

Winter 2024-25 Unsheltered Homelessness Service Enhancements

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	September 9, 2024
Type:	Managers' Reports
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

Report Summary

This report provides a recommendation regarding enhancement services over the winter of 2024-25 to support the needs of the unsheltered homeless population.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves increased daytime, weekend, and overnight drop-in hours at the Samaritan Centre, operated by New Hope Outreach, to accommodate up to 25 persons from October 1, 2024, to April 30th, 2025 for a 2024 cost of \$209,527 and a 2025 cost of \$279,370;

AND THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves re-purposing the trailer located at 24 Energy Court, previously used for the Supervised Consumption Site, to operate an overnight warming center for up to 50 people from November 1, 2024, to April 30th, 2025, with anticipated 2024 capital costs to repurpose the trailer of \$50,000 and operating costs subject to future Council approval once operating costs can be identified through conducting an Expression of Interest;

AND THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves a Request for Proposals for a service provider to operate the overnight warming center at Energy Court to be funded through capital funding offset by any Federal funds received as outline in the report entitled "Winter 2024-25 Unsheltered Homelessness Service Enhancements" from the General Manager of Community Development presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee meeting on September 9, 2024.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

The report supports the Council's Strategic Plan around Quality of Life and Place as it aligns with the Population Health Priorities of Indigenous Youth, Mental Health, Housing and Healthy Streets by providing additional services for individuals who are homeless in the community. This report has no relationship to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

The total 2024 costs of \$259,527 are not currently budgeted and would form part of the year-end position. This amount includes \$209,527 to extend operating hours at the Samaritan Centre for the period of October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 as well as \$50,000 for renovations to the trailer located at 24 Energy Court to repurpose the space as an overnight warming centre. This does not include operating costs for 24 Energy Court as these costs will be presented for approval to Council at a future date.

The total 2025 costs are \$279,370 and would be added to the 2025 base budget. This amount reflects incremental costs to extend operating hours at the Samaritan Centre for January 1, 2025 to April 30, 2025.

Additional funding for enhanced encampment services is expected to be announced by the Federal government this fall which would offset these costs.

Background

The number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the community has continued to increase steadily over the past 18 months. Under a coordinated encampment response, community outreach, by-law services and social services staff track the number of encampment sites and the number of people staying in encampments. As per the data below, the number of people staying in a homeless encampment has risen from 18 people across 9 sites in January 2023 to 200 people across 44 sites in June 2024.

Encampment	# of people	# of sites
January 2023	18	9
June 2023	46	36
January 2024	106	22
June 2024	200	44

The City holds a By Name List of people experiencing homelessness in the community, who have consented to have their name added to the list. The number of people who have consented to have their name on the By Name List, and have report sleeping outdoors, either in an encampment or unsheltered, has also steadily increased over the past 18 months.

BNL	# of people sleeping outdoors
January 2023	72
June 2023	75
January 2024	104
June 2024	145

* outdoors = unsheltered + encampments

In December 2023, the city received an additional allocation of \$436,079 from the Federal Reaching Home program under a Winter Unsheltered Homelessness Funding to be utilized by April 30th, 2024. At this point in time, Health Sciences North was reporting increased use of the emergency department as a warming location for homeless individuals and community partners who were seeking additional indoor locations to prevent cold related injuries and death. The additional Federal funding was used to increase access to daytime and overnight warming spaces at several locations including the Samaritan Centre which reached

full capacity with the extended hours.

Additionally, the City funds 73 emergency shelter beds within three emergency shelter programs. Prior to January 2024, the shelter system was able to effectively support the total number of homeless individuals, and the homelessness system did not experience a growth in encampments. From January 1 to June 30, 2024, the shelter capacity has risen to over 96% capacity on average per night and has reached capacity for 57 nights.

The reason for increased homelessness was detailed in the Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030 Report presented to Council in May 2024, and includes the lack of investment in supportive and deep core housing development, inadequate social assistance rates, rising market rents, and increased need for mental health and addiction supports. While longer term recommendations from the Roadmap are implemented, including seeking higher level investments in supportive and deep core housing, increased homelessness prevention, and advocacy for increased social assistance and mental health supports, it is also necessary to ensure that those individuals experiencing homelessness are protected in the interim.

The increase in unsheltered homelessness is being seen in communities across Ontario. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario states “as homelessness continues to escalate in scope, visibility and complexity, communities in Ontario are seeing a rise in homeless encampments.”

Samaritan Centre Drop In Centre

New Hope Outreach has funding to operate an afternoon drop-in centre from Monday to Friday from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm until December 31st, 2024, at the Samaritan Center located at 344 Elgin Street. This program provides access to a safe space, washrooms, computers, internet, and support staff for up to 25 persons at a time. This drop in is co-located with services provided by the Elgin Street Mission and Blue Door Soup Kitchen including access to free meals, washrooms, showers, laundry, community paramedics, and hairdresser services.

New Hope Outreach has submitted a proposal to extend drop-in operating hours from October 1, 2024, to April 30th, 2025, with an aim to have 24-hour operational supports for an additional cost of \$488,897. The proposed hours are:

Weekdays 8:30 am – 12:00 noon

Saturday and Sunday 11:30 am to 4:30 pm

Nightly 7:00 pm to 8:00 am

Weekdays (January 1, 2024, to April 30, 2024) 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Repurpose of 24 Energy Court

Funded through the City, a trailer was erected at the Municipal Parking Lot at 24 Energy Court to operate a Supervised Consumption Site from September 2022 to March 2024, at which point the program closed its doors due to lack of Provincial funding. In consideration for the previous use, with some capital costs, Staff have identified an opportunity for the trailer to be repurposed for use as an overnight warming center this winter.

Estimated capital costs to repurpose the trailer for use as a warming centre is \$50,000. Following necessary modifications, Staff anticipate the facility will support the provision of warming centre services for up to 50 persons at one time, providing a safe warm space, with access to washrooms, also accommodating necessary support staff and security.

The Request for Proposals will be issued to find an operator for the warming center program, estimated to operate from November 1, 2024, to April 30th, 2025, from 9:00 pm to 8:00 am.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Sudbury/Manitoulin – Off the Street Emergency Shelter

The CMHA Off the Street Shelter currently operates 365 days per year, from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. with capacity for 35 individuals. Over the past 12 months, the shelter has operated at a 96% occupancy rate.

The emergency shelter program has submitted a proposal to extend winter program hours for an additional four hours per evening, from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 a.m. Staff are currently awaiting a budget submission from the program for consideration.

Elizabeth Fry Society Safe Harbour House Emergency Shelter

The Elizabeth Fry Society Safe Harbour House Emergency Shelter operates 365 days per year from 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., providing 10 low-barrier shelter beds for adult women and those who identify as non-binary. Safe Harbour House was implemented in 2022 as a response to the shelter capacity pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program has been meeting an important need in increasing the number of shelter beds in the community and enhancing the shelter bed options for women who require low barrier services. Over the past 12 months, the shelter has operated at a 91% occupancy rate.

Staff are in discussion with Elizabeth Fry Society to explore opportunities to expand the program, including securing additional capital to operate the program with an increased number of beds, and funding opportunities through the province to transition a number of emergency shelter beds to transitional housing beds to operate 24 hours per day.

The extension of emergency shelters hours at both CMHA Off the Street Shelter and Elizabeth Fry Safe Harbour House are in alignment with recommendations outlined in the Roadmap to End Homelessness, including the extension of emergency shelter hours to 24 hours and the transition of emergency shelter beds to transitional housing.

Next Steps

With Council approval, staff will enter into a service provider agreement with New Hope Outreach to provide the increased warming center hours.

Remediation of the trailer located at 24 Energy Court will be completed. A Request for Proposals will be conducted for a service provider to operate the overnight warming center from November 1st, 2024, to April 30th, 2025, and a report will be brought back to Council for approval of operating funding as required.

Staff will bring forward recommendations regarding the extension of hours at CMHA Off the Street Shelter and Elizabeth Fry Society Safe Harbour House following the review of proposals and associated budgets submitted by these programs.

Resources Cited

[Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030](#)

[Homeless Encampments in Ontario: A Municipal Perspective](#)