



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	December 18, 2023
SUBJECT:	Update #3 Regarding 2023-2024 Winter Response Strategy (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division, 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.

On November 27th, 2023, and November 30th, 2023, Housing Services Division provided Communication Updates about enhancements to the Council approved winter response.

INFORMATION

This Communication Update provides information on ongoing work underway to further enhance services which will complement the Council approved Annual Winter Response Strategy and already implemented enhancements.

As a result of continued collaboration with partners, an additional overnight warming space serving men will be operationalized. This collaboration is between the City of Hamilton and Good Shepherd Centres, who will utilize the former Cathedral Boys High School located at 378 Main St. East as part of the City's Winter Response Strategy.

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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This site will operate as a low-barrier overnight warming location, offering up to 50 spaces and will serve men, trans- and non-binary people impacted by homelessness. This location will operate seven days a week from 8:00pm to 8:00am.

Due to final operational and staffing requirements still underway, this site will be activated in the coming weeks in a phased approach, increasing up to the maximum 50 spaces. When an exact opening date is determined, the City will work with its community partners to ensure those that can benefit from these spaces are aware and the City's Winter Response Strategy webpage will also be updated.

This location has previously operated in similar capacities, having been utilized as a full temporary shelter location for up to 100 individuals in both the men's and women's serving systems during the City's COVID-19 Pandemic response.

Housing Services Division staff continue to work with other partners to explore options that can further be implemented to support pressures across the system. Updates will be provided as these services are finalized.

With these changes, the Winter Response Strategy overall from December 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, includes:

- Warming Bus through Hamilton Transit operating nightly from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., including onboard support through social service staff (all populations)
- 45 additional overnight warming spaces (serving women, trans- and non-binary people)
- 50 additional overnight warming spaces, once operational (serving men, trans- and non-binary people)
- 40 additional overnight drop-in spaces (serving women, trans- and non-binary people)
- 100 additional day-time drop-in spaces (all populations)
- 45 additional emergency shelter beds (serving men)
- Extended hours of operation at 3 designated Recreation Centres to act as a warming space (all populations)
- Extended hours of operation at the Hamilton Public Library Central location to act as a warming space (all populations)

Details on the Winter Response Strategy can be found on the City of Hamilton's website at the following page: www.hamilton.ca/WinterResponse

For more information, please contact Rob Mastroianni, Manager Homelessness & Housing Support, at Rob.Mastroianni@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 ext.8035.