SUBJECT: Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (ECS07020) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020, be approved and adopted as the City of Hamilton’s Service System Plan to manage homelessness within the city of Hamilton.

(b) That the thirty-six (36) strategies, which are part of the Strategic Plan, attached as Appendix D to Report ECS07020, be approved.

(c) That staff bring forward any of the strategies that require additional resources or will incur additional costs to Council for approval before implementing.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 1998 Report, of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness, recommended that municipalities be designated as the local Service System Manager for Homelessness. Subsequently, the Province formally assigned the role of Service System Manager for Homelessness (SSM) to municipalities following the release of that 1998 report.
A central element of the City of Hamilton’s role, as SSM, is to engage the community in system planning. The Strategic Plan (the “Plan”) was developed with extensive community consultation and contains thirty-six (36) strategies, which have been designed to engage the entire community in addressing homelessness; to provide a continuum of supportive housing that will help residents achieve their potential; to provide supports that aid residents in obtaining and maintaining housing; to assist those citizens in securing adequate income; and to illustrate how to make use of community resources efficiently and effectively. The Plan sets the framework for community action, and will require the development of an implementation or action plan, which will be led by the Community Services Department, as the SSM.

Therefore, staff is recommending that Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessnessness (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020) be approved and adopted as the City of Hamilton’s three (3) year Service System Plan to manage homelessness within the city of Hamilton.

**BACKGROUND:**

**City of Hamilton as Service System Manager for Homelessness**

The 1998 Report, of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness, recommended that municipalities be designated as the local Service System Manager for Homelessness. Subsequently, the Province formally assigned the role of Service System Manager for Homelessness (SSM) to municipalities following the release of that 1998 report.

Since that role was created, there has been a lack of Provincial direction to municipalities respecting the definition of Service System Management for Homelessness. Guidance has been limited as to the administration of specific programs; such as the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP). The Community Services Department has interpreted the role to include governance, service system management and service delivery. These functions were outlined in several Provincial documents that describe service system management for Ontario Works, Child Care and Social Housing. The service system management function includes planning, resource allocation, accountability and quality assurance. Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessnessness (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020) fulfils a key component of service system management through the development of a planning document that will provide direction for program development and funding decisions. It also provides direction for quality assurance through monitoring and evaluation.

In response to the assignment of this role, an Information Update, dated January 17, 2006, indicated that the Community Services Department was developing a strategic plan for homelessness; the final result being the Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020).
Current Context

This is a crucial point in the fight against homelessness in Hamilton. On Any Given Night: Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton (attached as Appendix B to Report ECS07020) shows the utilization of many services has stabilized in the past few years. It is important to capitalize on this opportunity and continue this trend after struggling with increasing service utilization for many previous years.

Program changes for homelessness are also underway. The Province introduced the CHPP giving municipalities greater flexibility in funding local programs (Report SSC06010, Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, Spring 2006 Update). The federal government has recently announced a new program, the Homelessness Partnerships Strategy, to replace the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI). It is expected that details of the new program will be released shortly.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Development of the Strategic Plan

Everyone Has A Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020) was developed with extensive community consultation. Two advisory committees were established in December 2005 to provide input to the Plan’s development. One internal advisory committee consisted of Community Services Department staff from various programs that serve people experiencing homelessness. The second advisory committee consisted primarily of external representatives of various sectors that assist citizens experiencing homelessness and several City staff members. The full membership of both committees appears in Appendix C to Report ECS07020.

A Homelessness Summit initiated the public phase of the planning process on May 4, 2006. More than ninety (90) people attended the event including representatives from senior levels of government, social service agencies and advocacy organizations. A follow-up internal meeting was held a month later with City staff from programs that serve people experiencing homelessness. These two events provided the foundation for the draft Strategic Plan. Consultations were subsequently conducted with planning tables, community groups and people experiencing homelessness from July to September 2006. The feedback from the consultation was integrated into the document and a Community Check-in was held on September 12, 2006, to verify the contents of the draft Plan.

Overview of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020) is an attempt to engage service providers, advocates, City staff and people experiencing homelessness in the development of a shared aspiration to manage homelessness in Hamilton. The goal is intended to focus on what the community truly desires to achieve rather than
simply reacting to immediate circumstances. “Hamilton is a community where everyone has a home” is the aspiration that emerged. This is a bold vision and accomplishing it will stretch the Community Services Department, the City of Hamilton and the community. This aspiration supports the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction aspiration that Hamilton will be the “best place to raise a child.”

The principles, shown below, were identified to guide how the service system will function:

- Everyone has a right to housing;
- Safe, healthy, inclusive neighbourhoods and communities are key;
- Everyone has a role to play;
- We must be person-centred in our approach; and,
- We will get further through true collaboration.

The Plan also identifies several outcomes, which are high-level, but provide a valuable method to focus the community’s efforts. All programs and activities will contribute to the identified outcomes shown below:

- The entire community is engaged to address homelessness;
- A continuum of affordable housing that helps residents to achieve their potential;
- Increase supports to help people obtain and maintain housing;
- Access to adequate income; and,
- Efficient and effective use of community resources.

Thirty-six (36) strategies have been identified to help achieve these results and are listed in the Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix D to Report ECS07020).

**Consultation Themes**

It is clear that the objective will not be achieved by “doing things the way they’ve always been done”. A consistent message from the meetings and consultations was that to create change “things must be done differently”. Many dedicated individuals and organizations provide invaluable assistance to feed, shelter and support people experiencing homelessness. However, making Hamilton a community where everyone has a home is going to require addressing some tough questions:

- How do our organizational “silos” keep people from leaving homelessness?
- Are our programs effective?
- How can people experiencing homelessness become more involved?

As Service System Manager, the City of Hamilton must be a leader in asking these questions of itself, and in facilitating similar discussions within the community.
Within the consultations, there was recognition that changing the delivery of programs and services for homeless persons will be difficult. It will mean changing business processes, reviewing eligibility rules, building new data systems to communicate between programs, making tough decisions about where to put resources and engaging senior levels of government proactively. The solutions will be complex and difficult to implement, but they are necessary to achieve the outcomes outlined in the Plan.

Collaboration also emerged as an important theme. As a community, we need to create an environment where people and agencies can work together to address homelessness. This will require building trust, creating processes that allow time to develop plans together and communicate openly. It also means developing new partnerships to encourage new perspectives and mobilize vital resources.

Empowerment was also highlighted as a key to bringing about large scale change regarding homelessness in Hamilton. As a community, it is important to empower people who are experiencing homelessness. This means not just asking them what they think about an idea, but inviting them to participate in the solution. It also means empowering individuals and organizations, throughout the community, to become involved in addressing homelessness both in slight and immense ways.

**Implementation**
Following Council’s approval of the Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020), an implementation framework will be developed. The framework will be brought forward to the Emergency & Community Services Committee in the third quarter of 2007.

Careful coordination of the various strategies, engaging stakeholders, assigning City leads, and monitoring progress will be critical to ensuring that the Plan moves forward. It is envisioned that an advisory committee whose mandate would be to focus on providing advice regarding both the implementation of the Plan and effective Service System Management.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Should Council decide not to approve the Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020), the City of Hamilton’s leadership role would be undermined with regard to homelessness issues within our community. This would also leave the Community Services Department without a Service System Management Plan for Homelessness.

The absence of a Council-adopted municipal homelessness strategy, which would document needs and priorities of our homeless citizens, may harm the City’s ability to access available federal and provincial program funding, such as the recently announced Federal Homelessness Partnership Strategy, in the future.
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial and Staffing Implications:

Staff has assessed the implications of the thirty-six (36) strategies contained in the Strategic Plan (attached as Appendix D to Report ECS07020). There are no staffing or financial implications for most of the strategies, as they are either advocacy or co-ordination activities that can be undertaken within existing resources, or they are already accounted for through the affected program/policy areas (e.g. mandated responsibilities like Social Housing). However, a few strategies could have some implications in terms of resources and these are outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Potential Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.5</strong> - Public Health, Building and Licensing, Community Services and Fire Departments work to implement standards for emergency shelters and residential care facilities in conjunction with the Residential Care Facilities By-law.</td>
<td>While MCSS has provided funding for RCF Standards, there may be financial implications for emergency shelters and City staff resources to develop, implement and monitor shelter standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.9</strong> - The Community Services Department and community agencies develop and implement transitional housing for youth, women leaving abuse (second stage), as well as women and men leaving emergency shelter.</td>
<td>Currently the City is collaboratively involved in a number of transitional housing projects such as the CityHousing Hamilton/Wesley youth project, the MCSS funded Hostels to Homes Pilot project. There may be financial implications for the City if more transitional housing programs are created beyond those projects currently underway in terms of any City contributions towards project costs and subsidies; however, new housing projects will be dependent upon senior government funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.1</strong> - City of Hamilton to advocate with Provincial and Federal governments to increase benefits paid by income maintenance programs such as OW, ODSP and CPP and to ensure that they are indexed to reflect the actual cost of living. Attention should also be given to improving eligibility criteria for these programs.</td>
<td>This is consistent with the City’s current advocacy efforts with senior levels of government. However, should advocacy efforts prove successful, there could be financial implications in the future in terms of the City’s share of any additional subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.2</strong> - City of Hamilton advocate with Provincial government for an end to the National Child Benefit claw-back.</td>
<td>Advocating for end of the NCB claw-back is consistent with current policy direction but there may be program and resource implications – see Report SSC06023.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.3</strong> - Community Services</td>
<td>There are potential staff resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Potential Implications</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Department and service agencies to expand evaluation and monitoring efforts in homelessness programming to ensure that effective programs are being funded.</td>
<td>Implications to undertake/co-ordinate evaluation and monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.6</strong> - Community Services Department develop a strategic plan update in 2009.</td>
<td>There are potential staff resources implications to update the strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Council approval will be sought for any of the strategies that require additional resources or incur additional costs.

The Community Services Department intends to use anticipated federal funding, provided through the new Homelessness Partnership Strategy, to coordinate the implementation of the Plan, monitor and report on progress, and evaluate results.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

Everyone Has A Home: Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07020) will provide direction for policy in the new Official Plan. The Plan is also aligned with other strategic initiatives such as the Social Development Strategy, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Keys to the Home: A Housing Strategy for Hamilton and Vision 2020.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

Development of the Plan, involved consultation with an extensive list of stakeholders, which is outlined in Appendix C to Report ECS07020

Staff from the following City of Hamilton Divisions/Departments were also consulted:

- Public Health Services Department, Child and Adolescent Services Section
- Community Services Department, Culture and Recreation Division
- Planning and Development Department
- Community Services Department, Employment and Income Support Section
- Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration Section
- Public Health Services Department, Health Protection Division
- Community Services Department, Health and Social Support Section
- Community Services Department, Housing Section
- 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
Shelter, care and satisfying employment are accessible to all Hamiltonians. The Strategic Plan to address homelessness identifies five outcomes that will help move the community toward the aspiration that "Hamilton is a community where everyone has a home."

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Poverty is reduced. Providing services to address homelessness represent an investment in the community that can reduce poverty and costs to other parts of the community.

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
EVERYONE HAS A HOME

A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness
On Any Given Night: Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton, released early in 2006, indicated that in 2004, 399 people used emergency shelters on a given night in November. While this figure has remained relatively consistent since 2001, it is more than double the number reported in 1995. In 2005, 3,795 people stayed in emergency shelters.

In addition, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Hamilton residents to afford a place to live. In 2001, approximately 45% of renter households spent more than 30% of their income on rent and 22% spent more than 50%.

While poverty is the root of homelessness, its effects are worsened by physical and sexual violence, social isolation, addiction, physical disability, mental health issues, immigration status, gender and age. Since homelessness affects many different types of people, unique solutions are required.

What is our aspiration for the future?

Our aspiration is for Hamilton to be a community where everyone has a home.

Principles

- Everyone has a right to housing. As a community, we need to ensure that adequate and affordable housing exists for everyone.

- Safe, healthy, inclusive neighbourhoods and communities are key. Neighbourhoods that include a mix of people with different income levels, abilities and ethno-cultural backgrounds create opportunities for building social capital.

- Everyone has a role to play in addressing homelessness. People experiencing homelessness, governments, service providers, employers, businesses and citizens can help reduce homelessness.

- We must be person-centred in our approach. Services need to be provided in ways that make sense for the people we serve.

- Through true collaboration, which involves communication, openness and trust, better outcomes will be achieved for everyone.

Why is a strategic plan important?

Addressing homelessness is complex. Services such as emergency shelters, food banks, mental health outreach programs and organizations addressing violence against women all work to address homelessness in some way. These services are funded through different sources, which can create 'silos' that can make it difficult for service providers to coordinate or plan together.

This is a crucial point in time. With the introduction of the province's Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP), which gives municipalities more flexibility in funding local programs, and with the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI) nearing its end, it is important for us to regroup and consider how we can make the biggest difference going forward.

It is our responsibility to be a leader in addressing homelessness. The City of Hamilton is designated as the Service System Manager for homelessness. A key role in service system management is engaging the community in system planning. Successful implementation of the plan will require the participation of all levels of government and many sectors of the community.
What is the scope of the plan?

This is the three-year strategic plan for Hamilton’s service system for homelessness. It outlines strategies to prevent people from becoming homeless or to help them escape homelessness, provides direction for the funding and development of services, and sets a vision for where we want to go as a community.

This plan complements Keys to the Home, the City of Hamilton’s housing strategy. Achieving the outcomes of this plan is dependent on the work of The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, and the City of Hamilton’s Social Development Strategy’s Affordable Housing and Skills Development flagships. This supports The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction’s aspiration that Hamilton be the best place to raise a child.

Who provided input into the plan?

A Community Advisory Group, representing various service sectors, provided input into the process to develop the plan. Many others were involved through a Homelessness Summit involving 90 participants from a variety of sectors across the community, and a planning session for City of Hamilton staff. Community group consultations were also conducted, along with three focus groups and 20 interviews with people experiencing homelessness.

Definitions

Affordable Housing
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defines affordability as follows: A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards. An adequate dwelling does not, according to its residents, require major repairs. A suitable dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the occupying household. To be affordable, shelter costs must consume less than 30% of before-tax household income.

Community
It refers to the City of Hamilton, to the neighbourhoods and groups that exist in the city, to the various sectors providing services to people experiencing homelessness, and to the people experiencing homelessness themselves.

Home
A home is more than a physical structure that shelters you from the weather. It is a place where you feel safe and feel that you belong. It meets your needs and it is affordable.

Homelessness
In this document, homelessness refers to the absolute homeless (those living on the street, in an emergency shelter or in a place unfit for human habitation), the hidden homeless (those who are marginally, inadequately or temporarily housed) and those at risk of homelessness (those paying large amounts of income on rent, those experiencing abuse, etc.).

Prevention
There are two types of prevention: primary and secondary. Primary prevention has to do with preventing an initial occurrence of homelessness while secondary prevention relates to preventing someone from becoming homeless on repeated occasions.

“This is an inspiring plan that enables us to coordinate our response to homelessness. Often times, things happen in isolation, but this plan paints a clear picture of who is doing what. It empowers people, and puts forth a ‘community voice’ that helps us avoid duplication and focus on cohesiveness.”

Suzanne Ross, Member, Community Advisory Board, Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)
The plan outlines five outcomes and their supporting strategies:

OUTCOME 1
Entire community is engaged to address homelessness

Everyone in the community has a role to play in addressing homelessness. It is critical to engage everyone. Community organizations, individuals and people experiencing homelessness need to understand how they can be part of the solution. Neighbourhoods are also a critical part of the equation as there needs to be welcoming, safe places for everyone to call home.

Strategies
1.1 The Community Services Department continues to support the work of The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction to educate and mobilize the community to take action on poverty and homelessness.

1.2 An advisory committee is struck to provide advice regarding implementation of the strategic plan and management of the service system.

1.3 The Community Services Department develops strategies to include new sectors in addressing homelessness. These sectors include, but are not limited to, landlords, healthcare providers, employment development program providers and employers.

1.4 The Community Services Department enhances collaboration with community organizations, providing appropriate timelines for planning and consultation and involving affected groups early in program planning.

1.5 As a community leader, the City of Hamilton ensures that its statements and actions reflect a positive portrayal of people living in poverty and experiencing homelessness, as a way to fight stereotypes.

1.6 The Community Services Department works with the community to develop and distribute evidence-based information for the purposes of education about homelessness and addressing NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard).
OUTCOME 2

A continuum of affordable housing that helps residents achieve their potential

Housing needs to be affordable, safe and appropriate to one's needs, which may change over time. Providing a continuum of housing from emergency shelter to affordable independent housing is key to addressing homelessness. It can help people achieve their full potential and move through the continuum, as appropriate.

Strategies

2.1 Hamilton City Council advocates with the federal and provincial governments regarding their critical role in funding programs to address homelessness at the municipal level.

2.2 Hamilton City Council advocates with other levels of government for funding of additional affordable housing units, transitional housing, supportive housing, rent supplements and allowances, and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).

2.3 The City of Hamilton includes in its new Official Plan a statement on inclusionary housing principles and policy direction regarding condominium conversions, the affordable housing continuum, maintaining the city's existing dwelling stock, housing supply targets, residential intensification, accessory apartments and lowering the cost of new housing through alternative development standards.

2.4 The City of Hamilton ensures that the existing stock of rooming houses is preserved and improved through licensing and proactive enforcement of standards as recommended in Keys to the Home.

2.5 Public Health, Building and Licensing, Community Services and the Fire Department work to implement standards for emergency shelters and residential care facilities, in conjunction with the Residential Care Facilities By-law review.

2.6 The Community Services Department develops strategies to ensure financial viability of existing units and social housing providers (ie. addressing increased energy costs, limited capital resources, etc.).

2.7 City Housing Hamilton and other social housing providers explore ways to accommodate needs of newcomer/immigrant families.

2.8 The Community Services Department and service providers help people move through the housing continuum by targeting interventions to specific groups and more intensively addressing their needs.

2.9 The Community Services Department and community agencies develop and implement transitional housing for youth, women leaving abuse (second stage), as well as women and men leaving emergency shelter.

"The development of this plan brought service providers together who are not necessarily connected to one another, and it brought to light what others are doing in the community in a planning sense. It was a forum for acknowledging that all of these services are connected. I think this plan will give us clear direction on where we need to go, moving every agency forward at the same time."

Joanne Santucci, Executive Director, Hamilton Food Share
OUTCOME 3
Increase supports to help people obtain and maintain housing

A house is not a home unless you feel safe and that you belong. Supports can help people find housing that is right for them. It is important to ensure supports are in place so that people can maintain their physical, mental and spiritual health and remain housed.

Strategies
3.1 The Community Services Department collaborates with social housing providers and private sector landlords on the development and implementation of eviction prevention policies and practices.

3.2 The Community Services Department and community partners identify people who are staying in emergency shelters for 42 days or more, and provide appropriate supports to help them find and maintain affordable housing.

3.3 The Community Services Department collaborates with community partners to develop and implement a system of coordinated case management for people in emergency shelters.

3.4 The Community Services Department, other levels of government, and agencies increase availability and accessibility of mental health and addiction services, including harm reduction strategies, outreach and treatment.

3.5 The Community Services Department collaborates with the provincial government regarding the continuation and enhancement of the rent bank and utility support programs.

3.6 The Community Services Department collaborates with the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), healthcare providers and agencies to increase coordination of, and access to, healthcare for those with mental and/or physical health issues that could cause them to lose their housing or limit their ability to move along the housing continuum.

3.7 The Community Services Department collaborates with other agencies to promote social inclusion through access to affordable recreation, transportation and other services.

3.8 The Community Services Department and emergency food service providers work together to implement the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and analyze the data.

3.9 The emergency food sector engages in system planning through the development of a strategic plan.
OUTCOME 4

Access to adequate income

Adequate income underpins many issues relating to homelessness. If people do not have adequate income, they cannot pay for food, housing or other basic necessities.

Strategies

4.1 The City of Hamilton advocates with the provincial and federal governments that benefits paid by income maintenance programs such as Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) be increased and indexed to reflect the actual cost of living, and eligibility criteria be improved.

4.2 The City of Hamilton advocates with the provincial government for an end to the National Child Benefit claw back.

4.3 The City of Hamilton explores adoption of a Living Wage policy.

4.4 Ontario Works explores opportunities to maximize access to benefits for clients including coordinating with other programs such as ODSP and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for seniors.

4.5 Ontario Works increases access to employment supports to help people move along the employment continuum.

4.6 The Community Services Department works with the provincial government and service agencies to advocate for trusteeship programs for those who would benefit.

“With such an intimate link between healthcare and housing, we know we need to create a system in which there is better integration of services and better outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness, and for those who are at risk of becoming so. We believe this strategic plan is critical to building and sustaining a network that focuses on the health of these individuals.”

Myles Sergeant, Medical Director, Shelter Health Network
OUTCOME 5

Efficient and effective use of community resources

It is important to see funds spent to address homelessness as an investment. If funds are well spent, they can reduce costs in other areas. It is also important to use our human and financial resources to the best of our ability. This means finding the answers to the questions, what has worked well and what do we need to do differently.

Strategies

5.1 The Community Services Department facilitates discussions with community funders regarding the coordination of funding for homelessness programs.

5.2 The Community Services Department works with other funders regarding sustainable funding to maintain key programs.

5.3 The Community Services Department and service agencies expand evaluation and monitoring efforts of homelessness programming to ensure that effective programs are funded.

5.4 The Community Services Department develops an implementation framework to ensure the strategic plan links to other initiatives such as the Official Plan, The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Human Services Plan, Social Development Strategy and Vision 2020.

5.5 The Community Services Department works to increase coordination between Ontario Works, the Housing Branch and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

5.6 The Community Services Department provides a strategic plan update in 2009.

Next Steps

The next steps involve development of an advisory committee and engagement of the community to develop an implementation plan. For the purposes of monitoring implementation of the plan, indicators will be developed. The indicators will be developed in the areas of emergency shelter use, housing, supports, income and employment, and will measure progress toward the outcomes.

Quotes from people experiencing homelessness were provided by the Social Planning and Research Council.

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ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT

Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton
ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT

IN HAMILTON...

399 men, women and children stay in emergency shelters on any given night

The social housing waiting list has 4,258 active applications

2,436 women and children stayed in a Violence Against Women shelter during 2004/2005

21.9% of renter households spend more than 50% of their income on shelter putting them at serious risk of homelessness

Emergency shelter usage has more than doubled since 1995

Due to a recent infusion of SCPI funding for shelter beds, Hamilton is meeting the immediate needs of single men seeking emergency shelter for the first time since 1998
Introduction

Hamilton, like many Canadian cities, faces a range of serious social issues which interact to create homelessness. This indicators report notes key factors impacting homelessness in Hamilton. Local information on factors contributing to homelessness, a demographic profile of people experiencing homelessness and some service utilization statistics are included in this report. Data presented here reflects the most recent information available.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the nature of homelessness in Hamilton. It is not intended to be a policy statement but rather to inform the ongoing discussion about the best way for the City, the community and senior levels of governments to address the issue of homelessness in Hamilton.

A strategic plan to address homelessness in Hamilton

The City of Hamilton will embark on a series of planning initiatives that will culminate in a Strategic Plan for Homelessness in Hamilton (fall 2006). Findings from this report will be used to inform the strategic planning process. A key component of the community planning process will include consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders and community partners.
Understanding Homelessness in Hamilton

Who is homeless?
People experiencing homelessness are a diverse, mobile population encompassing many subgroups. Some people without housing have nothing in common but their lack of housing. Among those without housing are many single men and women, families, youth, visible minorities, aboriginal people, and some people with severe mental illnesses and other serious health problems. (Source: Adapted from www.raisingtheroof.org)

Why does homelessness occur?
Two major contributors to homelessness are the lack of adequate income and the lack of affordable housing. Inadequate income makes it difficult for people to find and keep stable, suitable housing. Families or individuals may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless for any number of reasons such as:

- experiencing abuse or violence
- losing a job
- having an income too low to stay in suitable housing
- experiencing food insecurity
- suffering from mental or physical health conditions
- experiencing discrimination by landlords or neighbours
- facing challenges with substance use
- lack of appropriate support services
- excessive housing costs including utility costs

(Source: Adapted from Keys to the Home, City of Hamilton, 2004)

What do we know?
While improvements have been made, homelessness continues to be a significant issue in Hamilton. Emergency shelters for men, women, youth and families continue to experience relatively high occupancy rates. Based on available data, we know that the number of people accessing Hamilton’s emergency shelters has more than doubled since 1995. Hamilton’s food banks report more than 15,000 visits per month. Just over half of those are families with children. Almost one in five Hamilton residents subsist on an income lower than the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) threshold. The high demand for affordable housing in our community is evidenced by Hamilton’s social housing waiting list which currently has 4,258 active applications.

The connection between health and homelessness
Homelessness seriously affects a person’s physical and mental health. Foot, skin and dental problems are common among the homeless population. For some people, addiction and mental illness can exacerbate the experience of homelessness making it difficult to work and/or maintain housing. This situation was made worse by the process of releasing patients with mental illness from psychiatric institutions into the community where supports are inadequate. A recent study on health and homelessness in Hamilton noted:

- Rates of chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular and chronic respiratory problems are much higher than the general population.
- Over one third of participants reported not having enough energy to get through the day. These participants reported eating only one meal a day.
- Some participants (27%) reported not having an Ontario Health Card.
- Diagnosed mental illness was reported by 23.8% of respondents.

Definitions of Homelessness

Homelessness can be defined as the lack of safe, affordable, adequate and secure housing. A range of homelessness experiences exist which can be described as absolute, hidden or relative homelessness.

**Absolute homelessness:** refers to living on the street, or in places unfit for human habitation (e.g., abandoned buildings or vehicles).

**Hidden homelessness:** refers to a state in which a person is marginally, inadequately, and/or temporarily housed including “couch surfing” (i.e., staying temporarily with friends or family).

**At-risk of homelessness:** includes households that spend more than 50% of its total income on housing costs. Other risk factors for homelessness may include being in arrears with rent payments, living in precarious housing, experiencing serious health issues, family conflict and/or domestic abuse.

Emergency Shelter System in Hamilton

Emergency shelters provide short-term lodging and other supports to people experiencing homelessness. In Hamilton, the emergency shelter system is comprised of three types of services:

i. Emergency Shelters;
ii. Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters;
iii. Seasonal Programs (i.e., Out of the Cold).

There are also a number of transitional housing programs that offer short to medium term accommodation to people experiencing homelessness. These numbers are not included in this report.

**Supply of emergency shelter beds/mats**

There are 523 emergency shelter beds in Hamilton. The majority of emergency shelter beds are for single men (270). The second largest group of shelter beds are for women and children staying in a Violence Against Women shelter (100). The total number of shelter beds has increased by 80% between 2000 and 2004 largely due to an infusion of funding from the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the Cold</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Hamilton, Community Services, 2005*

- Most shelters close during the day which minimizes the opportunity to provide much needed support services to clients.
- There is a limit to the number of consecutive days one can stay at an emergency shelter.
- Staying in an emergency shelter for some means using a mat to sleep on the floor.
- Privacy and personal space in emergency shelter is at a premium. In some shelters you may be sharing your space with a large number of strangers.
Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton

It is difficult to provide exact measures of homelessness. While some people who are experiencing homelessness are included in service utilization figures, many others are on the street or "hidden." The following information is based on data from the City of Hamilton's Community Services department and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC).

**Annual homeless shelter count**

The SPRC conducts an annual survey of emergency shelters usage in Hamilton. The “On a Given Night” survey data provides the most recent and complete source of shelter utilization data in Hamilton. It should be noted, however, that this data only reports on one night in November and may not be representative of fluctuations in occupancy rates throughout the year. While this data provides a snapshot of shelter use on a given night, it does not capture the magnitude of homelessness in a given year. Since 2003, occupancy rates have dropped, in part, due to an increase in beds and mats available in the emergency shelter system. The total number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night in November also fell slightly from 420 in 2003 to 399 in 2004.

**Single men**

Single men comprise the largest group of people experiencing homelessness in Hamilton. In 2004, 57% of the total number of emergency shelter beds used in Hamilton was by single men. On any given night in November there were 237 men accessing an emergency shelter bed or mat. There are four emergency shelters in Hamilton that provide refuge for single men. These shelters are the Good Shepherd Men’s Centre, Mission Services Men’s Residence, Salvation Army Booth Centre and Wesley Drop-In Centre.

**Single women**

Emergency shelter beds are available for women experiencing homelessness for reasons other than domestic violence. Good Shepherd Mary’s Place provides 9 beds and the Wesley Drop-In Centre provides 15 mats for women experiencing homelessness. On any given night in November 2004, there were 20 women staying at an emergency shelter in Hamilton. Mary’s Place, as the only single gendered shelter for homeless women, is often at capacity and has to turn women away. In 2004, Mary’s Place turned away women 630 times.

**Families**

Historically, families experiencing homelessness in Hamilton have been accommodated through the use of contracted space at local motels and hotels. The number of families seeking emergency shelter increased dramatically in 2000 to 378 from 5 in 1998. The use of emergency motel and hotel beds was seen to be a short-term solution. It is important to note that the number of families accessing emergency motel and hotel beds is not reflected in the ‘On a Given Night’ data. Utilization rates dropped dramatically in 2003 and 2004 in part due to the opening of temporary emergency family shelter beds in Hamilton.
In 2003, 53 temporary emergency shelter spaces opened. This project provided short-term emergency accommodations for families up to a maximum of 6 weeks. On any given night in November 2004 there were 39 people staying in the temporary emergency family shelter. In December 2005, a new permanent family emergency shelter opened that can accommodate up to 20 families (or up to 80 individuals).

**Women and children who are victims of domestic violence**

Women and their children who are victims of domestic violence can stay in one of four Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters. There are 100 beds available in the VAW system in Hamilton. In 2004, 1,626 women and 780 children stayed in a VAW shelter. Note that we do not know if these numbers represent one time or multiple stays.

Data from VAW shelters in Hamilton show that women are staying longer during each visit which means there is also less turnover. In 2004, the average length of stay was 24 days. Women's shelters also report there are fewer women with children which led to a decrease in the overall occupancy rates. As well, 15 new beds were added to the system in 2004.


**Homeless and street-involved youth**

According to a study prepared by the SPRC and community partners in 2005, there were at least 600 street-involved youth (or 1.5% of total youth population). Street-involved youth are young people between the ages of 16 to 21 who are absolutely homeless or precariously housed using services for street-involved youth and/or spend the majority of their time on the street. Homeless youth, a sub-group of street-involved youth, are those with no place to live and might stay at emergency shelters. On any given night in November 2004, there were 21 youth staying at an emergency shelter. The following are some key data findings from the report:

- Almost as many female as male street-involved youth;
- Data from one youth service agency suggests that one in five street-involved youth is absolutely homeless;
- Aboriginal youth are over represented compared to the overall population;
- 10% of street involved youth have completed less than grade school.

*(Source: SPRC, Addressing the Needs of Street Involved Youth, 2005)*

**Urban aboriginal homelessness**

Urban aboriginal homelessness continues to be a serious issue in communities across Canada. Hamilton is no exception to this assertion as recent estimates suggest that 20% of people experiencing homelessness in Hamilton are aboriginal. According to the 2001 census, 1.3% of Hamilton’s population were self-identified as aboriginal indicating that this population is overrepresented in the homeless population.

*(Source: HEDAC, Homelessness Trail: “The Voice of the People”, 2001)*

**Out of the Cold program**

*Out of the Cold is a drop-in program for people seeking temporary shelter and is operated by local faith groups. In Hamilton, the Out of the Cold program provides 40 mats per night at various locations across the City. On any given night in November, nine people sought shelter through this program in 2004. The low occupancy rate reported on a given night in November may not be reflective of typical usage throughout the year.*
Access to Adequate Income

People who experience relative homelessness often do so because of insufficient income to pay for adequate housing and nutritious food. The following sections examine a number of factors that put someone at risk of becoming homeless.

**Income security**

Low income affects access to necessities such as shelter, nutritious foods, warm clothing and education. It can also affect the overall well-being of an individual as low income may increase stress, lower self-esteem and limit participation in the community.

The Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) is used as a tool to define low income levels in Canada. For a single person in Hamilton, the LICO is $16,979. Compared to Ontario, a substantially higher proportion of the population in the City of Hamilton live below the LICO (18.8% in the City of Hamilton vs. 13.6% in Ontario).

- Almost one out of every five Hamilton residents has an income below the LICO.
- Along with Toronto, Hamilton has the highest rate of poverty in Ontario.
- 16% of families and 46% of unattached individuals live on incomes below the LICO.

(Source: *Social and Health Issues Report, City of Hamilton, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2001*)

**The working poor**

Working individuals who subsist on wages below the LICO are sometimes referred to as the “working poor”. In Hamilton, the working poor makeup more than one quarter of the population living below the LICO (or 25,015 people). In other words, many individuals who are working still don’t have enough money to pay for the basic necessities of life such as housing and food.

**Housing wage vs. minimum wage**

The minimum “housing wage” is defined as the amount required for a one-wage earner household to afford a one-bedroom or two bedroom apartment and not pay more than 30% of their gross income on rent. In 2005, the difference between minimum wage ($7.45/hour) and the housing wage for a one-bedroom apartment ($12.42/hour) or two-bedroom apartment ($15.21/hour) is substantial.

**Social assistance and basic needs**

In May 2004, the Ontario government increased social assistance rates by 3%. This increase was the first since social assistance rates were reduced by 21% in 1995. Despite this increase, families and individuals in receipt of social assistance are not able to afford basic necessities such as housing and/or nutritious food. In 2004, the total number of beneficiaries in receipt of Ontario Works was 25,411. Hamilton has a higher percentage of clients in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) than the Ontario average.
Access to Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing in Hamilton puts many residents at risk of homelessness.

- In Hamilton, 21.9% of renter households spend more than 50% of their income on shelter putting them at serious risk of homelessness.
- Approximately 45% of renter households spend more than 30% of their household income on shelter.
- The social housing waiting list reveals the pervasive need in Hamilton for rent-gained-to-income housing. There were 4,258 active applications on the social housing waiting list in 2005.
- Some groups, such as women, recent immigrants, visible minorities and people with a disability, are more likely to pay more than 50% of their income on rent putting them at-risk of becoming homeless.

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2001; Community Services, City of Hamilton, 2005)

**Figure 6**
Percentage of Tenant Households in Hamilton paying >50% Gross Income on Rent by Demographic Group

Affordable housing in Hamilton, particularly in the rental market, is a key concern for maintaining a healthy, productive workforce. Households that are experiencing affordability concerns are said to be in “core housing need.” The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines this as living in housing that falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards (i.e., spending more than 30% of total household income on housing costs).

**Figure 7**
Renter Households Experiencing Housing Affordability Concerns, Former City of Hamilton

**Supply of affordable rental housing**

- In 2005, vacancy rates for apartments were high at 4.8% for the City of Hamilton.
- Average rent for a 1 bedroom apartment in Hamilton was $612 in 2005.
- In Hamilton, rents have increased by approximately 20% since 1996.
- There have been very few new affordable rental housing starts in Hamilton over the past decade.
- Based on population projections for the City of Hamilton, 650 new rental units are required annually to meet housing demand.
Access to Adequate and Nutritional Food

Food insecurity

Food insecurity in Hamilton, and Canada, is primarily the result of poverty. Food insecurity can be defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

The need for emergency food programs and services is highly correlated to the low levels of social assistance payments: three out of four households using food banks reported OW or ODSP as their primary source of income. There is a disproportionate experience of food insecurity for lone mother families, recent immigrants, visible minorities, youth, and Aboriginal people.

(Source: Hamilton Emergency Food System Assessment – Phase II, SPRC, 2005)

Low incomes for the working poor, the high cost of housing, and inadequate social assistance payments all help to create and maintain poverty.

Food banks and hot meal programs

Indicative of worsening food insecurity in Hamilton is the increased and persistent reliance on the emergency food system. Food banks provide necessary emergency assistance to thousands of people each month and still must turn some people away. Those who have come to rely on food banks are often not able to meet all of their nutritional requirements. Originally set up as temporary “stop-gap” measures to assist people facing emergency situations, food banks have become a more permanent fixture in the community. Food banks in the community are an integral piece of the puzzle when it comes to people staying housed.

(Source: Hamilton Emergency Food System Assessment – Phase I, SPRC, 2005)

- In March 2005, there were 6,597 household visits to local food banks.
- In March 2005, over 55,000 hot meals were served at meal programs.

(Source: Hunger Count, Hamilton FoodShare, 2005)

Housing costs that absorb more than 30% of household income put many people at-risk of becoming homeless. Rent is often the single largest expense for food bank recipients. In Hamilton, 62% of food bank recipients reported that they would lose their housing without food bank services.

(Source: Hunger Count, Hamilton FoodShare, 2004)
Addressing Homelessness in Hamilton

Further dialogue, analysis and action are required to deepen our understanding of the complexities of homelessness in Hamilton.

**Supporting Community Partnership Initiative II (SCPI) – 2003 to 2007:**
As part of SCPI II, Hamilton is receiving $17.1 million dollars over a four-year period ending March 31, 2007. SCPI II invested funding in the following areas:

- Prevention of Homelessness ($1.2 million)
- Family Shelter ($3 million)
- Transitional/Supportive ($3.9 million)
- Improving access to and coordination of healthcare ($1.1 million)
- Priority infrastructure for needs of food banks ($432,000)
- Transitional Housing for Youth ($2 million)

In addition, 18% of all SCPI II funding was allocated to the aboriginal community to address urban aboriginal homelessness in Hamilton.

**Prevention of homelessness:**

- City Housing Hamilton’s Eviction Prevention Policy will be released in spring 2006 and is the recognition that early intervention is an effective means to prevent homelessness.
- The Rent Bank Program, which received $569,463 in funding from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2005/2006, continues to help low-income individuals and families remain housed during a financial crisis.

**Creating affordable housing:**

- The Community Rental Housing Program has funded the development of four new rental housing developments totalling 159 units.
- Under the Strong Start Component of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP), three projects totalling 210 affordable rental units will be under construction by summer 2006.
- Further affordable housing developments are anticipated with assistance from the AHP and the City’s HAHPI Housing Partnership Fund.

**Strategic initiatives:**

- Moving forward with the implementation of the recommendations in Hamilton’s affordable housing strategy “Keys to the Home”.
- Implementation of “Addressing the Needs of Street Involved Youth” report.
- Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction addresses and creates solutions on key poverty issues.
- Affordable Housing Flagship is a community collaboration that addresses affordable housing and homelessness.

**Issues/data for future consideration:**

- Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) will provide a more complete demographic profile of the people using emergency shelters. A more in-depth assessment of program usage will also be made possible by analyzing HIFIS data.
- Demographic and program data from the Access to Housing (ATH) database will provide insight into the demand for social housing in Hamilton.
- Analysis of transitional housing in Hamilton is needed to better understand its role in the system of services to address homelessness.
- Comparison to similar municipalities will help to assess how Hamilton is faring next to other places.
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Thank you to all our community partners who provided information and insightful feedback on various drafts of this report. We would also like to acknowledge Jeff Wingard at the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton with the support of the United Way for providing crucial historical data and suggestions throughout the development of this report.

Production of this report was made possible by funding from Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative.

This report can be downloaded from the City of Hamilton’s website:
www.hamilton.ca/socialservices/homelessness

For more information please contact: Christina Gallimore,
Social Policy Analyst, Community Services,
City of Hamilton, cgallimo@hamilton.ca

Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton
CONSULTATION LIST

Membership of External Advisory Group

Affordable Housing Flagship
- Jeff Wingard, Social Planning and Research Council
- Brother Richard MacPhee, Good Shepherd Centres
- Paul Johnson, Wesley Urban Ministries

Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Community Advisory Board
- Bill Cooke, citizen
- Suzanne Ross, citizen

Food Shelter and Housing Committee (FSHC)
- Joanne Santucci, Hamilton Foodshare
- Tom Heeney, Mission Services
- Ron Sharegan, citizen

Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC)
- Cindy Sue McCormack, Social Planning and Research Council

Street Involved Youth
- Loretta Finamore-Hill, Good Shepherd Centres Youth Programs

Mental Health Outreach
- Valine Vaillancourt, Manager, Mental Health Outreach

Newcomers/Immigrants Research
- Sabin Mukkath, Social Planning and Research Council

WAWG/Violence Against Women
- Clare Freeman, Interval House
- Medora Uppal, Martha House

Government Partners/Funders
- Dave Brodati, City of Hamilton, Community Services
- Mary Burnett /Sam Curtain, Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Deena Colasurdo, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Carmen Salciccioli, City of Hamilton, Community Services
**Membership of Internal Advisory Group**

Marla Adams, CSD, Tenant Support Services  
Cathy Buffett, CSD, Health and Social Supports Branch  
Dave Brodati, CSD, Housing  
Keith Extance, CSD, Housing Development and Partnerships  
Betty Lou Purdon, CSD, Residential Care Facilities and Emergency Shelters Unit  
Carmen Salciciolli, CSD, Homelessness  
Valine Vaillancourt, CSD, Mental Health Outreach

**Planning Tables & Community Organizations Participating in Consultation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordable Housing Flagship</th>
<th>Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative Community Advisory Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for Adequate Welfare</td>
<td>Settlement and Immigration Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Family Services</td>
<td>Street Involved Youth Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Food Action Committee</td>
<td>Solutions for Housing Action Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Shelter &amp; Housing Committee</td>
<td>Roomers and Boarders Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Addiction and Mental Health Network</td>
<td>Shelter Health Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Addiction Services Coalition</td>
<td>Shelter Operators Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre</td>
<td>Tennant Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition</td>
<td>Woman Abuse Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Security Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty Roundtable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Care Facility Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People Experiencing Homelessness

3 Focus Groups
- Coalition of Residential Care Facility Tennants
- Healthy Aboriginal Men’s Group
- Martha’s Place

20 Interviews
# Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness

## Strategies and Potential Resource Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Potential Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Entire community is engaged to address homelessness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The Community Services Department continues to support the work of the Poverty Roundtable to educate and mobilize the community to take action on poverty and homelessness.</td>
<td>• This fits with City and Department vision and supports the continuation of actions of Social Development and Housing and Homelessness teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 An advisory committee is struck to provide advice regarding implementation of the strategic plan and management of the service system.</td>
<td>• Within current resource allocation, staff can continue to provide co-ordination and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The Community Services Department develops strategies to include new sectors in addressing homelessness. These sectors include but are not limited to landlords, healthcare providers, employment development program providers and employers.</td>
<td>• No financial or resource implications as this can occur within the existing staff compliment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The Community Services Department enhances collaboration with community organizations, providing appropriate timelines for planning and consultation and involving affected groups early in program planning.</td>
<td>• There are no financial implications but will require staff time and resources to develop and promote new business processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 As a community leader, the City of Hamilton ensures that its statements and actions reflect a positive portrayal of people living in poverty and experiencing homelessness as a way to fight stereotypes.</td>
<td>• No financial implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 The Community Services Department works with the community to develop and distribute evidence-based information for the purposes of education about homelessness and addressing NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard).</td>
<td>• Existing staff can research and produce NIMBY reports • City efforts can be linked with other NIMBY initiatives (e.g. OMSSA and CMHC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: A continuum of affordable housing that helps achieve their potential</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Hamilton City Council advocates with the federal and provincial governments regarding their critical role in funding programs to address homelessness at the municipal level.</td>
<td>• City Council to continue playing an active role in advocating for homelessness funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Hamilton City Council advocates with other levels of government for funding of additional affordable housing units, transitional housing, supportive housing, rent supplements and allowances and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)</td>
<td>• See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 The City of Hamilton includes in its new Official Plan a statement on inclusionary housing principles and policy direction regarding condominium conversions, the affordable housing continuum, maintaining the city’s existing dwelling stock, housing supply</td>
<td>• This strategy supports existing housing policy recommendations from <em>Keys to the Home</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Potential Implications</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>targets, residential intensification, accessory apartments and lowering the cost of new housing through alternative development standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2.4 The City of Hamilton ensures that existing stock of rooming houses is preserved and improved through licensing and proactive enforcement of standards as recommended in Keys to the Home. | • This strategy supports existing housing policy recommendations from Keys to the Home.  
• Council may make decisions about stock preservation and proactive enforcement once Business Case information is presented by Building and Licensing staff – no resource implications at this time. |
| 2.5 Public Health, Building and Licensing, Community Services and Fire Departments work to implement standards for emergency shelters and residential care facilities in conjunction with the Residential Care Facilities By-law. | ***While MCSS has provided funding for RCF Standards, there may be financial implications for emergency shelters and City staff resources to develop, implement and monitor shelter standards.*** |
| 2.6 The Community Services Department develops strategies to ensure financial viability of existing units and social housing providers (e.g. increased energy costs, limited capital reserves). | • This supports CityHousing Hamilton’s mandate and the City of Hamilton’s responsibility as Service System Manager. No financial implications at this time beyond those identified as part of this mandate. |
| 2.7 CityHousing Hamilton and other social housing providers to explore ways to accommodate needs of newcomer/immigrant families. | • Using existing resources, staff can explore ways to address the needs of newcomer/immigrant families. No financial implications at this time. |
| 2.8 The Community Services Department and service providers help people move through housing continuum by targeting interventions to specific groups and more intensively addressing their needs. | • The City is involved in several activities to help people move through the housing continuum such as Hostels to Homes pilot, Youth Transitional Housing, HOAP and Hamilton HomeStart. Future resource implications beyond these types of initiatives is unknown |
| 2.9 The Community Services Department and community agencies develop and implement transitional housing for youth, women leaving abuse (second stage), as well as women and men leaving emergency shelter. | ***Currently the City is collaboratively involved in a number of transitional housing projects such as the CityHousing Hamilton/Wesley youth project, the MCSS funded Hostels to Homes Pilot project. There may be financial implications for the City if more transitional housing programs are created beyond those projects currently underway in terms of any City contributions towards project costs and subsidies; however, new housing projects will be dependent upon senior government funding.*** |

**Outcome: Increase supports to help people obtain and maintain housing**

3.1 The Community Services Department  
• There are no financial implications but
### Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Potential Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with social housing providers and private sector landlords on the development and implementation of eviction prevention policies and practices.</td>
<td>Will require staff time and resources to develop and promote new business processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.2 The Community Services Department and community partners identify people who are staying in emergency shelters for 42 days or more and provide appropriate supports to help them find and maintain affordable housing</strong></td>
<td>- This will be accomplished through the H2HP using existing and new resources provided by MCSS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3 The Community Services Department collaborates with community partners to develop and implement a system of coordinated case management for people in emergency shelters.</strong></td>
<td>- See above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 The Community Services Department, Public Health Services, other levels of government and agencies increase availability and accessibility of mental health and addiction services, including, harm reduction strategies, outreach and treatment.</strong></td>
<td>- Staff will continue to provide coordination and support within existing resources. Mental health and addictions services are primarily a provincial area of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5 The Community Services Department collaborates with the provincial government regarding continuation and enhancement of the rent bank and utility support programs.</strong></td>
<td>- No financial or resource implications as this can occur within the existing staff compliment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.6 The Community Services Department collaborates with the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), healthcare providers and agencies to increase coordination of and access to healthcare for those with mental and/or physical health that could cause them to lose their housing or limit their ability to move along the housing continuum.</strong></td>
<td>- No financial implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.7 The Community Services Department collaborates with other agencies to promote social inclusion through access to affordable recreation, transportation and other strategies.</strong></td>
<td>- Social Development team is currently working on a Social Inclusion policy – financial implications are unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.8 The Community Services Department and emergency food service providers work together to implement Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and analyze the data.</strong></td>
<td>- Although HIFIS is funded through the federal NHI/SCPI program, there may be minimal City staff resource implications as staff collect and analyze HIFIS data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.9 The emergency food sector engages in system planning through the development of a strategic plan.</strong></td>
<td>- Using existing resources, staff can provide support but the City’s role is currently undefined, therefore, financial implications are unclear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome: Access to adequate income**

4.1 City of Hamilton to advocate with Provincial and Federal governments to increase benefits paid by income maintenance programs such as OW, ODSP and CPP and to ensure that they are indexed to reflect the actual cost of living. **Attention should also be focused on increasing benefits paid by income maintenance programs such as OW, ODSP and CPP and to ensure that they are indexed to reflect the actual cost of living.**

***This is consistent with the City’s current advocacy efforts with senior levels of government. However, should advocacy efforts prove successful, there could be financial implications in the future in terms of the City’s share of any additional contributions.***
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strategy</strong></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>given to improving eligibility criteria for these programs.</td>
<td>subsidies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 City of Hamilton advocate with Provincial government for an end to the National Child Benefit claw back</td>
<td>*** Advocating for end of the NCB claw back is consistent with current policy direction but there may be program and resource implications – see report SSC06023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 City of Hamilton to explore adoption of a Living Wage policy.</td>
<td>• Researching of a living wage policy does not carry any financial implications but adopting such a policy may in the future. This strategy is consistent with Council direction already provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Ontario Works to explore opportunities to maximize access to benefits for clients including coordinating with other programs such as ODSP and GIS for seniors.</td>
<td>• No financial or resource implications as this can occur within the existing staff compliment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Ontario Works to increase access to employment supports to help people move along the employment continuum.</td>
<td>• The City is already undertaking several initiatives to increase access to employment supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Community Services Department to work with provincial government and service agencies to ensure trusteeship programs are available to those who would benefit</td>
<td>• There are no financial implications but staff time and resources are needed to support and provide analysis of trusteeship programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Efficient and effective use of community resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Community Services Department to facilitate discussion regarding coordination of funding for homelessness programs across the community funders</td>
<td>• Within current resource allocation, staff can continue to provide co-ordination and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Community Services Department to work with other funders regarding sustainable funding to maintain key programs</td>
<td>• No financial or resource implications as this can occur within the existing staff compliment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Community Services Department and service agencies to expand evaluation and monitoring efforts in homelessness programming to ensure that effective programs are being funded.</td>
<td>***There are potential staff resources implications to undertake/co-ordinate evaluation and monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Community Services Department to develop an implementation framework to ensure Strategic Plan is effective and includes links to other City of Hamilton initiatives such the Poverty Roundtable, Human Services Plan, Official Plan, Social Development Strategy and Vision 2020.</td>
<td>• Existing staff resources can be used to complete the implementation framework and ensure linkages between the Strategic Plan and other initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Community Services Department to work to increase coordination between Ontario Works, the Housing Branch and ODSP.</td>
<td>• Within current resource allocation, staff can continue to co-ordinate and collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Community Services Department Develop a strategic plan update in 2009</td>
<td>***There are potential staff resources implications to update the strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>