



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 16-358**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Sheldon Laidman, Director, Housing & Social Services
Date of Meeting: November 15, 2016
Subject: Daytime Services and Overflow Shelter Services for Persons
Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Homelessness

Executive Summary:

In January 2015, the 10-Year Plan to end homelessness began implementation in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac. City Council allocated provincial and municipal funding to four priority areas: Prevention/Diversion Programs; Basic Needs Supports (Homeless Prevention Fund); Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelters; and Rapid Re-Housing/Housing First. The purpose of this report is to ensure appropriate daytime services for the homeless are provided, meal programs and drop in services at The Gathering Place are continued, and the Ryandale overflow emergency shelter continues to be funded.

With the new Housing First approach, the emergency shelter system in the City of Kingston changed in July 2015, incorporating shelter specialization by client group and introducing a 15 bed overflow shelter. The total number of shelter beds, inclusive of the overflow shelter, remained unchanged at 86 beds with a goal that as more chronically homeless clients accessing the shelter system are housed, the need for an overflow shelter would be eliminated.

To date, 165 households including a total of 224 people have been housed under the Housing First model. The occupancy rate for the shelter system for the month of September 2016 was 79% and at Ryandale Shelter the occupancy rate was 60% in September. The ideal occupancy rate for the overall shelter system is 90%, which indicates that resources are being allocated appropriately. A goal of the 10-Year Plan is to reduce shelter bed utilization by 50% by 2023. Ryandale Shelter has been working with City staff and community members to develop a plan to re-purpose their shelter facility to offer services which would benefit the Housing & Homelessness Services System (HHSS). At this time, City staff are recommending that Ryandale Shelter be funded until June 30, 2017 as shelter utilization usage does not yet warrant its discontinuation as an overflow shelter. Prior to the expiration of this funding, City staff will

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present a report to Council analyzing the continued need for the overflow shelter and necessary strategies to mitigate the effects of reduced shelter beds in the system.

With the introduction of the HHSS, the City worked with funding partners and the funded shelter providers to provide daytime programming and services. While most shelters were able to offer their shelter clients daytime programming by linking them to other programs and services offered by the shelter agency, the 29 bed co-ed shelter operated by Home Base Housing, known as In From the Cold shelter, lacked the financial resources to allow it to offer daytime programming.

As an interim measure, to provide daytime services for persons experiencing homelessness and as part of the homeless reserve funding strategy, The Gathering Place was funded to allow it to remain open during daytime hours when Ryandale overflow shelter and In From the Cold Shelter are closed. Statistics indicate that about 80 percent of the clients accessing The Gathering Place are not in fact homeless but are clients living in poverty and substandard housing primarily looking for meals and socialization, getting out of the weather, showers and laundry facilities. For homeless persons, it has been determined that it would be more beneficial to fund the In From the Cold Shelter so that it can remain open during the daytime as it would be in a better position to provide programs to clients accessing the shelter. Daytime services would be focused on moving clients from shelters to permanent housing. Providing these services at In From the Cold Shelter would enable Housing First/Rapid Re-Housing housing-based case managers to better connect and engage with their clients and would also enable shelter workers to more effectively work in partnership with housing-based case managers in supporting clients in meeting their housing plan goals. This partnership would increase the capacity of the HHSS to move chronically homeless clients out of shelters and into permanent supported housing. City staff are recommending that Home Base Housing be provided funding to allow it to remain open during the daytime.

This report also recommends that The Gathering Place continue to receive funding for 2017 to primarily focus on the provision of meal and drop in centre services which operates on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday and has been funded since 2006. The Gathering Place serves a need in the community by providing approximately 1,200 meals each month for those who are living in poverty. In 2017, City staff will be working with the United Way to develop a food security plan which will include a review of meal service availability and need in the community. City staff will prepare a report to Council to address meal service availability going forward which could have future implications for The Gathering Place.

Recommendation:

That Home Base Housing be allocated \$149,460, to be included in the 2017 operating budget, to fund staffing to enhance the emergency shelter services currently being provided at In From the Cold emergency shelter by offering daytime services to homeless persons; and

That Ryandale Shelter for the Homeless be allocated \$113,017, representing the amount of funding required to allow Ryandale Shelter to operate as a 15 bed overflow shelter from January

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1 to June 30, 2017, with \$56,508.50 being funded from the Homeless Reserve and \$56,508.50 to be included in the 2017 operating budget; and

That the Kingston Salvation Army - Community & Family Services be allocated funding to allow them to operate The Gathering Place from January 1 to December 31, 2017, with \$70,000 being funded from the Homeless Reserve and \$45,560 to be included in the 2017 operating budget.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Denis Leger, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services Not required

Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston Not required

Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

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Options/Discussion:**Housing and Homelessness Services System**

The 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan), approved by Kingston City Council in December 2013, adopts a Housing First approach to ending chronic and episodic homelessness in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac. Housing First is the widely adopted, evidenced-based approach to ending homelessness in North America. It meets the unique needs of individuals, providing access to permanent housing with tailored supports necessary to sustain their housing. Housing First has been proven to enhance social inclusion, community integration, self-sufficiency and improves quality of life and health.

The City of Kingston introduced its Housing First model by implementing the Housing & Homelessness Services System (HHSS) in January 2015. In 2014, Council approved the allocation of provincial and municipal homelessness funding towards the following four Priority Programs under the HHSS:

- Prevention/Diversion
- Basic Needs Supports (Homeless Prevention Fund)
- Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelters
- Housing First/Rapid Re-Housing (housing and supports)

Emergency Shelter System and Services

Effective July 1, 2015 the Emergency Shelter System and shelter funding model changed in the City of Kingston to specialized shelter client populations and services provided in each emergency shelter. The number of shelter beds available to clients remained unchanged at 86. The shelter system includes a 15 bed overflow at Ryandale Shelter, which was introduced with the intent that as the Housing First system matured and more chronically homeless people accessing the shelter system were housed, the need for overflow shelter beds would decrease.

With these changes to the system, a greater emphasis was placed on moving clients out of shelters and into permanent housing. This included offering daytime services for those who are homeless as opposed to drop in centres. The focus of daytime services would be to provide a range of programs and services designed to assist homeless individuals in their housing searches and to gain the skills to acquire and maintain permanent supportive housing.

With limited provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding available, the City relied on funding partners and the funded shelter providers to offer daytime programming and services. While most shelters were able to offer their shelter clients daytime programming by linking them to other programs and services that the agency operates, the 29 bed co-ed shelter operated by Home Base Housing, known as In From the Cold Shelter, was unable to provide daytime programming in the emergency shelter. The cost estimated to provide sufficient staffing and resources to provide daytime services at In From the Cold is \$149,460.

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In addition, to operate as a true overflow shelter to meet the needs only of clients unable to access beds in the primary shelter system, Ryandale Shelter for the Homeless is closed during the daytime, opening at 6 p.m. to provide overnight accommodation.

The following chart shows the emergency shelters funded in the City of Kingston, the number of beds available, the client group served at that shelter and whether or not daytime services are currently provided by the agency to serve the clients staying in their emergency shelter:

Name of Shelter (Service Provider)	Client Target Group	Number of Beds	Daytime Services Provided by Agency
In From the Cold (Home Base Housing)	Co-ed 24 years of age and older	29	No
Kingston Youth Shelter	Youth 16 to 24 years of age	15	Yes
Elizabeth Fry Shelter	Vulnerable Women 24 years of age and older	8	Yes
Lily's Place (Home Base Housing)	Families	19	Yes
Ryandale Overflow Shelter	All client groups	15	No

Daytime Services

To ensure that clients who are homeless in the City of Kingston have easier access to daytime services, City staff are recommending that Home Base Housing be provided with funding to enable the In From the Cold Shelter to stay open during daytime hours.

Opening the day services program at 540 Montreal Street would allow clients, shelter workers and Housing First/Rapid Re-Housing housing-based case management staff to connect more easily to work on developing and implementing housing plans. The day service would bring in additional programming and service providers to assist clients in their housing searches. The day service program would be open to any individual who is currently homeless. Additionally,

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the new Street Outreach Service being offered through a collaborative effort of several organizations could bring individuals who are on the street back to the Centre for practical assistance.

Home Base Housing has committed that the services to be provided during the daytime would be those which have been proven to be effective in assisting people experiencing homelessness in their development and transition to being housed. Day services may include programs such as social skills, healthy eating, hygiene practices, how to talk to a landlord, how to be a good tenant, living alone, maintaining a home, art groups, literacy classes, exercise classes, harm reduction practices, foot care and dental care.

Establishing day services at 540 Montreal Street can offer the following:

- 1,400 square feet of space which includes laundry facilities, kitchen, washrooms and showers, office space for other agency staff to meet clients, weekly visits from a nurse practitioner (Street Health), telephones and computer access.
- All space is barrier free/accessible.
- Bus stop at the front door.
- Co-located with Housing First/Rapid Re-Housing Case Management. Also, co-located with The Housing Help Centre and the Prevention-Diversion Case Management services.
- Productive programming provided during very cold or very hot weather when it is stressful for individuals who must travel elsewhere in the City to the few places that are consistently open.
- Productive programming for the increased number of homeless individuals who are older and who have medical and mobility challenges and who experience particular difficulty navigating Kingston's streets that they currently have to travel to during the day. Day services at 540 Montreal Street would ease that burden.
- A building equipped with back-up electrical power in case of widespread power interruption.

Overflow Shelter

Ryandale Shelter has operated as a 15 bed overflow shelter since July 1, 2015 and in that capacity, it provides shelter beds to clients who are homeless when there is no other shelter bed available in that client group's primary shelter. The utilization rate for the shelter system varies daily. Under the Plan, a 90% occupancy rate at emergency shelters is considered optimum, indicating that resources are being efficiently allocated. However, due to shelter specialization that is not always possible (i.e. the Youth Shelter and Family shelter may have beds available; however, the co-ed and women's shelter may be full). In September the average occupancy rate overall was 79% with Ryandale Shelter at 60% occupancy. City staff are working closely with Ryandale staff to analyze shelter utilization by clients and to ensure that clients are not staying at Ryandale long term but are moving into the primary shelter system where supports and services are in place.

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To date, 165 households, including a total of 224 people, have been housed under the Housing First model locally, yet there has been no reduction in the number of shelter beds available in the City. City staff continuously analyze the shelter data which is now available as a result of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) database system. While there continues to be peaks in shelter utilization at different times during each month and at different times of the year, overall shelter utilization decreased 9% from 2014 to 2015 (25,995 beds used in 2014 compared to 23,644 used in 2015). This trend of decreasing demand for emergency shelter beds is continuing, as there has been a decrease of 16% in the number of beds used between January and September of 2015 and the same months of 2016. Some of the decreased utilization from 2015 to 2016 is accounted for by the closing of the youth shelter from February through June 2016 due to a fire. There is also an indication that shelter bed utilization from neighbouring communities has increased recently, a trend that has only been identified and monitored through HIFIS with the introduction of our HHSS.

City staff are working closely with the emergency shelter service providers as a group as well as with Ryandale Shelter on an individual basis to analyze shelter utilization and to determine what strategies need to be put into place to allow for the reduction in the demand for and number of funded shelter beds in the community. The Board of Directors of Ryandale Shelter have indicated to City staff that they are dedicated to reducing the number of shelter beds in the community and that they are interested in pursuing options to re-purpose the Ryandale Shelter facility. The Board of Directors has held a number of visioning sessions and is preparing a proposal for a different role, consistent with Housing First for City staff's consideration. At this time, City staff are proposing that Ryandale Shelter be funded to operate as an overflow shelter until June 30, 2017. City staff will report back to City Council on the future of Ryandale's services and on the strategies which will be put into place should there be no overflow shelter beds available. Some examples under consideration include increasing capacity at other shelters, applying stricter diversion practices and repatriation of clients to their home communities.

The Gathering Place

In 2006, The Salvation Army was successful in its bid under the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) to obtain \$115,000 annually to operate a meal program and drop in centre on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, known as The Gathering Place. In 2006, daytime programming was identified as a gap in the services for clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. The contracts with The Gathering Place and other CHPP funded agencies were renewed on an annual basis until 2015 when the City introduced its HHSS which focuses on providing supports and services to those individuals and families most in need who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 2014, the City of Kingston issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to fund only the Priority Programs under the HHSS which would be required to shift the system from one of "managing homelessness" to ending "chronic homelessness".

While meal programs were not funded under the HHSS, by Council resolution, funding for The Gathering Place was extended for 2015 and 2016. Annual funding for The Gathering Place services has been taken from various sources including from the Local Services Realignment

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fund (LSR) and by re-allocating 2015 CHPI surplus funds to offset municipal funding and re-directing the municipal funding to pay for these services.

In addition to providing meals, The Gathering Place provides a place for clients to socialize, do laundry, shower and access other agency and staff supports. Client data and statistics from The Gathering Place program indicate that the vast majority of clients accessing the meal program are not homeless but are living in poverty. Some participants have told staff that offsetting food costs by obtaining a free meal allows them to meet other basic financial obligations such as paying rent or purchasing school supplies thereby preventing their homelessness.

While under the new service delivery and funding model, the Housing Assistance/Emergency Shelter Programs will be providing meals to homeless clients accessing their service, it is recognized that food security is precarious for those living in poverty or on low incomes. Individuals and families are often forced to choose between paying rent, paying utilities or buying food.

The Salvation Army is also one of the funded service providers offering Prevention/Diversion services to clients at risk of homelessness. A Housing Resource Centre is open four mornings a week at The Gathering Place to provide housing resources and supports for clients searching for housing or at risk of homelessness. In 2016, the City contracted with The Salvation Army to open The Gathering Place to fill in system gaps by providing a place for clients staying at both In From the Cold co-ed shelter and Ryandale overflow shelter, to go during the daytime.

Meal Programs

Food Security has been identified as a priority by City Council. There are several free and low cost meal programs offered at different locations throughout the downtown area of the City at various times during the day. At least one meal is served by the different meal providers each day of the week. In 2017, City staff will be working with the United Way to develop a food security plan which will include a review of meal service availability and need in the community. City staff will prepare a report to Council to address meal service availability going forward which could have future implications for The Gathering Place.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

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Financial Considerations:

The uncommitted balance in the Homeless Reserve is currently \$270,000. Allocating \$70,000 from the Homeless Reserve to The Gathering Place and \$56,509 to Ryandale Shelter will reduce the balance to \$143,491.

The remainder of the costs identified to fund these three programs (\$251,528) are included in the Housing portion of the 2017 Housing & Social Services Department budget.

Contacts:

Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services 613-546-4291 extension 1231

Sheldon Laidman, Director, Housing & Social Services 613-546-2695 extension 4957

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Lee Campbell, Manager, Housing and Childcare Programs, Housing & Social Services

Melanie Bale, Financial Analyst, Housing & Social Services

Valerie Watson, Housing Programs Administrator, Housing & Social Services

Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

Lana Foulds, Manager, Financial Planning, Financial Services

Exhibits Attached:

Not applicable