

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members, Community and Protective Services Committee Meeting
From: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development
Subject: Emergency Treatment Fund (ETF) Approval of Federal Contribution Agreement (Reducing Substance Use Harms Through Basic Needs and Healthcare at 602 Queens “The Commons”)
Date: April 7, 2025

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the following actions **BE TAKEN**; the attached proposed by-law (“Appendix A”) **BE INTRODUCED** at the Municipal Council meeting to be held on April 22, 2025 to:

- 1) **Ratify** the Contribution Agreement Arrangement #2526-HQ-000038 between the City and Canada (Minister of Health), executed by the City Manager.
- 2) **Delegate Authority** severally to the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, to approve amending agreements with His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health (“Canada”) for the Substance Use and Addictions Program – Emergency Treatment Fund Arrangement (ETF) (Reducing Substance Use Harms Through Basic Needs and Healthcare at 602 Queens “The Commons”) #2526-HQ-000038 (“Contribution Agreement”) attached as Schedule 1; and
- 3) **Delegate Authority** severally to the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, to approve service provider agreements (including amending agreements) with third party services providers that relate to the Contribution Agreement (“Purchase of Service Agreement”) attached as Schedule 1.

Executive Summary

In November 2024, Civic Administration submitted proposals to Health Canada’s Substance Use and Addictions Program – Emergency Treatment Fund (ETF). In March 2025, the proposal *“Reducing Substance Use Harms Through Basic Needs and Healthcare at 602 Queens “The Commons”* was approved for funding, totaling \$444,250 for 2025-2026.

The project aims to urgently address health care (e.g., overdose events, deaths from overdose) and basic needs among people who use substances and are experiencing homelessness. This project will provide wraparound support to address the effects of the health and homelessness crisis on individuals experiencing homelessness in a supportive environment at The Commons for 12 months in the City of London.

This Agreement outlines the terms for Canada’s funding contribution, which must be used solely for the project in accordance with applicable laws.

The Agreement will be effective on April 1, 2025 and end on March 31, 2026.

To ensure the 2025-2026 funding be secured, we required the City Manager and Deputy City Manager to sign off before March 21, 2025. City Council will then ratify the agreement and provide final approval on April 22, 2025, to align with the required funding deadlines.

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.

Analysis

1.0 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- London's Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response - Proposed Community Encampment Response Plan (SPPC: June 18, 2024)
- Whole of Community System Response – Community Encampment Plan: Implementation Recommendations 2025 and Basic Needs Update (SPPC: October 29, 2024)
- Life Stabilization Purchase of Service Agreements – Single Source Procurements (CPSC December 2, 2024)
- Emergency Treatment Fund (ETF) Approval of Federal Contribution Agreement (CPSC March 17, 2025)

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Background

In November 2024 Civic Administration, submitted multiple projects to Health Canada's call for proposals to access the Substance Use and Addictions Program - Emergency Treatment Fund focusing on projects that could be mobilized quickly, match the scope of the federal program, and that could effectively make use of the time-limited funding.

This fund, for the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year through Health Canada, will continue to rapidly respond to the high demand for urgent funding needs that municipalities and Indigenous communities have already identified. The ETF provides urgent, targeted funding to municipalities and Indigenous communities to support rapid responses to the overdose crisis. Funding will address urgent and immediate needs, as defined by the communities, to bolster local capacity and provide access to culturally appropriate, trauma-informed and evidence-based programs and services.

In March 2025, Civic Administration received project approval from Health Canada for the second of two submitted proposals. The approved project entitled "*Reducing Substance Use Harms Through Basic Needs and Healthcare at 602 Queens 'The Commons'*" and attached as Schedule 1, received \$444,250 in funding for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The funding objective for the City of London's application to urgently alleviating substance-related harms through outreach to encampments are as follows:

- To alleviate substance related harms among people experiencing homelessness in response to an increasingly toxic drug supply.
- To address the immediate basic needs and acute health and safety concerns of individuals living unsheltered to decrease deprivation linked to increasing overdose events and overdoses which are disproportionately experienced by unhoused individuals.
- To decrease the increased desperation of individuals living unsheltered due to lack of access to basic needs through the provision of service, such as water, food, and hygiene.

The project proposal includes supports for individuals experiencing concurrent mental disorders (schizophrenia, bipolar, substance use disorder, etc.) with complex multimorbidity, including chronic health challenges (diabetes, HIV, HEP C, etc.) combined with long-term homelessness (precariously housed/sheltered) and poverty, often experiencing multiple unmet basic needs (Social Determinants of Health; social isolation,

food insecurity, etc.). Although each individual experience of deprivation is unique, this description reflects a broad array of challenges. The application submitted by Civic Administration does not contemplate or suggest any funding for the distribution or affiliation with the Safer Opioid Supply program or directly fund any Supervised Consumption Site services.

602 Queens – The Commons:

“The Commons” is a bricks and mortar location for delivering basic needs, safety, hygiene and health services for people experiencing homelessness. Having developed trusting relationships, this low-barrier, place will be a fundamental anchor for supporting people living unsheltered through pathways to hubs, highly supportive housing, and other forms of housing and recovery support. Through this project, The Commons will continue to provide a model of care which closely integrates primary healthcare and social services. Providing responsive services which can support physical health, mental health, social wellness and navigating the relationship between these factors is critical due to the high rates at which these complexities present in those who may access care.

The services at The Commons ensure that every effort is made to leverage Ontario Health dollars already in place which ensures people not only can have a meal, access showers and laundry, and connect with a variety of services, such as income support, applying for identification, housing support, but also direct medical care from the Thames Valley Family Health Team.

Many who visit The Commons experience challenges attending appointments in the community for a variety of reasons, such as transportation barriers, anxiety attending without support, or being in poor health.

Bringing service providers to where people are, means service providers are better able to connect with the individuals they support and individuals will access more services more often, thereby creating stronger connections and support networks, all inside and out of the elements. Through the ongoing provision of services at The Commons, individuals are more likely to come indoors and as such access primary care and income supports.

Those who are most marginalized and disconnected from care are at greatest risk and experience disproportionate health impacts. This primary healthcare + basic needs model is low-barrier, creating pathways to care for individuals with complex social and medical needs. These interventions assist an individual on the pathways to stable housing and help break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

Health Service Partnerships:

Multiple partnerships with health agencies who operate out of and within the Commons will be leveraged with the EFT funding supports. This includes the Thames Valley Family Health team which is breaking down barriers faced by those experiencing homelessness to offer primary health care services including health care planning, primary care, health and wellness services, harm reduction, addiction and treatment services through existing community service pathways. Regional HIV/AIDS Connection will be offering monthly HIV and Hep-C testing, the H.O.M.E. program will be offering access weekly for system navigation, ID support and additional on-site health care. The Middlesex London Ontario Health Team is offering care through the Lower Limb Preservation Project, Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy will be providing weekly drop-in connection for Indigenous participants where access to medicines, cultural support and activities will be available; and Ontario Health at Home program will be offering on-site PSW care where applicable and when approved as well as access to supports through care coordination.

2.2 Procurement Process

Civic Administration is recommending that a contract amendment for London Cares in support of the recommendations of this report be made under Section 20.3 e). of The

Corporation of the City of London Procurement of Goods and Services Policy, stating Committee and City Council must approve the following awards: Contract Amendments exceeding \$50,000 or 3% of original contract value, whichever is greater.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

As part of finalizing the Contribution Agreement, the following costs were identified.

Contractual Services	
2025-2026	
\$216,662	
Description:	Total wages and benefit including 3 FTE Harm Reduction Workers / Drop In Staff, 3 FTE Crisis response staff/security (inclusive of benefits).
Justification:	Key positions to meet program objectives of direct service provision, direct pathways, and basic needs provision.
Travel and accommodations	
2025-2026	
\$25,000	
Description:	Participant travel includes vehicle lease costs, insurance, gas, maintenance and alternative transportation such as taxis.
Justification:	Participant travel costs to support participants to access services and supports.
Materials and Supplies	
2025-2026	
\$23,800	
Description:	Materials and supplies for participants.
Justification:	Individuals will require supplies related to support and care through the services they access at The Commons.
Equipment	
2025-2026	
\$92,000	
Description:	Program technology such as phones, iPads, computers, et. and program van
Justification:	Staff will need to be mobile and will need access to technology as they provide service in community. Van required to transport recovery coach to clients in remote areas, and to bring clients to monthly program events
Rent and Utilities	
2025-2026	
\$54,000	
Description:	Rental space for staff offices
Justification:	Staff will require office space for meetings, planning and administrative tasks
Performance Measurement & Evaluation	
2025-2026	
\$7,200	
Description:	Engagement of an evaluation team to provide tool development, data collection, analysis, reporting and evaluation support.
Justification:	Commitment to the evaluation of this initiative.
Other Costs	

2025-2026
\$25,588
Description: Elder Honoraria, Cleaning and maintenance of office, staff wellness, professional development and health and safety, leadership and admin support, insurance, accounting, bookkeeping and auditing, office supplies and legal costs.
Justification: Ensuring staff and operations are supported during this initiative

4.0 Conclusion

The next steps once the agreement is executed will be to engage and negotiate with London Cares who are already providing these services and finalize the budget and services to be provided as per the requirements of the Contribution Agreement. This project helps leverage previous Council approved contributions from the Life Stabilization budget, provincial health funding, and ensures there’s dignified indoor services being offered to the most marginalized in the community. Leveraging provincial and now federal funding will assist individuals in their pathway to housing.

Recommended by:	Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager Social Health Development
Cc:	
Sandra Datars Bere,	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