

Agenda

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

6th Special Meeting of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

March 5, 2024

9:30 AM

Council Chambers - Please check the City website for additional meeting detail information. Meetings can be viewed via live-streaming on YouTube and the City Website.

The City of London is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (AUh-nish-in-ah-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run).

We honour and respect the history, languages and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home. The City of London is currently home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit today.

As representatives of the people of the City of London, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live in this territory.

Members

Councillors S. Lewis (Chair), H. McAlister, P. Cuddy, S. Stevenson, J. Pribil, S. Trosow, C. Rahman, S. Lehman, A. Hopkins, P. Van Meerbergen, S. Franke, E. Pelosa, D. Ferreira, S. Hillier, Mayor J. Morgan

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Pages

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Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

To: Chair and Members, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee
From: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development
Subject: Contract Amendments to Maintain Day and Overnight Spaces for Unsheltered Londoners
Date: March 5, 2024

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to the Contract Amendments to Maintain Day and Overnight Spaces for Unsheltered Londoners report.

- a) To **APPROVE** an extension to the existing Municipal Purchase of Service agreement with London Cares at a total estimated increase of up to \$139,600 (excluding HST) for the period of April 1, 2024, to May 31, 2024, to continue temporary drop-in space and security services, as per the Corporation of the City of London Procurement Policy Section 20.3 e);
- b) To **APPROVE** an extension to the existing Municipal Purchase of Service agreement with Safe Space London at a total estimated increase of up to \$129,000 (excluding HST) for the period of April 1, 2024, to May 31, 2024, to continue to temporary day and overnight drop in space, as per the Corporation of the City of London Procurement Policy Section 20.3 e);
- c) That, Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all administrative acts which are necessary in connection with the contracts noted in a) and b); and,
- d) That, approval given herein **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation of the City of London amending existing Purchase of Service Agreements with agencies outlined in the attached as Schedule 1 of this report.

Executive Summary

The community Encampment Strategy Implementation Table as part of the Whole of Community System Response has continued the planning of a t community encampment strategy to support those living unsheltered. While the process for creating a community strategy has begun and is anticipated to come to Council in Q2 of 2024 there remains need in the community to provide life preserving services to vulnerable populations that have been accessing these temporary services. The encampment table and the many organizations have been engaged in this work and this report provides an update on the ongoing need to take a human rights-based approach to meet basic needs for those living unsheltered and drop-in spaces.

The recommendations brought forward in this report are to provide these temporary services for an additional two months commencing April 1, 2024, to allow for the continuation of supports to folks accessing the services and to align with the conclusion of other temporary services at the end of May 2024. This report is also a direct response to the written request of the encampment table to continue these services in support of taking a human rights-based approach to providing the unmet basic needs for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The two programs have had significant uptake in their services in 2023 and the early stages of 2024, these are noted below.

In 2023 the London Cares drop-in program supported 1021 unique individuals access the 602 Queens Ave. space.

This included:

- 68,877 meals provided by the sisters of St. Joseph's meal program
- 3343 Showers
- 1168 loads of laundry
- A total of 20,564 visits to 602 Queens Ave.

From January through November 2023, the Safe Space program has supported unsheltered individuals with the following:

- 3,728 times washroom was accessed
- 1,303 loads of laundry
- 7,279 times food was provided
- A total of 7,303 visits for basic needs

The Centre of Hope shower program will be continuing for the next two years as they received approval through a previous Strategic Priority and Policy Committee report.

It is being noted that the advancement of the Whole of Community System Response remains a priority and continues as work advances on new Supportive Housing and as Hubs are opened.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This report aligns with the strategic areas of focus in the 2023-2027 [City of London Strategic Plan](#). The City of London Strategic Plan (2023-2027) identifies housing and homelessness as a key area of focus, and housing and homelessness work is identified throughout the Strategic Plan, impacting all areas of life for Londoners.

Housing and Homelessness

- Increased access to a range of quality, affordable, and supportive housing options that meet the unique needs of Londoners.
- Decreased number of Londoners at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Improved safety in London's shelters system

Wellbeing and Safety

- Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life
- Housing in London is affordable and attainable

Analysis

• 1.0 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- Community Cold Weather Response Update (SPPC: November 21, 2023)
- Community Cold Weather Response (SPPC: October 31, 2023)
- Winter Response Program Outcome Report Year-over-Year Comparison (CPSC: August 15, 2023)
- Housing Stability Services 2023-2024 Contract Amendments (CPSC: July 18, 2023)
- Encampment Response Update (CPSC: June 13, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Program Outcome Report (CPSC: May 24, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response and Community Accountability Working Group Funding Reallocation Request (CPSC: April 12, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Program and Action and Accountability Working Group Update (CPSC: November 29, 2022)
- City of London 2021-2022 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: April 20, 2022)
- City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (November 2, 2021)
- Update – City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program For Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: April 20, 2021)

- City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: December 1, 2020)
- Municipal Council Approval of The Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 as Required Under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (CPSC: December 3, 2019)

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Background

A request submitted by the Encampment Strategy Table has come to civic administration identifying an urgent gap in services that will occur when the noted services are scheduled to end and until the broader community strategy to support people living in encampments is brought to the Strategic Priority and Policies Committee on June 18, 2024. The four core pillars of the plan to assist in the management of encampments are;

- i) Transactional Outreach;
- ii) Inclement Weather Plan;
- iii) Encampment Protocols; and
- iv) Transformational Housing Pathways.

The framework of this plan has come after several months of community meetings and engagement to support those living unsheltered and the continued recognition that the need to support the basic needs of individuals is vital and will continue beyond March 31.

Existing programs continue to operate at capacity and services are unable to expand to meet the ongoing need as the temporary cold weather responses begin to wind down and end. Like many other communities across Canada, London in the summer of 2023, continued to see an increase in individuals sleeping rough and experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The volume of individuals sleeping rough and in encampments had been on the rise and reached a maximum of 102 encampments in city parks in November 2023. The 2023-24 cold weather response along with the opening of 69 highly supportive housing units has provided an opportunity for many individuals to get indoors and has resulted in a reduction in the number of encampments in city parks down to 40 as of February 21, 2024.

The services provided by the opening of the highly supportive housing units and the cold weather response have supported a human-rights based approach to meeting the basic needs of individuals and has resulted in a decrease in the level of despair, hopelessness, and improved physical health in community. Although there has been a reduction in encampments recently, it is anticipated that as the temporary cold weather responses wind down and warmer weather approaches, there will be a significant increase in encampments as people have no other option for shelter.

The ongoing and anticipated impacts of increasing encampment numbers continue to stretch resources and supports in the community beyond capacity and like last year, will lead to increasing impacts throughout the broader community including street-involved activity and unpredictable or disruptive behaviours, disruption to businesses, trespassing, urban camps, and excessive garbage.

These challenges are related, in part, to the increased number of people experiencing homelessness outpacing the available resources and current community responses put in place to temporarily support this increase ending. This continues to put extraordinary pressure on existing supports and is compounded by the lack of available resources to meet basic needs for people living unsheltered, available indoor spaces and affordable housing with proper supports.

This report is a recognition of the quality services being provided and their impact on the vulnerable populations benefitting from them, and the experiences of operating such services has informed this request. Recognizing the original intent was to accommodate a March 31, 2024, wind-down, it is evident that a need remains, and these services are making a difference. These efforts are happening in parallel to the Health and

Homelessness System Response and the ask is to seek out additional resources to assist in targeted and cumulative measures formed through a human rights lens and a continued focus on more coordinated service provision.

Human rights-based encampment supports are essential for safeguarding the dignity and well-being of individuals facing housing insecurity. These supports encompass a spectrum of services aimed at upholding fundamental human rights, including access to safe shelter, adequate nutrition, healthcare, and social services. By prioritizing human rights principles, such as non-discrimination, equality, and dignity, these supports ensure that marginalized communities, including homeless individuals, are treated with respect and receive the assistance they need to regain stability.

Moreover, a rights-based approach acknowledges the voices of those experiencing homelessness, empowering them to actively participate in decision-making processes regarding their living conditions and opportunities to secure shelter and housing. By taking a human rights approach to encampment supports, our community can strive towards more inclusive and equitable solutions to address homelessness while upholding the inherent dignity of every individual.

The City of London Housing Stability Services team is working with community collaborators through the encampment strategy table to continue to provide these temporary day/overnight spaces while the development of a more fulsome community strategy is completed and in alignment with the collective efforts of the system response.

London currently funds approximately 323 beds within its existing emergency shelter system as recently approved through the stability of the sector report. 16 respite and 18 transitional spaces through the existing two hubs that are currently operating in community. The city also currently funds 15 resting space beds operated by London Cares. These spaces are consistently at or near capacity. As such, the temporary response aims to continue to support individuals in crisis, meet an individual's human rights basic needs and increase connectivity to primary social services.

Program locations and dates of operation:

Day Drop-In Space:

- London Cares- 602 Queens Ave, April 1, 2024, to May 31, 2024, Open 2 shifts of 3 hours, 5 days a week (M-F). Services include showers, laundry, washrooms, basic needs provision.
- Safe Space London, 679 Dundas Street, April 1, 2024, to May 31, 2024, program includes 15 drop-in spaces for women Tuesday through Saturday.

Night Drop-In Space:

- Safe Space London, 679 Dundas Street, April 1, 2024, to May 31, 2024, program includes 15 overnight drop-in spaces for women only.

2.3 Procurement Process

Civic Administration is recommending, to amend the existing purchase of service agreements with both London Cares and Safe Space London for an additional two months, April 1, 2024, through to May 31, 2024, in accordance with section 20.3 Contract Amendments of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy. Section 20.3 outlines the following as it pertains to contract amendments:

- a. No amendment to a contract shall be made unless the amendment is in the best interest of the City.
- b. No amendment that changes the price of a contract shall be agreed to without a corresponding change in requirement or scope of work.

c. Amendments to contracts are subject to the identification and availability of sufficient funds in appropriate accounts within City Council approved budgets including authorized amendments.

Noting that City Council must authorize contract amendments in accordance with Section 20.3 (e);

“(ii) the total amended value of the contract will exceed the Council approved source of financing by an amount greater than \$50,000 or 3% of original contract value, whichever is greater, and there are available funds.”

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

The total cost of the proposed contract extensions is up to \$268,600. The source of funding will be through existing Housing Stability Service budgets. Funding for this response is available on a one-time basis.

Attached as Schedule 1 “Program Extension Expected Costs” provides a breakdown by agency of service to be provided, cost estimate, and duration.

Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager Social and Health Development

Cc:
Lynne Livingstone, City Manager
Scott Mathers, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Economic Development
Kelly Scherr, Deputy City Manager, Environment, and Infrastructure
Anna Lisa Barbon, Deputy City Manager, Finance Supports
Tara Pollitt, Deputy City Manager, Legal Services
Cheryl Smith, Deputy City Manager, Neighbourhood and Community-Wide Services
John Paradis, Deputy City Manager, Enterprise Supports

Schedule 1: Program Extension Expected Costs

Program/Service	Duration Up To:	Agency	Cost Estimate	
Day Drop-in	2 months	London Cares Homelessness Response	Staff Costs	\$41,600
			Security	\$77,500
			Operating Costs	\$10,000
			Participant Costs	\$7,500
			Admin	\$3,000
			TOTAL	Up to \$139,600
Day and Overnight Drop-in	2 months	Safe Space	Staff Costs	\$73,000
			Operating Costs	\$33,000
			Participant Costs	\$6,500
			Admin	\$16,500
			TOTAL	Up to \$129,000
			TOTAL	\$268,600

March 3, 2024

To the Chair and Members, of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

At this current time, as I write this, there is no report to read. All there is to go by is the following, "meeting has been called to consider the continuation of life preserving services for vulnerable Londoners." Its Sunday, and can not find information online, providing more details of this meetings agenda, and from what we understand, if the public would like to submit an item to the Tuesday meeting, then it needs to be sent to the clerk by Monday morning by 9am. Because this SPPC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 5 for 9:30am, followed later by a City Council meeting, held later that same day.

We have concerns, and questions.

We would email our local Ward 13 Councillor. But he has mentioned in the past, about the many emails he receives, and we are sure that by the time he read this organizations email, this matter will have been decided upon, voted on, and closed.

From what local Media has published, we assume that this SPPC meeting will be about extending additional funding for London Cares, and its drop-in service.

We asked that funding. For London Cares drop-in services, Not be provided.

The Midtown Neighbourhood is directly across the street from the London Cares location at 602 Queens Avenue.

Things have drastically changed since a year ago. The Midtown Neighbourhood is now hosting two Cold Winter response program sites, for vulnerable people. Operated by Ark Aid Street Mission. With one location at 566 Dundas Street, (My Sisters Place) with a nighttime program and the second site 24/7 located at the former Bishop Cronyn Memorial Church, located on the corner of Queens Avenue and William Street. Where services for vulnerable people are also being provided for.

These winter response programs, just like the past winter responses program, that Ark Aid Street Mission operated in this neighbourhood, back in 2020, (when at that time, the site was 415 York Street, where trailers were used.) Were and are only Temporary and not permanent sites, from Midtown residents understanding.

What this all means is that there is now even a higher over concentration of a high acuity population in the neighbourhood. And it is being felt in a big way.

From what we have witnessed, when individuals leave the 602 Queens Ave, property. They are no longer a concern of London Cares, but they do become the concerns of the residents and businesses.

The neighbourhood is now dealing with a higher increase of vandalism, garbage, open drug use, and antisocial behaviours displayed by individuals. If you asked anyone what their thoughts were on the area, you would hear a response, that is more negative than positive. This is what Midtown Community Organization is trying to change. Trying to change the narrative and take a negative and turn it into a positive.

However, it is not easy, when the city keeps funding programs and services that are for the vulnerable, and places many of these services, in to one geographic area that is within a one Kilometer radius of Adelaide and Dundas Street.

Where are the facilities for the vulnerable Londoners, in Ward 11? Or Ward 6? or even Ward 9? Homeless, and vulnerable individuals are their too, and its unfair to expect the disadvantage, vulnerable people, to travel all the way down to this area of the city to get services.

The city has a homeless problem and there are many vulnerable people throughout the city. This is a city-wide matter, and solutions should also be city wide.

Please keep in mind that Midtown, is already presently doing a lot to help the wider city community by hosting the following permanent services for the cities vulnerable. Such as.

Mission Services- Men's Mission 459 York Street.

Carepoint and Counterpoint Harm Reduction Programs, 446 York Street. (Operated by Regional HIV/Aids Connection.)

My Sisters' Place 566 Dundas Street. (Operated by CMHA Thames Valley)

Clinic 528 Dundas Street.

If this committee, wishes to extend the funding, then they need to start thinking about the concerns of the local stakeholders, Midtown businesses and residents who call this community home.

As an inner core neighbourhood, we would really like to know what services and programs the city has for the local Midtown businesses, residents. For example, when it comes to helping clean up the graffiti that some one spray painted on their property.

Also, has any thought been taken to having a report created, explaining what the impact is to the surrounding area? For we are seeing the impacts that the homelessness crisis

is having, to the local economy and residents, when there is a facility like the one at 602 Queens Ave, which is catering to the needs of the entire city's vulnerable population?

As Midtowners, we really can not be expected to take on anymore of the city's social problems. We are already doing our part to help the city. It is now time for other parts of the city to do theirs.

Thank you.

Cheryl Watson, Coordinator

Warner Thomas, Coordinator

Deanna Brown, Coordinator

Midtown Community Organization