call for Application based on the funding priorities;
- Developing agreements for projects funded through HPS;
- Monitoring projects to ensure that milestones are achieved; and
- Measuring and evaluating community progress.

It is recommended that the City continue in the role of the Community Entity for the HPS funding. An agreement between the City and Service Canada must be signed before the funding may be disbursed to the community beginning April 1, 2014.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC - formerly Human Resources and Skills Development Canada) has identified a significantly different approach for this iteration of HPS funding. Where previously, ESDC gave local communities flexibility within a broader mandate to plan homelessness remediation activities, the federal government is now mandating that 65% of all funding be applied to Housing First initiatives. Housing First is based on the concept that the primary need of a person experiencing homelessness is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues that may affect the person can and should be addressed once housing is obtained. A Housing First approach also provides individual’s with intensive case management supports to address issues that impact a person’s ability to maintain housing. Hamilton has been supporting services with a Housing First approach since 2007 with the inception of the Hostels to Homes Pilot. Currently, there are local HPS projects such as the Transitions to Homes (T2H) and Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) programs that apply Housing First
principles to their service delivery. These projects have demonstrated successful housing outcomes.

Within this new approach, a set of community priorities must be approved to guide local funding decisions. These new priorities will be developed based on:

- The mandate of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy;
- Strategies in the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan;
- A comprehensive overview of the impact of federal homelessness funding since 1999 completed in 2012;
- An asset inventory and needs analysis;
- Consultation with the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group, in its role as the Community Advisory Board for HPS; and,
- Consultation with the broader community.

It is important to note that the Housing Services Division is also planning for the Provincial funding allocation for homelessness through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). It is important that these two funding streams are aligned to achieve the goals of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

The new direction for HPS has a significant impact on local planning. Currently funded projects that meet the new terms and conditions will be extended for one additional year until March 31, 2015 at a cost of $3.5 million. The extension year will provide time for staff to work with the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group to ensure that HPS priorities align with the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and to complete a Call for Applications process for the remaining 4 years of HPS funding. Appendix A to Report CES14005 lists the currently funded HPS projects. Not all project activities will be eligible for a one year extension due to changes in the terms and conditions. One of the most significant changes includes the elimination of health related services and supports as an eligible project expense.

The new HPS approach represents prescriptive targets, strategies and interventions. The significant changes in direction will mean that some projects that are currently receiving HPS funding will no longer be eligible. Unsuccessful proponents for the Call for Applications will be provided with at minimum three months’ advance notice time so they may search for alternative funding or reduce service. While unfortunate, HPS has limited funding and is clearly identified as project funding rather than a source of sustainable and ongoing program funding.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable
FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:
The City will receive $21,141,270 in HPS funding for the five-year period (April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2019). A flat rate of 15% will be allocated to the administration of the program and the balance of the funding will be awarded to community agencies through a Call for Applications process. The City as the Community Entity is tasked with the distribution and reconciliation of funding over the five-year period.

Staffing:
The administration funding for HPS will cover the cost of 6.5 existing FTE’s within the Housing Services Division. These FTE’s are part of the current staff complement in Housing Services Division from prior federally funded homelessness programs.

Specific administrative functions under the HPS program have become even more critical including:

- Data collection and analysis;
- Project monitoring and accountability; and,
- Community planning and ongoing consultation.

Legal:
To ensure that the City complies with the terms of the Administration Agreement; Legal Services will be involved in the review and drafting of any ancillary agreements, as may be required to deliver the HPS program.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

HPS is the federal government’s primary program to address homelessness in Canada. Hamilton is one of 61 designated communities across Canada and the recipient of the third highest amount of federal homelessness funding in Ontario. Hamilton is considered one of the largest designated communities in Canada under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

The federal government began to fund local homelessness projects in 1999, through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). The program has been renewed in two and three year cycles since 1999 and is now called the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The last period of funding will end March 31, 2014. The new HPS iteration (2014-2019) is for five years and represents the longest term since its inception in 1999.

Since the beginning of the federal homelessness funding program in 1999, Hamilton has received nearly $55 million to support local projects to address homelessness and has funded a total of 195 projects in the community since 1999.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications associated with Report CES14005.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

At the request of Service Canada, the Community Advisory Board (also known as the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group) confirmed their support for the City to continue as the Community Entity for the administration of the HPS funding. This endorsement was made at their November 21, 2013 meeting. City staff will conduct a community engagement process that will consist of consultation with internal and external stakeholders as well as a community check-in event. Findings from these consultation activities will help determine local HPS priorities for 2015-2019.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

The HPS aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada. While the overall goal of the program remains unchanged, the mechanisms to achieve that goal are different than previous iterations of the program.

Changes from Previous HPS Iteration

The HPS program focus is Housing First. The Housing First approach supports the idea that people are better able to pursue their personal goals towards employment, treatment, health and well-being when they are first placed in stable housing. It is a more holistic approach that includes providing the supports and services that a person needs to become self-sufficient, where possible.

Service Canada has mandated that 65% of Hamilton's HPS allocation must be allocated to Housing First projects effective April 1, 2015. The remaining 35% may be allocated to homelessness prevention projects.

Service Canada has indicated that HPS funding must demonstrate a clear and significant reduction in homelessness in local communities. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, a couple of significant elements of Hamilton's current approach must change in the following ways:

1. **Need must be prioritized.** In the past, people experiencing homelessness and risk of homelessness were supported in HPS funded agencies largely on a first come, first served basis. In the new iteration, people experiencing homelessness both episodically and chronically must be prioritized. Service Canada expects that 90% of the episodically and chronically homeless individuals will be supported before services move on to support other individuals experiencing homelessness.
Service Canada defines ‘episodic’ homelessness as people who are currently homeless and who have had three or more incidents of staying in shelter or on the streets with at least a thirty-day break between incidents within a one-year period.

Service Canada defines ‘chronic’ homelessness as people who are currently homeless and who have been for at least six months within a one-year period.

2. Services must be integrated. It is well known that health, addictions, underemployment, low social cohesion and other issues intersect with a person’s homelessness experience. For many people who are experiencing episodic or chronic homelessness, a number of different supports may be needed. In order to be successful the supports listed above should work together to achieve the goals of the individual. This is necessary if Hamilton is to achieve the goal of reducing homelessness.

3. Data and monitoring of services must focus on the goal of reducing homelessness. All projects will be required to report on a set of Community Progress Indicators (CPI) as determined by the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat. Data will be collected and analysed in terms of homelessness reduction. Monitoring of projects will focus not only on financial efficacy but also on outcomes related to a reduction in homelessness and housing stability. As the Community Entity, the City of Hamilton will also be required to conduct an annual Point in Time Count, which is a one-day, statistically reliable, count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families in Hamilton. The purpose of the Point in Time Count is to demonstrate a reduction in homelessness over time.

This iteration of HPS funding represents a significant shift in focus for Hamilton. The development of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan has provided a strong framework and will facilitate the transformation of the service system to best meet the needs of people who are facing the complex issue of homelessness. Hamilton has been supporting services with a Housing First approach since 2007, with the Hostels to Homes Pilot. In the last iteration of funding (2011 – 2014), 45% of the funding was dedicated to Housing First projects (which are 20% below the expectation for the 2014 – 2019 iteration). It is important to note that these projects have demonstrated successful outcomes. The majority (74-80%) of program participants retain their housing after 6 months.

City as Community Entity

If the City continues in the role of Community Entity, it will continue to strengthen the City’s role as Service System Manager for housing and homelessness programs. The City has established strong partnership with both Service Canada and service providers...
through participation in planning tables and advisory groups. These relationships facilitate collaborative approaches to homelessness and reduce duplication. Continuation of the City’s role will ensure a smooth transition to the successful implementation of the new HPS iteration of funding. Please see Appendix B to Report CES14005 for a timeline of activities for the new round of HPS funding.

The City of Hamilton has historically allocated 20% of HPS funding to Aboriginal specific initiatives. In 1999, the City of Hamilton established a partnership with the Urban Aboriginal community. The 20% is in acknowledgement that Aboriginal communities face higher rates of poverty and housing insecurity than the general population. Since 2004, the urban Aboriginal community has received distinct HPS Aboriginal Homelessness Funding from the Federal Government in addition to the 20% allocation from the City of Hamilton. The urban Aboriginal community plans for the allocation of HPS funding under the leadership of the Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC) – a collaborative of Aboriginal-serving organizations. The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) has provided support as the Community Entity for the HPS Aboriginal Homelessness Funding stream since January 2008.

A review of the relationship and HPS funding arrangement between the City of Hamilton and the Aboriginal community was conducted in 2013 by Stevanato and Associates. A final report is expected to be completed by February 2014.

**New agreement between the City of Hamilton and Service Canada**

The City has submitted an application to Service Canada to continue as the Community Entity for the HPS funding.

The next step is to sign a new Agreement between the City of Hamilton and Service Canada in order for the additional funding to flow April 1, 2014. The current agreement expires on March 31, 2014. The agreement must be signed. Council approval of the recommendations in Report CES14005 is time sensitive in order to meet federal timelines.

**The Community Advisory Board**

The Community Advisory Board will continue its role through the next iteration of HPS funding. The Community Advisory Board functions are performed by two different groups:

- The Housing and Homelessness Planning Group provides high level policy advice including input into the local HPS priorities. This group is well suited for this role because they spent the last three years supporting the City of Hamilton in developing its 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and understand this as a framework for funding decisions.
• An HPS Proposal Review Team will be established through a recruitment process to review proposals received through the Call for Applications for HPS funding. They are called together, as needed, when a Call for Applications is released.

Extension of funding for existing projects

Existing HPS contracts with service providers are scheduled to end March 31, 2014. Most projects currently receiving HPS funding will be eligible to receive an extension of funding for 12 months. The extension will be contingent on compliance with the new HPS terms and conditions. The extension will ensure that there is no lapse in important local services while new priorities are developed and a Call for Applications is issued. The approximate cost of the 12-month extension is $3.5 million. This will also allow City staff to work with the community to develop local HPS priorities, complete a Call for Applications and provide sufficient notice to currently funded HPS projects that may not continue to receive HPS funding beyond the extension period. Appendix A to Report CES14005 provides a list of projects that are currently receiving HPS funding. The Aboriginal community will plan for the allocation of the 20% funding during the extension year and provide the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services with recommendations.

Development of HPS local priorities

In the past, Service Canada required communities to develop their own local priorities for HPS funding. This time around, Service Canada has identified five priorities from which communities will choose. However, it is important to note that Hamilton must allocate 65% of its funding to Housing First – this is mandated in the HPS Guidelines. Those five priorities include:

1. To reduce homelessness through a Housing First approach.

2. To improve the self-sufficiency of homeless individuals and families and those at imminent risk of homelessness through individualized services.

3. To preserve or increase the capacity of facilities used to address the needs of people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

4. To ensure coordination of resources and leveraging.

5. To improve data collection and use.

The Community Entity (City) will engage the community to determine the amount of funding to be spent on each priority area and how the priority area will be delivered in the Hamilton context. The prioritization exercise will align closely with the work of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.
Call for Applications

A Call for Applications must be conducted to award funding under the new community priorities. It is anticipated that a new Call for Applications will be conducted in the summer of 2014 with funding decisions completed by the end of 2014. New contracts will be developed with the successful applicants. Some projects that are currently receiving funding from HPS may not be successful in the upcoming Call for Applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with at least three months’ notice to search for alternative funding sources or to reduce services. While unfortunate, HPS has limited funding and is clearly identified as project funding rather than a source of sustainable and ongoing program funding.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are no alternatives for consideration for Report CES14005.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1
A Prosperous & Healthy Community
WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective
1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

Strategic Priority #2
Valued & Sustainable Services
WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES14005: HPS Transition Planning Timeline

## 2014 HPS Transition Planning Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January – April 2014</td>
<td>Community Planning Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Approval of Community Plan from Federal Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Call for Applications Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Release of HPS Call for Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>September – November 2014</td>
<td>Call for Application Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>Recommendation of HPS projects to General Manager of Community and Emergency Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>Communication of funding decisions to Proponents of HPS Call for Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – March 2015</td>
<td>Contract development of 2015-19 HPS funded projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1, 2015</td>
<td>2015-2019 HPS project funding begins</td>
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</tbody>
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HPS Projects - 2014/2015 Transition

Please note: This does not include the 20% proportion of the funding for the Aboriginal community – the recommendations for those projects will be provided by the Aboriginal Community Advisory Board to the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2014 HPS Funded Program</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning to Adulthood</td>
<td>Children's Aid Society (CAS)</td>
<td>To successfully transition youth who are in the care of the Children's Aid Society to independent living.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRIDGE Project</td>
<td>Micah House</td>
<td>To provide transitional housing to refugee claimants and to support those residents into long term housing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Housing Support Project</td>
<td>Catholic Children’s Aid Society (and partners)</td>
<td>To provide a continuum of comprehensive and coordinated housing services for at risk, street involved and homeless youth by providing a range of supports that are direct and client centred. To transition youth into housing that paves the way for successful, independent adulthood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trusteeship Program</td>
<td>Good Shepherd Centres</td>
<td>To provide financial management services that help people retain their housing and reduce debt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2014 HPS Funded Program</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Our Sisters (SOS)</td>
<td>Good Shepherd Centres</td>
<td>To provide a comprehensive service system response for women at risk of and experiencing homelessness through a mobile, trauma-informed case management team that will support women in their move from emergency shelters and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters to the most appropriate form of housing that will meet their needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>Good Shepherd Centres</td>
<td>To provide skills to frontline staff working with people experiencing homelessness to enable them to appropriately deal with the complex challenges facing individuals in the shelter system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrections Integrated</td>
<td>The Bridge</td>
<td>Ensure soon to be released individuals from the Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre have access to discharge planning.</td>
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<td>Discharge Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitions to Home (T2H)</td>
<td>Wesley Urban Ministries</td>
<td>To move men from emergency shelters into safe appropriate housing and providing ongoing person-centred case management supports that are mobile and help people to maintain their tenancies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Outreach Initiative</td>
<td>Housing Help Centre</td>
<td>To reduce homelessness by improving housing retention through direct tenant landlord intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminalized Women's Housing</td>
<td>Elizabeth Fry Society</td>
<td>Engage criminalized women or women a risk of criminalization and connect them to services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIP HOP</td>
<td>St. Matthew's House</td>
<td>To prevent homelessness by helping at risk seniors/older adults stabilize and maintain their housing by addressing their health care needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2014 HPS Funded Program</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton - PAWS</td>
<td>Housing Help Centre</td>
<td>To create a practical community wide response to assist individuals with pet companions who are facing homelessness that will prevent them from living on the streets and attain housing stability.</td>
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