

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON DECEMBER 1, 2020
FROM:	KEVIN DICKINS ACTING MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME
SUBJECT	CITY OF LONDON 2020-2021 WINTER RESPONSE PROGRAM FOR UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Acting Managing Director, Housing, Social Services and Dearness Home, that the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to The City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for unsheltered individuals to:

- (a) **ENDORSE** and **APPROVE** this proposed report dated December 01, 2020, "City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals"; and
- (b) that Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to undertake all administrative acts which are necessary in relation to this report;

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- Municipal Council Approval Of The Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 as Required Under The Housing Services Act, 2011 (CPSC: December 3, 2019)
- Core Area Action Plan (SPPC: October 28, 2019)
- Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2010 – 2024 (CHLC: November 18, 2013)
- Homeless Prevention System for London Three Year Implementation Plan (CPSC: April 22, 2013)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval for the implementation of an urgent winter response for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in order to provide lifesaving temporary measures.

BACKGROUND

Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (2019) London's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (2019), is the approved guiding document for homeless prevention and housing in the City of London, and was developed in consultation with Londoners.

Providing the right level of support at the right time to decrease the use of emergency services and creating an outreach system and rapid response to support individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness are strategic areas of focus within the 2019 – 2024 Housing Stability Action Plan. London needs to increase system capacity and availability of services across sectors to meet the housing stability needs of

individuals and families in crisis, including housing individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Core Area Action Plan

Establishing more daytime Resting Spaces and implementing a breakfast program are actions identified in the Core Area Action Plan. London needs to increase the number of spaces available during the winter months for individuals to rest and meet their basic needs such as food, water, change of clothing and bathrooms. Warm spaces are needed for individuals who sleep unsheltered to access breakfast essentials of daily living including food, drink, and connectivity.

Winter Response Program:

As a result of COVID-19, existing programs and services are limited in their ability to expand capacity during the winter months.

Given the condensed timelines to draft a winter response solution, a number of existing spaces were considered. This included a number of empty buildings in the downtown, old east village and Hamilton Road corridor. These buildings ultimately did not meet the immediate needs of the response due to a variety of reasons. Including, capital upgrade requirements, location and space operating challenges.

Beyond the current available 200 shelter spaces, 122 hotel rooms and 15 resting spaces, the winter response is proposing 60 additional overnight spaces with the ability to expand as staffing supports permit. An increase of up to 40 resting spaces through an alternate approvals process as well as adding an extra 10 hotel rooms will support existing outreach teams who continue to support those individuals that choose not to engage or access the proposed winter response.

This response is intended to support the unsheltered and marginalized individuals of London over the winter months. The response aims to meet individuals' basic needs, ensure life saving measures are in place, increase connectivity and to provide a solution to assist our most vulnerable Londoners to get out of the cold. Significant background planning has taken place over several weeks both internally across all service areas of the Corporation and as well with several community organizations that serve vulnerable individuals.

To address the COVID-related health regulations, the Homeless prevention team have been in close contact with the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to work to address any concerns related to COVID-19.

MLHU has approved the current plans presented to date and have provided civic administration with resources to maintain COVID-19 provincial and local guidelines, and has advised the plan as discussed meets current expectations. MLHU has also assisted civic administration in preparing an Outbreak Plan for both the day spaces and the 24/7 spaces.

Both the day spaces and the 24/7 spaces will follow existing community policies and procedures that have previously been established and are currently in use, in the event a participant should have a positive COVID screening.

The homeless prevention team has consulted with the City's Risk Management department related to liability, risk and insurance. Feedback included recommendations related to the use of current contracting protocols and processes for other homeless prevention funding agreements that promote safety, indemnification provisions and compliance.

Day Space

Day Spaces are focused on providing a warm space for individuals to get out of the cold, access basic needs and build a sense of community in a socially distanced environment. Locations will be staffed by community social services staff and volunteers. City of

London staff will be onsite during operating hours. Each site can accommodate up to thirty (30) individuals at a time. There will be two Day Space locations:

- Hamilton Road Seniors Centre (525 Hamilton Road)
- Dundas Field House (177-179 Dundas Street).

Day Space locations are owned or leased by the City of London.

Day Space with Overnight Resting Spaces

Overnight Resting Spaces are low barrier spaces for individuals who are sleeping unsheltered to rest, access basic needs and supports. Two locations will operate Day Space and Overnight Resting Spaces. Locations will be staffed by community social services staff and volunteers. City of London staff will be onsite during operating hours. Each site can accommodate up to thirty (30) individuals at a time during the day and overnight. There will be two combination Day Space and Overnight Resting Spaces:

- T-Block (652 Elizabeth Street)
- Privately owned surface level parking lot in the Core Area

Combination Day Space with Overnight Resting Spaces will be provided through the use of heated temporary structures enclosed by construction fencing. The structures will be purchased by the City of London and therefore can be reused for different initiatives as needed. Services provided to the participants will include access to washrooms, showers and laundry services.

Increased access to washrooms, showers and laundry facilities have been identified as a need during COVID-19. The Winter Response will benefit from increased access to these services in the community.

PROCUREMENT

Procurement for the Winter Response will be supported through section - 14.2 of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy. The urgent nature of the procurement is a result of the reduction of capacity in emergency shelters and homeless serving programs related to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. Implementation will take place rapidly in December 2020 and through to the end of April 2021.

Given these circumstances, there is a threat to:

1. Public Health
2. The maintenance of essential City Services; and,
3. The welfare and protection of persons, property, or the environment; and the event or occurrence necessitates the immediate need for good or services to mitigate the emergency and time does not permit for a competitive procurement process.

The Winter Response will continue to leverage existing purchase agreements with service providers, seek volunteers, and benefit from donations coordinated by community organizations.

Civic Administration, upon approval of this plan will move quickly to finalize any and all agreements or procurements in order to support the vulnerable in an expedited manner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The anticipated costs of the winter response program are outlined in the table below.

Item	2020 Costs	2021 Costs
Building	\$0	\$10,000
Staffing	\$102,225	\$715,550
Food & Beverages	\$25,675	\$179,800
One-time Capital	\$815,000	\$0
Cleaning	\$800	\$16,000
Operational	\$15,675	\$109,650
Additional Security	\$5,000	\$45,000
Administration	\$8,250	\$57,750
Contingency	\$0	\$200,000
TOTAL:	\$972, 625	1,333,750

Funding is available in the Homeless Prevention 2020 approved operating budget to support the costs incurred up to and including December 31, 2020.

As part of the 2020 Mid-Year Operating Budget Monitoring Report presented to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee on September 22, 2020, Council endorsed the following recommendation:

"[...] c) notwithstanding the Council approved Surplus/Deficit Policy, the Civic Administration BE AUTHORIZED to allocate the year-end Property Tax Supported Budget surplus as follows:

- i) \$5 million to the Economic Development Reserve Fund to support social & economic recovery measures;*
- ii) the balance to the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve as a funding source to offset anticipated financial impacts of COVID-19 on the City's 2021 Budget;"*

In the event that the costs of supporting the winter response in 2021 exceed available approved 2021 operating budgets, Civic Administration intends to utilize a portion of the 2020 property tax supported surplus contributed to the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve (in accordance with the recommendation above) to fund the costs incurred in January to April 2021.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
DEBBIE KRAMERS MANAGER, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME	CRAIG COOPER MANAGER, HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME
RECOMMENDED BY:	
KEVIN DICKINS ACTING MANAGING DIRECTOR HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES AND DEARNESS HOME	