

Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: HS2023-008

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

Title: Homelessness Prevention Program Investment

Opportunity

Description: Recommended investment plan for new Homelessness

Prevention Program funding.

Author and Title: Michelle Corley, Human Services Manager, Housing

Recommendation(s):

That Report HS2023-008, Homelessness Prevention Program Investment Opportunity, be received;

That the Housing Needs Review 2023 , provided in Appendix A to this report, be received for information to support the Homelessness Prevention Program investment funding as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton;

That a community integrated care hub located in Lindsay, as outlined in Report HS2023-008, be endorsed as a priority response to support people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including vulnerable residents who require low barrier supports and services, in the City of Kawartha Lakes;

That the City provides the following financial support to this community integrated care hub project:

- 1. One-time capital funding of \$700,000 through the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program 2023-2024 funding allocation; and
- 2. Annual financial contributions required to assist with ongoing operating funding to support program delivery, as outlined within a service agreement, and funded through the Housing Service's annual budget, which includes Homelessness Prevention Program provincial grant funding.

Department Head:	
Financial/Legal/HR/Other:	
Chief Administrative Officer:	

That the necessary by-law and Municipal Housing Facilities Agreement be forwarded to council for approval;

That the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to approve relief from any and all required City of Kawartha Lakes municipal fees and charges in alignment with current City budgets, as in-kind municipal support, needed to implement the community integrated care hub project;

That the Director of Human Services and the Human Services Manager, Housing, be authorized to execute necessary agreements including contribution agreements, and service agreements to implement this community integrated care hub project; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Background:

In March of 2023, the City of Kawartha Lakes was informed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), that the City would be receiving an annual increase of \$1,140,500 in Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funding, starting within the 2023-24 funding year. This increase brings the total annual Provincial funding allocation to \$3,371,900.

The City has flexibility to use allocated funding for certain eligible services which must be provided in an Investment Plan and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Outcome categories for the HPP funding a

- 1. Preventing and Diverting Homelessness
- 2. Addressing Homelessness
- 3. Reducing Homelessness

The increase in HPP base funding serves as a means to assist communities in continuing to support various expenses that were supported on a one-time basis during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, through the Province's Social Service Relief Funding (SSRF) program. Between April 2020 and December 2022, the City received \$8.8 Million dollars in SSRF support. Although we are no longer in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the social challenges that were exacerbated by the pandemic, such as the increase in unsheltered homelessness, the drug poisoning and mental health, lack of housing stock that is financially affordable, rising inflation among other economic challenges, continue to impact our community today.

The City of Kawartha Lakes is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for Housing and Homelessness in the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton. The designation of CMSMs recognizes that local communities understand local needs and where investments can make the most impact on preventing, addressing, and reducing homelessness.

The City's homelessness budget, largely supported by HPP funding, supports the following new and existing programs and services:

- Emergency shelter 19 beds at A Place Called Home
- Shelter aftercare and outreach program A Place Called Home
- Supportive housing program services and supports for tenants at 68 Lindsay Street North, along with other site units throughout the region managed by the John Howard Society

- Men's transitional housing a single home supporting five men operated by the John Howard Society
- Trustee program financial supports for individuals provided by A Place Called Home
- Homelessness prevention financial supports one-time supports to help prevent homelessness or to help address life stabilization needs and financial barriers for those experiencing homelessness to secure housing
- Homelessness Outreach two City staff, one in the City and one in the County of Haliburton
- Homelessness System Coordinators two City staff who coordinate and manage the homelessness By-Name List, perform program quality assurance reviews, lead system collaborative work with community partners, support policy development and other special projects
- Program Supervisor (new)
- 24/7 security services at 68 Lindsay Street North (new previously supported by SSRF)
- Interim winter response a collaborative effort between City staff and A Place Called Home to temporarily increase shelter capacity in the winter (new – previously supported by SSRF)

Prior to COVID-19, the lack of housing and homelessness crisis was widespread in Ontario and across the country. Homelessness has intensified in most communities since the pandemic, increasing and widening the gaps in other systems and capacity to serve that contribute to homelessness. Homelessness is a systemic crisis that calls for an economic, social, justice and health policy response. The City works collaboratively with community health, justice and social service providers on short-term interventions and longer-term strategies to support ending homelessness. Work also continues with both provincial partners and local groups to examine system-level interventions that adapt and respond to social and health equity issues.

As the CMSM, strategic and systemic planning at the local level in both the City and the County is a required responsibility. To plan strategically, understanding the local needs, and knowing the gaps and opportunities in service delivery requires quantitative and qualitative evidence. To that end, and given the significant social and economic shifts seen and experienced since 2020, Housing Services staff have conducted a Housing Needs Review to help determine the most critical gaps of service for those in our community experiencing homelessness, prior history of homelessness, or at risk of

homelessness. The Housing Needs Review (Appendix A) consisted of a survey delivered in-person with service users (those with lived experience of homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness), and an electronic survey provided to service providers, within the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton.

The results of the study and analysis clearly identified that there are a significant number of individuals (particularly in the town of Lindsay) with complex needs who urgently need low-barrier (minimizing barriers to access service) and wrap-around services such as food, safe rest places and longer term needs such as substance use, primary care and mental health services. That qualitative data in the review demonstrated that some participants indicated that a 'community hub' is needed where people can go and connect directly with services and support versus having to seek out, navigate or potentially be turned away.

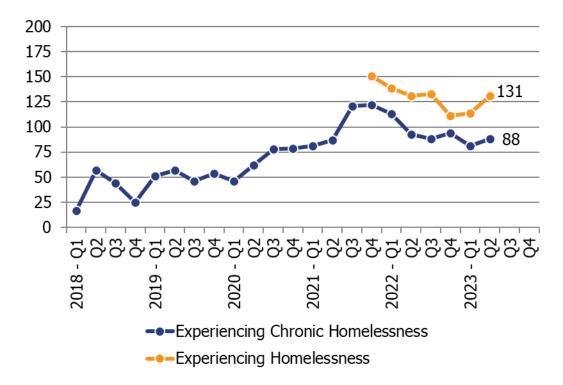
- As of August 2023, of the approximately 160 unhoused right now across Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton staff estimate that about 45 to 50 (approximately 30%) are at least periodically experiencing unsheltered homelessness (staying outside or in vehicles).
- Of those 160, between 130 and 140 (approximately 85%) are regularly active on our homelessness By-Name List (BNL) through our coordinated access system.
- There is estimated to be at least 30 (approximately 19%) more people actively experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are not officially connected to the coordinated access system and the BNL.

The table below outlines the demographic profile for those individuals registered on the BNL, as of Q2 - Q3, 2023 with 81.9% of individuals within Kawartha Lakes and 18.1% within Haliburton. Over 60% of those on the BNL are singles looking for shelter.

Category	Service Area	Kawartha Lakes	Haliburton County
Entire Total	138	113 (81.9%)	25 (18.1%)
Couple	3	2	1
Family	26	17	9
Senior	16	15	1
Single	84	71	13
Youth	9	8	1

As mentioned, the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton (CKL-H) has an established and supported system of access for the unhoused, which provides a consistent way to identify, prioritize and connect households to housing and supports. CKL-H coordinated system currently includes a common assessment and centralized list (By Name List). The goal of a coordinated access system is to ensure the unhoused are provided housing-focused supports so that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. However, the system may not capture all unhoused households. There may be a number of reasons why people are not on the BNL including lapsed consent forms, lack of engagement with agencies and financial reasons such as losing a portion of income and personal choice.

The graph below demonstrates the growing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness since 2018, when tracking chronic homelessness commenced. As shown most recently in Q2, 2023, there are 88 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Meaning that the individual has been homeless over a period of six consecutive months in a 12-month period. Those experiencing homelessness, inclusive of those experiencing chronic homelessness is trending upwards with 131 registered on the BNL.



In 2019 Council adopted the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, which contains numerous objectives to address homelessness and promote support opportunities for

marginalized individuals and families. The increase in HPP funding will help support the achievement of some of these objectives, as well as meet current and changing needs identified in the review, such as an integrated care hub.

The only way to end homelessness is through the creation of housing that is affordable, including a variety of supportive housing options to meet various needs. However, current needs suggest that we must urgently create opportunities to provide services to those with complex needs, who are currently restricted from many services and buildings, and need urgent health interventions. Building on collaborative partnerships currently in place and bringing together health, employment, justice and social service providers to better integrate care and service delivery within a hub model, is an effective option to meet the needs of this population. Staff continue to do long-term planning for additional supportive housing capital builds, and are ever mindful of the urgent needs of those unable to access services currently and explore evidence for the creation of an integrated care hub model.

Rationale:

Housing Needs Review

During June and July, City staff interviewed a total of 45 service users from City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton. 100% of respondents provided consent for de-identified information and direct quotations to be shared in this report. To protect participant's identities every person was given an alias.

Additionally, an electronic survey was distributed to service providers, resulting in 95 completed surveys. Included were community agencies, health centres, police and paramedic services, Ontario Works client services, schools, employment agencies, local committees and/or groups and food banks.

The majority of respondents (80%) shared that CKL is their primary home community. Housing services was able to intentionally engage with 6 individuals from Haliburton County through Outreach efforts (13%) and there was a small percentage of service users whose primary community is not this area (7%).

The predominant themes arising from the surveys are the impact of household eviction, individuals trespassed from certain housing buildings, and restricted from community

service agencies. One service user stated that "constantly being told to get out from other buildings is demeaning – no matter where I go, I am told to leave."

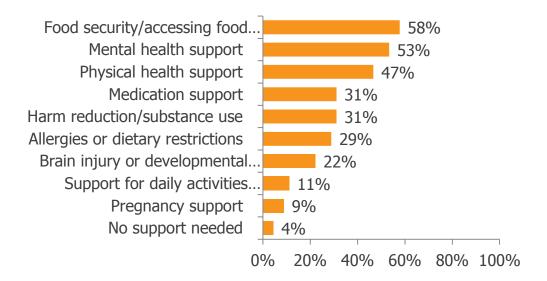
Other themes that were present in the survey responses identify both needs and gaps, including:

- Feeling of hopelessness
- Lack of housing
- Low-barrier, pet-friendly spaces and emergency space(s) to rest
- Meet basic needs public washrooms
- Accessible mental health services including substance use
- Counselling supports
- Need for community training and education including trauma and violence informed care
- Unification with children, importance of loved ones
- Reducing stigma, increasing awareness
- Outreach services that are consistent, long-term and individualized
- Just trying to survive
- Meals
- Clothing and basic hygiene
- Computer and phones
- Lack of sleep and safety
- Policies and communication
- Discrimination
- Wandering
- Isolation
- Completion of paperwork, ID (identification) and documents
- Integrated wellness
- Drop in Centre and/or warming or cooling room

The Review captured individual experiences with regards to where people slept the night prior, reason for current housing situation, housing barriers, health and wellness and accessible service needs, and other supports. Health and wellness of the community is a multifaceted topic that interfaces with the health of our population through the social determinants, including income and social status, education, access to health services, employment, social supports, etc. Outlined in the graphs following are the respondents' needs related to their overall health and wellness needs.

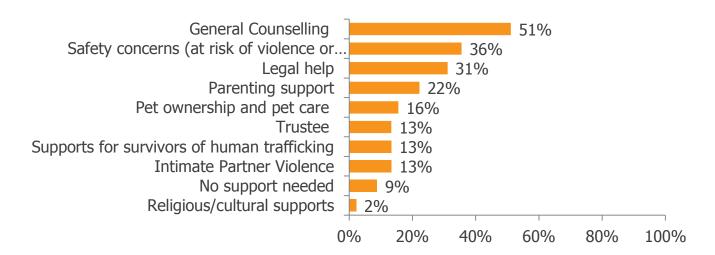
Health and wellness

Service Users



Other Supports

Service Users



Those experiencing homelessness are subject to increasing levels of danger due to the current crisis and overall declining levels of social well-being across the community. Those who are couch-surfing or living in tents and makeshift shelters are forced to survive in terrible conditions, are extremely vulnerable and live in a constant state of anxiety and fear. They are in survival mode.

It is not surprising that those experiencing homelessness in our community feel hopeless, lost and unwelcome. Mat, a community service provider shares this, "*The overall climate of the community is "survival mode." Individuals, even dual income households, struggle month-to-month, unable to enjoy life. This stimulates hopelessness and feelings of discouragement.*"

The threat of violence or harm is high for respondents. Many shared that they feel constantly unsafe and vulnerable to violence, theft, abuse or subject to unpredictability or instability when interacting with others. Those living rough (outside) or in vehicles report that their belongings are stolen daily and/or destroyed. One individual taking shelter in her vehicle currently has been subjected to a long history of abuse, human trafficking and violent crimes. She shares "I don't sleep anymore. I don't feel safe anywhere."

Couch surfers are subject to negative and unpredictable living conditions and are often forced, due to their circumstances to tolerate abuse, substance use and violence. Being forced to live in these negative environment was a recurring theme.

In relation to emergency shelter, one statement appeared in almost every service user survey: "*The shelter is always full.*" The majority of those surveyed state that there is an urgent need for overflow shelter beds that are available and open for everyone on a first come, first served basis with low barrier access that includes pets. Moreover, 48% of service providers agree that more emergency shelter beds are needed now and suggest developing more specialized shelter bed options and corresponding service levels for those with higher needs.

Janice shares, "we know that those facing homelessness have more health care problems - lack of accessible mental health and substance use supports." Noting the obvious, a lack of low barrier, accessible mental health care is a concern and a gap in service for both service users and providers.

Both groups shared that free general counselling is something that is needed but not available. 76% of service providers believed General Counselling is needed; 51% of service users felt the same.

The largest common theme of the survey was aimlessness, boredom and lack of meaningful activities. This is most commonly expressed as wandering during the day, being outside with no particular destination or no place to go. Wandering involves visiting the library, visiting friends, and/or spending time in parks and public areas. Overwhelmingly, this is shared sentiment across all demographics. Andrea, couch surfing currently shares that there is "nothing for anyone to do, especially in winter." Survey responses did include creative ideas for activities that are meaningful to them and motivate them to achieve self-sufficiency, such as gym memberships, free transit, community events, skill upgrading, education and volunteering opportunities. "We need a social committee, life skills, cooking, volunteering, skills like crafts, and pot luck. Bring the community together." Other responses indicated that the creation of activities needs to be done in a meaningful way, and addresses personal interests while ensuring they are offered in a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive environment with low or no barriers.

Simultaneously as staff were analyzing results of this review, the City's Human Services Department partnered with the Community Counselling Resource Centre to provide general counselling services (social work) for those in receipt of Ontario Works, experiencing homelessness or tenants within Community Housing buildings. Building service capacity to support this level of need was identified in this review and by way of implementation; it has immediately addressed a pressing need for a segment of this population.

Mobile Outreach Hub

Through a collaborative effort, a variety of willing community partners committed to providing outreach services at various locations. City staff, along with community partners, identified that there were many underserved individuals in our community who often experience barriers to care, a service gap that was both highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Establishing a mobile outreach hub allowed partners to go to them and provide low-barrier, wrap-around supports, meeting their most complex and urgent needs.

The locations for the mobile outreach hub were identified by partners as locations often visited by these underserved individuals. Beginning in February 2023, various partners committed to extending existing resources towards this initiative, provided staff to attend twice a week during two-hour outreach hub gatherings, typically occurring at four different locations in Lindsay, throughout a two-week rotation.

Since February, community partner membership supporting this initiative has continued to grow voluntarily. Currently, the following service providers are actively participating and providing valuable low-barrier supports as part of this team:

- Ross Memorial Hospital Mental Health Crisis Outreach Supports
- John Howard Society Harm Reductions and other Addiction Support Services
- Community Health Centre Registered Nursing and Nurse Practitioner Services
- City of Kawartha Lakes Community Paramedicine Program
- City of Kawartha Lakes Outreach Services and Life Stabilization Supports
- Community Counselling Resource Centre General Counselling, as contracted by the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Elizabeth Fry Bail and Court Support Services
- Health Unit Sexual Health Services
- PARN Harm Reduction Services
- Ontario Disability Support Program Case Management

Since the inception of this initiative, significant meaningful engagements have occurred with our community's most vulnerable. Since the start of the mobile outreach hub in February, there have been over 800 visits, supporting numerous individuals by providing the following supports:

- primary care and paramedicine
- mental health service
- harm reduction or substance use support
- housing and homelessness support
- food security

A significant portion of the above interactions have a direct health system impact thus ensuring better health, better care and better value of service by way of avoiding emergency department visits, unnecessary 911 calls, inappropriate admission of acute care beds (those that require an alternate level of care) and increased access to primary care for those who are unattached.

The numbers above are suggested to be underestimated, due the increase in service interactions that occur outside of the mobile outreach hub sessions, resulting from trust and rapport established between service users and agency member staff during hub interactions. Similarly, the growing number of front-line staff attending these sessions have formed strong collaborative working relationships, resulting in an increase in

program referrals, coordinated care planning and system navigation supports and efforts.

As a result of the success of the mobile outreach hub in Lindsay, staff have worked with community partners in the County of Haliburton to establish a mobile hub. Starting in June 2023, a mobile hub is offering wrap-around services to individuals in Minden and Haliburton. Future planning is already underway to also reach other outlying communities such as Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon.

City staff would like to acknowledge the commitment and collaboration that the above community partners have demonstrated over the last several months by supporting vulnerable residents through the mobile outreach hub initiative.

Permanent Integrated Care Hub

Expanding on the success of the mobile outreach hub, and responding to the urgent needs as captured within the Housing Needs Review, the opportunity has arisen to utilize new HPP funding to support a permanent integrated care hub in Lindsay.

In July, City staff, along with other community partners, attended the Kingston Integrated Care Hub. The Kingston Integrated Care Hub provides 24/7 low-barrier and wrap-around services for those who face restrictions in accessing emergency shelters and other community services. The main services offered at the Kingston Integrated Care Hub are:

- Consumption and treatment services
- Rest zone
- Harm reduction supports and supplies
- Primary care services
- First aid and wound care
- Mental health and addictions supports
- Scheduled activities and events
- Meals
- Peer support employment training opportunities
- Other services, including referrals to other community programs, including Ontario Works and housing

Other integrated care hubs also exist in Ottawa, Windsor and Oshawa These all serve as models to learn from and inform planning here.

The main objectives of an integrated care hub in Kawartha Lakes would be to provide low-barrier resting areas, seven days-a-week drop-in space to support wrap-around service delivery and the potential for consumption and treatment services. Currently, the City's supportive housing programs and existing emergency shelter model do not meet the level of service needed, given the demand, to support our community's most vulnerable. Having a low-barrier location, open 7-days a week, offering multi-disciplinary supports will significantly help our community to address some basic and urgent health needs. Staff support the integrated care hub as another step in our housing and homelessness continuum of care system, seeing it as a service to help individuals obtain some initial stabilization before moving along to transitional or supportive housing.

An integrated care hub would meet several needs as identified in the needs review, such as:

- Low-barrier, pet-friendly spaces and emergency space(s) to rest
- Meet basic needs public washrooms
- Accessible mental health services including substance use
- Counselling services
- Meals
- Clothing and basic hygiene
- Computer and phones
- Lack of sleep and safety
- Wandering
- Isolation
- Completion of paperwork, ID and documents
- Integrated wellness
- Drop in Centre and/or warming or cooling Room

The John Howard Society (JHS) has operated various programs and services that align with and match the supports that are intended to be delivered within an Integrated Care Hub. Through success over time at their Lindsay location and through outreach services, JHS currently provides addiction support through a harm reduction lens, their MAP-Mapping a Plan program, one-to-one peer support, health outreach and drop-in services all meeting individuals where they are at on their health and wellness journey. JHS's current space enables drop-in space for warming, cooling or escape from the

elements, as well as harm reduction education and supplies for safer use and access to phone, laptop and information and referral to many community supports and services.

JHS senior staff, along with community partners, envision this model coming to life in Kawartha Lakes. Building on the collective impact of partnership and the positive client outcomes achieved through the Mobile Outreach Hub, JHS and City staff have met to review drafted program and operational plans for the Integrated Care hub. In order for the vision to come to fruition, additional building space and/or additional property is needed for this expansion. JHS is leading on behalf of the partnership to realize additional real estate in which to establish the proposed Integrated Care Hub. In order for this to occur, capital investment is required to secure the purchase of space to be renovated for the establishment of a hub in Lindsay.

Location is important for a model of this approach, one that is easily accessible by service users, close proximity to services supporting basic needs (shelter, food, clothing) as well aligned and linked to other services close by to support the stabilization of their life and for those without transportation services. Safety and security has also been identified as a priority related not only to the site location and the 24-7 services provided within the Hub.

Given the parameters set by MMAH for the 2023-24 HPP allocation, the qualitative and quantitative evidence from the Housing Needs Review (2023) and the positive impacts that the Mobile Outreach Hub has seen over the past eight months, City staff recommends that up to \$700,000 in HPP capital funding be utilized to support the purchase and renovations of a building and/or property. This up-front investment will seed the establishment and development of an Integrated Care Hub, the first step in moving towards this model. Over time as renovations are complete and progress is made towards a collaborative operating model and partnership, the Hub will be established and continual evaluation will occur related to continuous improvement. The operating model will evolve to allow additional funding investments to be secured from other partners to further support this initiative being sustained.

Sustaining the service delivery model and maintaining the Integrated Care Hub over time has already become a priority of the collective partners. The goal is to secure various funding opportunities to provide a variety of wrap-around supports at the hub and staff have been actively meeting with community partners to explore additional funding opportunities. Staff have met with Ontario Health East (OHE) senior staff to discuss intentions to support an integrated care hub in Lindsay. OHE staff have

suggested that the Ministry of Health is currently expressing much interest in low-barrier services, specifically including integrated care hubs. With Council's support towards this initiative, the municipality can position itself as a collaborative funding partner, which often opens doors to additional funding opportunities from other levels of government.

Moreover, the City's Community Paramedicine program has recently secured permanent and base funding for a component of this initiative. Final plans for this funding are still currently being established, and it is anticipated that a portion of the new resources could go towards supporting a permanent Integrated Care Hub. The objectives of this additional paramedicine program funding is to serve specific populations and provide a variety of services as follows:

- Chronic Health Conditions i.e. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD),
 Congestive Heart Failure (CHF), Geri-psychiatric disorders, high utilizers of
 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Department (ED)
- Mental Health and Addictions (MHA Patients) high utilizers of EMS and ED and at risk of exacerbation
- Transitional Support Services patients recently discharged from hospital with risk of readmission or Alternate Level of Care (with Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS))
- Surge management and responses services offered in response to local community need (COVID, influenza, etc.)

As a true collaboration is required for the successful offering of wrap-around supports, the following community agencies and organizations have expressed their support towards the integrated care hub concept:

- Kawartha Lakes Community Paramedicine
- John Howard Society Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton
- A Place Called Home
- Ross Memorial Hospital
- Community Care Community Health Team
- Kawartha Lakes Ontario Health Team
- Ontario Health East

Staff plan to explore options to address similar gaps of service in the County of Haliburton, and anticipate HPP capital investments supporting that community in 2024.

Given the success of the mobile outreach hub that currently offers services four hours a-week, staff and community partners look forward to offering daily, permanent and dedicated, supports.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

This report aligns to the Exceptional Quality of Life strategic priority. It contributes directly to the goals of:

- Improving the health and well-being of residents
- Build social infrastructure
- Community building

Financial/Operation Impacts:

It is anticipated that any required municipal fees to redevelop an acquired existing building and/or property to establish the Hub will be minimal. In speaking with other City staff, it is not anticipated that a site plan approval process is required should the footprint of an existing building not change. Additionally, it is recommended that given the intended use of a building to support this initiative, that the acquired building be rezoned as Institutional (if it isn't already zoned as the same), according to staff interpretation of the Development Charges By-law. Should a proposed change from a Commercially-zoned building be required, the fees would have the same development charge rates as Institutional, therefore not requiring the City to impose additional development charges for potential properties subject to this zoning. A building permit is likely to be the only City fee charged to support the redevelopment. Given the HPP funding contribution, the City will enter into a Municipal Housing Facilities By-Law and corresponding agreement, which then allows this project to be exempt from building permit fees.

The HHP capital funding components are required to be committed by November 30th, 2023. Any capital funding not committed by this date, would be required to be repaid to the Province.

The City's current homelessness budget is contributed through the following funding sources:

Federal Funding = \$0

Provincial Funding = \$3,371,900 (84%)

Municipal CKL = \$545,459 (14%)

Municipal County of Haliburton =\$105,774 (3%)

The Province has informed the City that HPP funding will remain static until 2025. This will likely require municipal investments to increase during 2025 to further support growing needs.

Unlike other communities, like the City of Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes does not receive annual Federal Reaching Home funding to help address homelessness.

Consultations:

Community Paramedic Superintendent, Paramedic Services Deputy Chief, Professional Standards, Paramedic Services Chief, Paramedic Services Homelessness System Coordinator, Human Services Program Supervisor, Housing Services Chief Building Official, Development Services

Appendix A – Housing Needs Review 2023



Department Head email: cfaber@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Cheryl Faber, Director, Human Services