

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES MEETING ON JULY 16, 2018
FROM:	MARTIN HAYWARD CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT:	Request from City of Toronto regarding Shelter Spaces for Refugee/Asylum Claimants

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the City Manager, the following report regarding the request from the City of Toronto regarding Shelter Spaces for Refugee/Asylum Claimants **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- None

BACKGROUND

At the Regional & Single Tier CAO's (RSTCAO) meeting held on June 22, 2018, the City of Toronto discussed Toronto's response to the arrival of refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto and the unprecedented and urgent situation the City is facing with more than 3,300 refugee/asylum claimants in the shelter system. Furthermore, the City of Toronto has exhausted all available facilities, personnel and financial resources to meet the needs of refugee/asylum claimants currently in Toronto's shelter system.

In addition to the public calls for assistance to other levels of government, Toronto City Manager Giuliana Carbone wrote a letter to the members of the RSTCAO caucus individually on June 29, 2018 (attached as **Appendix A**). In this letter, Ms. Carbone wrote:

"I am writing to ask that you [City of London] consider whether your municipality has any appropriate, immediately available, publicly or privately owned sites or facilities, including hotels, which could be used or re-purposed as shelter spaces for refugees/asylum claimants."

In recent weeks, federal officials have responded to calls for action from the City of Toronto, pointing to the fact that federal dollars have been identified but their disbursement requires a formal request from the Province of Ontario.

DISCUSSION

The City of London responded to the letter from the Toronto City Manager on July 6, 2018 (attached as **Appendix B**) which outlined the current stresses on the City of London's shelter system.

London is home to one of Ontario's few family-oriented shelters – Rotholme Women's & Family Shelter, Mission Services London. Rotholme provides emergency shelter services for male or female-led two parent and single parent families. Rotholme operates 41 beds and can accommodate approximately 20 families. Rotholme is currently operating at 150% capacity, and, at times, occupancy rates exceed 200%.

Additionally, London's broader emergency shelter system is operating at 100% capacity. This includes individual-focussed men's and women's shelters and is a result of the use of non-prescription drugs, mental illness and other street-involved behaviours.

The extremely high occupancy of our family emergency shelter is a result of the local pressures of families experiencing homelessness and refugees crossing the U.S. border and arriving in London requiring emergency shelter.

For the period of January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018, the following is a summary of refugee families at the Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter:

- Total number of refugees: 80
- Total number of households: 18
- Average family size: 4

The City of London is also in a similar position to the City of Toronto with respect to the availability of temporary housing opportunities in residences in area post-secondary institutions. With classes resuming next month, these facilities will soon be unavailable for these alternative uses.

The limited availability of affordable housing in London has also been identified as a challenge to settling refugees crossing the U.S. border. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has found that London's overall vacancy rate is 1.8%, with the vacancy rate of one, two and three bedroom apartments standing at 1.7%, 1.9% and 1.8%, respectively.

The Government of Canada has identified \$11 million in targeted funding to offset the immediate housing costs of refugees crossing the U.S. border as part of a \$50 million national fund. The provincial government has recently responded that the federal government should cover the entire cost of resettling refugees crossing the U.S. border and applying for asylum status.

CONCLUSION

The City of London recognizes and appreciates the challenges that that the City of Toronto is facing with respect to refugees crossing the U.S. border. The City of London also faces a critical shortage of emergency shelter beds as the broader shelter system is currently operating at full capacity.

The City of London will continue to work alongside our municipal counterparts, including the City of Toronto, as well as our federal and provincial partners to develop sustainable solutions for managing the influx of refugees crossing the U.S. border and locating in London. The development of a regional strategy alongside all orders of government is, and will remain a priority.

PREPARED BY:	CONCURRED BY:
ROSANNA WILCOX DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC INNOVATION	SANDRA DATARS BERE MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME

CONCURRED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
LYNNE LIVINGSTONE, MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN & FIRE SERVICES	MARTIN HAYWARD CITY MANAGER

APPENDIX "A"



Giuliana Carbone
Interim City Manager

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June 29, 2018

Martin Hayward
City Manager, City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6A 4L9

Dear Mr. Hayward,

I am following up on our discussion at the last Regional & Single Tier CAO's (RSTCAO) meeting on June 22, 2018 regarding Toronto's response to the arrival of refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto. As outlined in my presentation, we are dealing with an unprecedented and urgent situation, and request your assistance. There are currently more than 3,300 refugee/asylum claimants in the Toronto shelter system. This includes refugee/asylum claimants and families staying in more than 10 different hotels across the city. On May 23, 2018, with the City's hotel program having also reached its capacity, the City of Toronto activated its Emergency Contingency Plan and began temporarily housing refugee/asylum claimants at two college dormitories (Centennial and Humber College).

The situation is critical and urgent. The City of Toronto has exhausted all available facilities, personnel, and financial resources to meet the needs of refugee/asylum claimants currently in the municipal shelter system. On August 9, 2018, the City will lose access to the 800 temporary shelter spaces at Centennial and Humber Colleges, and the City has no capacity to relocate the individuals and families currently staying in them. Compounding this problem is the fact that, historically, the flow of refugee/asylum claimants has increased significantly annually in the final weeks of June and throughout the summer months, a trend which is expected to be repeated this year.

We have requested immediate action from the federal and provincial governments, prioritizing the need for an urgent regional response facilitated by the federal and provincial governments focused on placing families across the region or province. Our most pressing immediate need is for additional space to house refugee/asylum claimants before August 9th. I am writing to ask that you consider whether your municipality has any appropriate, immediately available, publicly or privately owned sites or facilities, including hotels, which could be used or re-purposed as shelter spaces for refugee/asylum claimants. We have submitted the same request to the federal and provincial governments but no facilities have been identified or provided to house refugee/asylum claimants beyond August 9, 2018.



APPENDIX "A"

2

City of Toronto staff would be pleased to answer any questions you may have with regards to identifying suitable sites. If any suitable sites are identified we will work with our provincial counterparts on next steps, including assessing feasibility and supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request, and I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Giuliana Carbone
Interim City Manager

- c. Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Steve Orsini, Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Ontario Public Service
Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Cindy Lam, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Mayor John Tory, City of Toronto
Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Acting Deputy City Manager, City of Toronto

APPENDIX "B"



300 Dufferin Avenue
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON
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London
CANADA

July 6, 2018

Giuliana Carbone
Interim City Manager, City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West, East Tower, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Ms. Carbone,

Thank you for your letter dated June 29, 2018 regarding the City of Toronto's response to the arrival of refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto. I certainly appreciate the difficulties Toronto is facing. The City of London also faces a critical shortage in shelter beds, and many of the available hotel spaces in the City have also been filled.

The City of London continues to see the arrival of many refugees and asylum claimants which is straining not only our shelter services, but also our social services. In addition, we continue to face a rise in mental health and addictions issues that are also contributing to a challenging situation in our community.

We would be happy to partner with you to seek federal and or provincial assistance in order to deal with these immigration and health matters.

Sincerely,

Martin Hayward
City Manager

- c. Mayor Matt Brown, City of London
Lynne Livingstone, Managing Director Neighbourhood, Children & Fire Services,
City of London