




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	August 10, 2022
SUBJECT:	Encampment Coordination Team Update - July 2022 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Angela Burden General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

Background:

On March 31, 2022, City Council approved:

- (a) That an Encampment Coordination Team be created as a pilot to the end of 2022 with an estimated cost of \$305,000, funded first from COVID-19 Government Funds (eligible costs), then COVID-19 Reserve (eligible costs), then departmental budgets surplus and finally by the Tax Stabilization Reserve; and,
- (b) That all reporting from staff related to encampment coordination and response in Hamilton be brought forward to the General Issues Committee for discussion and decisions.

This is the fourth monthly update for the dedicated Encampment Coordination Team which began on April 11, 2022.

Information:

The Encampment Response Team (reps from: Municipal Law Enforcement, Housing Services, Housing Focused Street Outreach, Hamilton Police Services Encampment Engagement Team and Public Works – Parks) continue to work together in an integrated and coordinated approach to encampments and to date have continued to achieve compliance of the Parks By-law. This is achieved through a strategic approach and ongoing collaboration to provide a housing-focused and humanistic coordinated response to encampments.

During the month of July 2022, 137 actioned items were received; 1 of which was duplicate call. Staff investigated 112 encampment sites on City and private property. For the 112 investigations the following results were achieved:

- At 84 encampments voluntary compliance was achieved (60 City/24 private);
- 28 complaints were unfounded (23 City and 5 private) (not encampment sites, but garbage and debris, partying locations, etc.);
- It was necessary to issue Notices of Trespass at 9 encampment sites on City property and voluntary compliance was achieved without any further intervention;
- Parks staff provided cleanup and maintenance at 55 sites in City Parks;
- Approximately 32 unique individuals that we are aware of currently remain unsheltered and regularly living in encampments throughout the City which is a significant reduction at this time last year;
- 25 unique individuals (both in encampments and otherwise) engaged with Outreach for supports/referrals (examples include: referrals to shelters &/or other community supports, housing searches, open bank accounts, obtain ID, etc.);
- 3 individuals were housed directly from an encampment by Outreach
- 3 unique individuals were assisted by Outreach through Housing Services Ontario Works Case Managers in obtaining or stabilizing their Social Assistance.

Since the pilot started, there has been a slight increase in the number of unique individuals living unsheltered who are regularly living in encampments. Despite Housing-focused Outreach staff's best efforts to house individuals, their efforts are limited by a lack of permanent and temporary housing options available. This includes affordable market rentals, subsidized housing, transitional and/or supportive housing, as well as appropriate wrap-around supports (e.g., mental health, activities of daily living).

The following is summary of the pilot project results (April - July 2022), however there has not been enough data collected for a comprehensive trend analysis.

Indicator	April	May	June	July
Actioned items by Municipal Law Enforcement	121	149	175	137
Duplicate items received	15	8	7	1
Total Encampment sites investigated (incl. public and private)	76	141	112	112
Voluntary Compliance Achieved – public	31	51	67	60
Voluntary Compliance Achieved – private	7	8	16	24
Complaints unfounded – public	10	11	20	23
Complaints unfounded – private	5	18	9	5
Notices of Trespass Issued	3	0	6	9
Approximate number of unique individuals unsheltered and regularly living in encampments throughout the City	25	30	30	32

Unique individuals (both in encampments and otherwise) engaged with Outreach for supports/referrals	43	71	39	25
Unique individuals housed directly from an encampment by Outreach	2	1	0	3
Unique individuals assisted by Outreach through Housing Services OW Case Managers in obtaining or stabilizing their Social Assistance	8	9	11	3
Number of sites cleaned and maintained by Parks staff	26	NA	47	55

There continues to be several very challenging sites that require daily visits from various City departments and on-going concerns and public complaints about behaviour and illegal activities (e.g. alcohol and drug consumption), as well as persistent garbage and debris at certain encampment locations continue to escalate this presents a safety risk for staff. As a result, a more strategic approach with a co-ordinated response with Hamilton Police Services, Encampment Engagement Team (HPS, EET) has been implemented to ensure the safety of staff. As the HPS, EET works a Monday- Friday operation and Encampment MLEO's have a 7-day operation, the City has collaborated with HPS to retain 2 HPS paid duty officers for Saturday and Sunday to provide support to Encampment MLEO's at various encampments throughout the City.

Several continuous improvement measures have been implemented and have been detailed in the previous communication reports sent out from April-June 2022. Staff will continue to determine efficiencies and implement measures that will improve the pilot and will include new information in reports going forward.

With grant funding announced earlier this spring for the development of a Rapid Intervention and Support Team (RIST) to support and address the needs of vulnerable individuals with complex needs in an integrated manner, Hamilton Police Services is working with community partners in the development of this team-based model. The team will be comprised of community navigators who share expertise in a particular sector (e.g., housing, mental health, Indigenous, women), with the goal of providing case management to high acuity clients, with a focus on homelessness, mental health, and addictions. Hamilton Paramedic Service social navigators have been engaged in these efforts and the Encampment Coordination Team will also work closely with Hamilton Police Services to operationalize and support the success of RIST as well as continue its ongoing partnership to support daily efforts to improve coordination and response to encampments.

Evaluation Framework Overview

As encampment response requires a multidisciplinary approach, collaboration and coordination are integral to meeting the objectives of the pilot. A variety of techniques and approaches will be used to ensure internal and external stakeholders are given an opportunity to share their expertise and perspectives, and to contribute to continuous learning and improvement. The Encampment Team is developing a framework to evaluate the pilot however given the short time since the pilot began, there has not been enough data collected to develop effective baselines for comparison. The evaluation framework will be presented in full within the planned interim report to Council, and success of the pilot will be determined upon how well the Encampment Coordination Team has met its objectives via its process milestones and performance indicators.

Engagement with Community Stakeholders and Unsheltered Individuals Living in Encampments

On July 20, 2022, in follow up to a January 13th, 2022 motion for *Comprehensive, Human-rights Based, Health-focused Housing Solutions for Residents Living Encamped across Hamilton* moved by Councillor Nann at the Emergency and Community Services Committee, and following the preparatory work by city staff, a consultant engaged 35 representative stakeholders across multiple sectors to develop a shared understanding of the issues and potential next steps to be taken by the community towards developing a coordinated, person-centred, health and housing focused approach to encampment response.

The engagement included a variety of sectors and representatives including frontline responders; community health providers; emergency shelter providers; housing providers; drop-ins; mental health, substance use and concurrent case management; social planning and research; advocacy; Hamilton Police Services; and City Staff from various departments and divisions including Housing Services Division, Municipal Law Enforcement, Hamilton Paramedic Service, and Public Health.

In parallel to this process, to ensure efforts are informed by individuals with lived experienced, from July 25-29, 2022, City staff engaged with individuals who are unsheltered living in encampments across Hamilton. Interviews were led by City Staff from Housing-focused Outreach, with support from staff of the Encampment Coordination Team and Housing Services Division. Unsheltered individuals were asked for their feedback around their experiences with the current bylaw, to explore issues contributing to unsheltered homelessness, discuss access to resources and services, and identify a future vision for the community's response to encampments.

Analysis of these engagements are underway, and the findings will contribute to a set of recommendations and potential action steps to be socialized at a second session with the representatives who participated in the first session, and will be shared with Hamilton City Council in Fall 2022. Findings will also inform the development of the evaluation framework.

Please direct any inquiries to Kelly Barnett, Manager, Response Coordination at (905) 546-2424 ext. 1344 or by email at Kelly.Barnett@hamilton.ca.