



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	November 27, 2023
SUBJECT:	Update Regarding 2023-2024 Winter Response Strategy (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director of Housing Services Healthy and Safe Communities
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On September 13, 2023 Council approved that staff implement an annual Winter Response Strategy, from December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 through Emergency & Community Services report HSC23012(a) to support vulnerable individuals within the homelessness serving system.

INFORMATION

This communication update provides information on the enhanced services that will be in place as a result of the Council approved Annual Winter Response Strategy.

Housing Services Division ran a Call for Applications from October 6 through October 27, 2023 seeking proponents to offer overnight warming spaces, daytime drop-in spaces, and outreach services as part of a comprehensive Winter Response Strategy. The Call for Applications received 14 proposals. The following services were evaluated as viable, cost-effective solutions within the approved budget to be implemented as part of Hamilton's 2023-2024 winter response strategy, beginning December 1, 2023.

- 80 overnight warming spaces
 - 45 Spaces: to be operated through Mission Services Willow's Place (serving women)
 - 35 Spaces: to be operated through Mission Services Men's Centre (serving men)

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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- 100 day-time drop-in spaces
 - 50 Spaces: to be operated through Living Rock (serving youth up to age 25)
 - 50 Spaces: to be operated through St. Matthew's House (serving all populations)
- Social service staff to support the mobile overnight warming bus, ensuring 2 staff onboard per night, 7 nights per week: contracted through St. Matthew's House (all populations)

In addition, expanded levels of service through City of Hamilton Recreation Division, Hamilton Public Library Central location and Hamilton Street Railway will also begin on December 1, 2023. These expanded levels of services are summarized below:

- Extended hours of operation at 3 designated Recreation Centres (Westmount, Valley Park, and Norman Pinky Lewis) to act as a warming space, expanding operating hours to 11:30 p.m. 7 days per week, as well as remaining open on statutory holidays and during inclement weather events where centres would otherwise close.
- Extended hours of operation at the Hamilton Public Library Central location to act as a warming space, enhancing their operating hours to remain open between 1-5 p.m. on statutory holidays and other days the library is regularly scheduled to be closed.
- Hamilton Transit will begin operating the overnight warming bus on a city-wide regular route, 7 days a week from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. (with onboard support staff as listed above).

In addition to the above, Housing Services Division continues to explore other viable options submitted as part of the Call for Applications process that would support emergency shelter pressures across the system and will provide an additional Communication Update once details are finalized.

Additional information on the Annual Winter Response Strategy will be distributed widely through support of the City's Communications department to community agencies supporting vulnerable residents, and will be detailed on the City of Hamilton's website at the following page: www.hamilton.ca/WinterResponse (note: the linked webpage will go live on the City's website on November 28, 2023).

For more information, please contact Rob Mastroianni, Manager Homelessness & Housing Support, at Rob.Mastroianni@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 x8035.