



THE CITY OF WINDSOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DREW DILKENS, DBA
MAYOR

May 17, 2022

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Dear Warden McNamara, Members of County Council and Mr. Galloway,

This letter offers a response to the correspondence received from County Council, dated September 15, 2021, regarding regional affordable housing and social housing cost sharing; the County Council resolution 035-2022, dated February 16, 2022, regarding Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding allocation; and a further letter from Mr. Galloway, dated March 8, 2022 regarding social housing and homelessness service provision.

City Administration would be pleased to engage with Administration from the County of Essex regarding a regional affordable housing strategy and would be available to present to County Council if that is required. As part of this discussion, the draft Regeneration Plan adopted by the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation would be used as a basis to inform a potential regional affordable housing strategy, however, it is the City's position that the current 1999 Social Housing Cost Sharing arbitrated agreement remain in place at this time.

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the region, the City of Windsor is responsible for the delivery of Housing and Homelessness programs. The following information will address Homelessness and Social/Affordable Housing and detail the regional, data-driven approach used in decision-making for applicable programs within these categories.

The CMSM acknowledges a multi-year funding request for various streams of funding from April 1, 2020. The response below outlines major programs funded through these programs. To provide these details would require a separate detailed response that would require more time to prepare. Overall the programs outlined below have been funded using these dollars since April 1, 2020.

Homelessness:

The CMSM has access to two primary funding sources for homelessness prevention programs. The Federal government provides funding through the Reaching Home (RH) program, and the provincial government provides funding through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP). Funding from both programs are used to support Homelessness initiatives throughout Essex County. We will describe both programs and their funding amounts for fiscal year 2022/2023. The provincial program is significantly larger and is described below.

In March 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) announced the new HPP (which came into effect on April 1, 2022), which consolidated several programs, including the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program (SCRSP), and Home for Good (HFG). City Administration, through Council Report C 51/2022 Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), detailed the implications of this change and provided a proposed HPP investment plan for 2022-2023. City Administration copied the County on this report as part of its regular communication to stakeholders and, as always, is available

to County Council to discuss the report and its contents. In addition, the CMSM has received Federal Funding through the RH program.

This HPP program represents the total provincial funding envelopment for homelessness and prevention programs that the CMSM uses to invest in our region. The focus of the HPP program is to prevent homelessness. Programs and investments are centered on upstream initiatives to try and keep people housed or to stabilize their current living situations.

The funding breakdown for the 2022/2023 HPP program is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Homelessness Prevention Program 2022/2023

HPP Service Category	Total Proposed Budget (Provincial/Municipal) - 2022			
	Provincial	City (Annualized)	County (Annualized)	Total Budget 2022-2023
Supportive Housing	\$3,757,015	\$1,829,797	\$448,640	\$6,035,452
Housing Assistance	\$2,835,373	-	-	\$2,835,373
Community Outreach & Supports	\$2,022,018	\$433,481	-	\$2,455,499
Emergency Shelters	\$3,182,791	\$111,000	-	\$3,293,791
Administration*	\$672,903	-	-	\$672,903
Total	\$12,470,100	\$2,374,278	\$448,640	\$15,293,018

Table 2 outlines City and County municipal contributions.

There is no City or County agreement that governs cost sharing for Homelessness Prevention Programs. The County contribution is a legacy arrangement that helps to support the costs related to the Housing with Supports program which has approximately 500 supportive housing beds located throughout the City and County. The Housing with Supports program is considered a Homelessness Prevention Program. If this program did not exist, many of the residents housed in this program would likely become homeless.

Table 2: Municipal Contributions to HPP program 2022/2023

HPP Service Category				
	City (Annualized)	County (Annualized)	City Share%	County Share%
Supportive Housing	\$1,829,797	\$448,640	65%	16%
Housing Assistance	-	-		0%
Community Outreach & Supports	\$433,481	-	15%	0%
Emergency Shelters	\$111,000	-	4%	0%
Administration*	-	-		
Sub Total	\$2,374,278	\$448,640	84%	16%
Total Municipal Dollars	\$2,822,918			

Within this funding envelopment, the CMSM allocates funds to programs that help to resolve or prevent homelessness. A key factor in decision making is that emergency shelter beds should not become permanent housing. The purpose of the emergency shelter program is to provide temporary accommodations to people that have nowhere else to go.

For the region, the following Homelessness initiatives are funded and available to all residents of Essex County.

Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC) is the region's housing first program and is currently funded to provide the following services:

- **Integrated Support Team Workers (1ST)**
 - o Provide clinical intensive case management supports for up to 36 months for households experiencing chronic homelessness with high acuity throughout Windsor Essex.
- **Integrated Support Team - Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)**
 - o Provides intensive case management supports for youth experiencing homelessness (16-24 years).
 - o Housing Intervention Workers (HIW) provide housing and case management supports for up to 18 months to households experiencing or who are at imminent risk of homelessness with moderate to low acuity throughout Windsor Essex and have been focussed on supporting County youth who are housed in developments operated by the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation.
- **Landlord Liaisons**
 - o Work with Landlords to procure private market rental units in Windsor Essex.
- **Indigenous Housing Advocates**
 - o Provide Indigenous-led supports to households experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness.
- **Homelessness Street Outreach**
 - o Engages with people experiencing homelessness who are often disconnected mainstream services and supports, including those intended for persons experiencing homelessness (e.g. emergency shelters).
 - o Role is to establish rapport, trust and a supportive relationships with persons experiencing homelessness, which will assist the household or person to access the necessary services and supports that will help them move off the streets.

As part of the HPP program Service Managers are required by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to create and maintain an effective By Names List (BNL). This is a homelessness survey tool that is used to try and measure the amount of homelessness in our region on a monthly basis (both chronic and long-term). The purpose of this is to help inform the CMSM to make data informed decisions with regard to investments in homelessness programming in our region.

By Names List (BNL) as of February 2022:

- 472 households experiencing homelessness in Windsor & Essex County in February 2022
- 35 households are experiencing homelessness in Essex County (7.4%)
 - 34 households are experiencing homelessness in Leamington (7.2%)
- 76.2% are chronically homeless
- 44.2% are chronic and have high acuity requiring intensive wrap around supports and/or supportive housing
- 1205 households remain housed
- 953 remain housed in City
- 121 remain housed in County
- 131 remain housed whose location is unknown

That data contained above, collected since 2018 and in partnership with over 30 organizations in Windsor and Essex County, indicates that the vast majority of the homeless population is from the City of Windsor. The CMSM relies on this data to inform its decision-making on HPP funding allocations, which accounts for the fact that a majority of investments are made in the City of Windsor.

In acknowledgement of the fact that nearly all households experiencing homelessness in the County are located in Leamington, staff in Housing and Children's Services have been working collaboratively with the County of Essex and stakeholders in the Municipality of Leamington to develop a response to these homelessness issues. The shelter pod option, use of motel rooms in Leamington, and improved transportation to existing emergency shelters in Windsor are three options currently being explored by City Administration with input from the stakeholder group. The benefits, risks and potential costs of each of these options are being developed.

Based on concerns brought forth by the Municipality of Leamington and the County of Essex the following homelessness prevention services have been allocated to the community:

Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC)

Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC) is the region's housing first program. Family Services Windsor-Essex is the lead clinical support agency in collaboration with Housing Information Services (HIS). Can Am Indian Friendship Centre (CAIFC) provides Indigenous led supports to households experiencing homelessness. Together, WEHC staff provide long-term case management supports (18-36 months) based on acuity for households who have experienced chronic homelessness.

Homelessness Street Outreach

- Monday & Wednesday primarily located in Leamington, with dispatch to other county locations as required

Housing Intervention Worker(s)

- Located at South Essex Community Council (SECC) Monday to Friday, 35 hours per week
- Support households who are experiencing homelessness with low to moderate acuity and are housed throughout Windsor Essex

Voluntary Trusteeship

Family Services Windsor-Essex provides voluntary trusteeship to eligible households throughout Windsor-Essex to assist with financial literacy training, payment of all bills, goal setting, advocacy, housing loss prevention, and referrals to community supports as needed.

The information presented above details some of the data that is used to help guide the CMSM's investments in programs that are available to residents across the region to support homelessness prevention

Reaching Home (Federal Homelessness funding)

This federal funding is to be used to help communities extend their response to COVID-19 and provide them with flexibility to use these investments to meet local needs and priorities, such as:

- Extending COVID-19 measures for those experiencing homelessness;
- Finding permanent housing for those temporarily housed, and
- Reducing the inflow into homelessness, including homelessness prevention and shelter diversion activities.

Input is provided from the regional Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee {HHAC} and the Community Advisory Board {CAB}, through other consultative processes, and working toward achieving the goals of the Windsor-Essex Housing & Homelessness Master Plan (the 10 Year Plan) which was approved by Windsor City Council and Essex County Council in 2019.

Regional agencies that are part of CAB include: County of Essex representation, and regional agencies such as Family Services Windsor Essex (FSWE), CMHA, The Bridge, Legal Assistance Windsor, Community Living Essex County, and Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation.

For 2022/2023 \$ 3,556,978 had been allocated. The CMSM is expecting carry over amounts of up to \$250,000 that is being used to fund the COVID Isolation and Recovery Centre. For fiscal year 2023/2024 \$3,521,211 has been allocated by the Federal government. Of note, the funding for these two fiscal years contain almost \$5.3 million in enhanced one time Federal funding. There are no commitments that Reaching Home will be renewed past 2024.

The planned major investments for 2022/2023 include the following:

- Operational funding for H4 (Homelessness and Housing Help Hub). This multi-disciplinary day program serves the region, and provides onsite services such as housing support, mental health resources, addictions counseling and resources, basic needs etc for the region's homeless population.
- Operational funding for HIS (Housing Information Services), an agency that provides housing support throughout the region. This funding is used to support the Windsor Essex Housing Connections program.
- Operational funding for the Downtown Mission (DTM). This is the emergency shelter for single men and women. They provide emergency shelter and food services to people experiencing homelessness for our region.

Housing Programs for Windsor-Essex:

The CMSM is responsible for Social and Affordable Housing in our region. There is a distinct difference between the two programs.

Social Housing:

Social Housing in Windsor-Essex is governed by the 1999 Arbitrated Agreement, and is responsible for the continued delivery of Rent Geared to Income (RGI) programs in our community. The County cost shares this program and it is related primarily to the legacy RGI stock in our region. The recent \$170 million dollar Repair and Renew Program for CHC was cost shared between the City and County based on this agreement. The overall RGI funding envelope is a combination of capital and ongoing operating costs related to delivering this program. The region must continue to deliver RGI programs due to provincial regulations to a prescribed service level. That number is currently 5,726 homes and is comprised of 34 non-profit organizations including the Windsor-Essex Community Housing Corporation (CHC).

Affordable Housing:

Affordable housing is not covered by any type of agreement between the City and the County. Rather, these programs are typically capital in nature and offered by the Federal or Provincial governments. The programs require the development to be financially viable, since operating dollars are not provided. A recent example of this would be the Meadowbrook development being built by CHC. This was funded using capital dollars from CMHC, the province and the City of Windsor. This development was not funded by the county, nor is it subject to the 1999 Arbitrated Agreement. Recent federal funding streams such as the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) require a municipal operating contribution as part of this commitment. In Windsor, 20 year operating costs are being covered by the municipality for projects located here. County Council has approved operating funding for The Bridge, which is located in Leamington, to serve homeless youth. Affordable housing programs can be developed by the private sector, non-profits or government entities.

The chart below outlines by dollars and numbers the amount of units developed since 2008 through 2021.

Investment in New Affordable Housing (2008 to 2021)

- Investment decisions are based on provincial / federal program guidelines and must adhere to City of Windsor procurement policies
- Panels to review capital funding applications include representation from the County of Essex

Windsor & Essex County Investments	County Investments	Leamington Investments
\$58 million	\$18.7 million	\$3 million
561 units	211 units	24 units

In late 2021, County Council was approached about an affordable housing development in the county. County Council financially committed to this deal, however, the proponent decided to withdraw from this opportunity at the last minute.

Due to timing constraints related to this funding, the CMSM was forced to pursue opportunities in Windsor to ensure that these funds were allocated for the region.

In closing, the CMSM is responsible to deliver Housing and Homelessness programs for the entire region. We use data to help support funding decisions for Housing and Homelessness. We recognize and value the County as a partner when it comes to delivering our programs and are committed to doing so going forward.

To begin discussions with City of Windsor Administration and the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation, please direct the appropriate member of County administration to contact Debbie Cercone, Acting Commissioner of Human and Health Services, at dcerccone@citywindsor.ca or at 519-255-5200 ext. 5232.

Sincerely,



Drew Dilkens
Mayor of Windsor



Joe Mancina, CPA, CGA, CMO
Chief Administrative Officer (A)

- c. Debbie Cercone, Acting Commissioner Human and Health Services
Kirk Whittal, Executive Director Housing and Children's Services