



Region of Waterloo

Interim Housing Solutions: Recommendations to Community Services Committee

August 9, 2022

A home. A community. A better life.

- The Region of Waterloo is working towards a world-class community for all residents because we believe **communities thrive when everyone has a place to call home.**
 - **Ending homelessness in all its forms for every single person that lives in Waterloo Region is crucial to realizing this vision.**

Background

- On June 22, 2022, Regional Council approved a motion directing staff to **"develop a plan to establish interim housing solutions for Regional residents experiencing homelessness including those currently residing in encampments"** for Council's consideration in August.
- This presentation outlines the recommendations for interim housing solutions for Regional Council's consideration following a community engagement process.
- Work towards addressing additional parts of the motion from June 22nd remains underway.

Recommendation #1

- Direct staff to develop a Homelessness Master Plan detailing the strategies and resources necessary to end homelessness in the Region of Waterloo.

Developing a Homelessness Master Plan

- Incorporating lived and living expertise, evidence-based practices, and sector experts into a longer-term plan that focuses on priorities and investments that prevent and end homelessness.
- Considering service enhancements along the Housing Continuum in response to community engagement, including:
 - Abstinence-Based Programs (e.g., Emergency Shelter).
 - Evaluating existing staffing models to incorporate appropriate staffing ratios to ensure services are trauma-informed and person-centered (e.g., given high rates of Acquired Brain Injury among those experiencing homelessness).
 - Enhancing the importance of lived experience in hiring practices and staffing models.
 - Promoting flow through programs and services to ensure available spaces for those who need them the most.

Recommendation #2

- Authorize Staff to prioritize and implement interim housing solutions, to support those experiencing homelessness in the Region of Waterloo, in the following order:
 - 1) Expansion of the Transitional Housing Program, including an Indigenous-focused and led site;
 - 2) Expansion of the Home-Based Support Program;
 - 3) Expansion of the Emergency Shelter Program; and
 - 4) Permit a managed Hybrid Shelter/Outdoor Model.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Transitional Housing**

- Transitional housing refers to a supportive – yet temporary – type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing (e.g., University Ave)

- **Home Based Support**

- A Housing First Service for individuals experiencing homelessness. Rental Supplements are paired with intensive case management to support individuals to find and maintain housing.

- **Emergency Shelter**

- Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for those experiencing homelessness and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

- **Hybrid Shelter/Outdoor Model**

- Any facility or property, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for those experiencing homelessness and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreement and includes managed space for outdoor tenting options.

Our Process



Initial Evaluation Criteria

Quick Implementation

- By early fall

Informed by Lived and Living Experience

- Will meet identified needs

Transitions to Longer-Term Solution

- Flexibility to evolve as needs change

Impact is Measurable

- Collection of data is possible

Access to Individualized Supports

- Ease of provision of supports to people

Staffing

- Model safeguards staff wellbeing (e.g., trauma-informed)

Reduces Chronic Homelessness

- Shortest path to permanent housing

Meets Basic Needs

- Provides food, shelter, sanitation

Initial Interim Housing Solutions

Expand Home-Based Support Program

- Helps people find and keep a home through wrap-around support and rent assistance to make housing in the private market more affordable.

Add Transitional Housing Site(s)

- Helps people with life stabilization by meeting health and housing needs with on-site staffing support.

Implement a Mobile Outreach Team

- A team of outreach staff offering crisis response where people are and linking to services to meet basic needs and connect to housing options.

Add Emergency Shelter Site(s)

- Helps people meet basic needs and connect to housing options through congregate or semi-private overnight accommodations.

Implement a Sanctioned Encampment

- Helps people meet basic needs at a designated site (provision of basic needs infrastructure including access to washrooms without a dedicated service provider).

Implement a Managed Encampment

- Helps people meet basic needs and connect to services at designated site (provision of basic needs infrastructure and dedicated service provider).

Implement a Hybrid Shelter/Outdoor Model

- Helps people meet basic needs and connect to services and housing options at designated site (basic needs infrastructure, dedicated service provider, trailers, shared amenities).

Community Engagement Process

- From July 13-25, Regional staff engaged with the following:
 - Emergency Shelter Service Provider Leadership
 - Unsheltered Working Group
 - Peoples Action Group (Lived Experience)
 - KW Urban Native Wigwam Project
 - Kitchener Lived Expertise Working Group
- Consultations were rich with perspective and wisdom, particularly given half of those engaged with brought a lived experience perspective.
- Additionally, on July 27, 53 encampment residents completed a survey with staff to share their housing needs and preferences.

What We Heard: Community Engagement

- Solutions should be **Lived Experience Informed** and use **Community-Led Processes**
 - *"Region needs to acknowledge that the people living in homelessness are in the best position to make decisions about their lives – not the government."*
 - *"Ongoing [and]...meaningful participation by people impacted by these decisions."*
- Importance of creating and fostering **Community** in all Solutions
 - *"Know that spatial, social displacement from support networks means the difference between life and death."*
- Replicate and Expand the success of **Transitional Housing**
 - *"Transitional Housing - it is proving to be an effective model."*

What We Heard: Community Engagement

- Importance of building in **Peer Support, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed** in designing solutions.
 - *"We know that not one size fits all, making it possible for people to live on their own terms. Even with all of the options that have been provided, it is critical that we approach everyone from a trauma-informed perspective."*
 - *"Harm Reduction must be considered before we start anything."*
- Root solutions in **Human Rights**.
 - *"People have been mistreated so much and so often, they don't feel part of society. It is our responsibility as people to take care of that with love, respect and dignity – basically a human rights based approach."*

What We Heard: Encampment Residents

- People currently residing in encampments shared their experiences at the encampment and their housing and service needs and preferences through an on-site survey (n=53). The following outlines the survey responses:
 - 19% of respondents identify as Indigenous
 - Residents are reluctant to access Emergency Shelter (violence, theft, lack of privacy, couples, pets)
 - Residents are drawn to sense of community and family at the encampment
 - Residents are seeking dignity, respect, washrooms, showers, electricity, food, water and garbage removal at the encampment.
 - 96% expressed a preference for permanent supportive housing
 - Seeking help to find and keep a home (life stabilization, affordability, own space)
 - Seeking support for mental health, substance use difficulties and connection with people they can trust

What We've Heard: Business Community

- Staff are regularly in contact with the business community, many of whom share the following considerations and concerns:
 - Concern for health of their businesses (e.g., ability to attract and retain customers).
 - Concern for physical safety and security of staff and the business.
 - Strong desire to see an end to homelessness in Waterloo Region.

Revised Evaluation Criteria

- Quick Implementation
- Informed by Lived and Living Experience
- Transitions to Longer-Term Solution
- Impact is Measurable
- Access to Individualized Supports
- Staffing
- Reduces Chronic Homelessness
- Meets Basic Needs

Use of initial criteria along with these additions:

- Trauma-Informed
- Rooted in Harm Reduction
- Enables and Incorporates Peer Support
- Builds Community
- Access is Available 24/7

Financial Considerations

2022 Homelessness Budget

2022 Homelessness Budget, In \$000s	FUNDING					2022 Budget
	Provincial		Federal		Regional Levy **	
	Ongoing	One-time	Ongoing	One-time		
<u>Homeless Programs</u>						
Emergency Shelter & Shelter Covid Response	\$ 3,404	\$ 6,686	\$ -	\$ 3,730	\$ 2,738	\$ 16,558
Supportive Housing (Fixed Site)	5,867	-	916	-	2,241	9,024
Rent Supplement	2,263	-	-	-	524	2,787
Community Outreach and Support Services	466	-	-	-	-	466
Administration	842	-	196	-	-	1,038
Total	\$ 12,842	\$ 6,686	\$ 1,112	\$ 3,730	\$ 5,503	\$ 29,873

** Regional property tax levy funding in 2021 was \$2,455K. This amount was increased by \$3,048K in 2022 for the Point in Time service expansion recommendations and House of Friendship mortgage financing (per Committee report CSD-HOU-21-24 dated November 9, 2021.)

Financial Considerations – Strategy Assumptions

Strategy 1

Expand the Transitional Housing Program, including an Indigenous-focused and led site

Assumption Cost per units/bed is based on University Ave. contract which includes staffing and rental
Assumes 125 new beds
Monthly cost per bed is \$3,454
Monthly cost for 125 beds is \$432,000
Capital investment (unknown amount) may be required

Strategy 2

Expand Home-Based Support Program client/spaces

Assumption Cost per client is based on Point in Count Time report from November 2021
Assumes 100 new units
Monthly cost per client/space is \$2,180
Monthly cost for 100 client/spaces is \$218,000

Financial Considerations

Strategy Assumptions...continued

Strategy 3

Expand Emergency Shelter Program spaces

Assumption Current average annual cost for 286 emergency shelter beds
Assumes 50 new beds
Monthly cost per client/space is \$2,538
Monthly cost for 50 beds is \$127,000
Capital investment (unknown amount) may be required

Strategy 4

Permit Managed Hybrid Shelter/Outdoor Model

Assumption Monthly cost from encampment report PDL-LEG-22-31
Monthly cost per space is \$1,566 and assumes 50 residents
Monthly cost for 50 spaces is \$78,000
Additional monthly cost (unknown amount) for staffing will be required
Additional Capital/Infrastructure investment (unknown amount) may be required

Cost Estimates (excl. capital costs)

Estimates rounded to nearest \$1,000

Strategies	Cost per unit per month	# of spaces / clients	Interim Response ¹	Annualized ²
			4 months 2022 Sep 1-Dec 31	12 months 2023 Jan - Dec 31
1 - Transitional Housing	\$ 3,454	100	\$ 1,382,000	\$ 4,145,000
	3,454	25	345,000	1,036,000
2 - Home Based Supports	2,180	100	872,000	2,616,000
3 - Emergency Shelters	2,538	50	508,000	1,523,000
4 - Managed Hybrid Shelter/Outdoor Model	1,566	<u>50</u>	313,000	940,000
	Total	325	\$ 3,420,000	\$ 10,260,000

¹This only reflects the financial forecast, implementation requires a longer timeframe

²The annualized cost does not reflect an additional cost for administration (Regional staffing costs)

Homelessness Budget - Funding Shortfall

\$ Millions	2022	2023
Budget Requirement for Homelessness Funding	\$ (7.0)	\$ (11.0)
<i>SSRF 1x and RH 1x ends and impacts 2023</i>		
<u>2022 Funding Announcements</u>		
Homeless Prevention Program	0.6	0.8
Reaching Home Funding	2.8	3.7
<i>Social Services Relief Fund #5 ends Dec 31/22</i>	3.3	-
Subtotal funding	6.7	4.5
Current Shortfall	(0.3)	(6.5)
<i>Add Proposed Interim Solutions Cost</i>	<i>(3.4)</i>	<i>(10.3)</i>
<i>Revised Regional Homelessness Program Shortfall</i>	<i>\$ (3.7)</i>	<i>\$ (16.8)</i>

2022 Funding Options and 2023 Budget Impacts

For 2022, the funding options being assessed include:

- Uncommitted 100% provincial COVID funding
- Uncommitted allocation in 2022 re: Strategic Investment in Affordable Housing
- Some capacity within the Equity & Inclusion budget allocation
- Tax Stabilization Reserve

For 2023 costs:

- Advocate to the Province for additional homelessness program funding
- In the absence of additional provincial funding, the net cost will fall to the property tax levy
- Any incremental 2023 levy requirement is not part of the 2023 property tax projection provided to Council in June, which was approx. a 10% tax increase for Regional services (excluding Police)

Provincial/Municipal Funding Commentary

The capacity of the property tax levy to fund municipal services relative to **public expectations of municipal service delivery** is a major challenge.

This is evidenced by the **ongoing funding of programs** with province-wide objectives and **which serve an income redistribution and social equity purpose from the property tax base**

The **Region's budget and financial capacity continue to be stretched**, highlighting the limitations of funding a multitude of social programs from an inadequate revenue base comprised solely of property taxes and user fees

This is predominantly an Ontario-based problem, as **most other provinces in Canada fund programs** such as income support, child care, public health, seniors' services, housing and homelessness **from provincial revenues**

Limitations to Community Engagement

- Compressed time frame
- Engagement process shifted to promote accessibility and a meaningful dialogue for each group.
 - Data collection methods were as unique as the group being engaged, however all qualitative data was analyzed consistently
- Engagement was limited
 - To be meaningful, engagement takes time. This is especially true when consulting with community organizations serving African, Black, Indigenous and racialized community members.
 - Priority to learn from process, and to expand engagement for developing the Homelessness Master Plan

Require the Following for Solution Implementation

- Plan involves and requires an all of community commitment and response
 - Focus and priority of Regional Council and staff along with community partners, service providers, area municipalities, housing providers, developers, philanthropic and private sector working together.
- More work will be necessary to fully cost each solution
 - Capital costs and internal administration costs, for example, remain unknown.
- Each solution would require the following to implement:
 - Funding and staffing beyond what is currently available;
 - Support from other levels of government;
 - Further integration of health and housing; and
 - Land and/or buildings (may require By-Law amendments/area municipal support).

Next Steps

- Staff begin immediate work on adding spaces to the System, based on these recommendations
- Develop a Homelessness Master Plan framework, process, and timeline by December 31st
 - Focus on outcomes, impact, and community engagement prioritizing lived experience, in an effort to end chronic homelessness in Waterloo Region.
- Develop a Homelessness Master Plan for Council's consideration in 2023