

# Staff Report



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To	<b>City Council</b>
Service Area	Public Services
Date	Tuesday, November 28, 2023
Subject	<b>Daytime Drop-In Services Update</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That Daytime Drop-In Services Update on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, report be received for information.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the provision of daytime drop-in services as directed at the October 17, 2023 Special Council meeting on Housing in Guelph Workshop Actions and Responses.

### Key Findings

Staff do not propose taking any further action on daytime drop-in services upon completion of the pilot community benefit agreement. Provision of daytime drop-in services is outside the scope of the City of Guelph's mandated municipal services and would have to be funded as a discretionary social service. There is no funding currently allocated within the 2024-2027 multi-year budget for this service.

### Strategic Plan Alignment

This report aligns to the Guelph Future Ready Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023) priority area of building our future where we help increase the availability of housing needs that meet community needs, and continue to build equitable, strong, vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live here.

This report also aligns to Future Guelph, Guelph's 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan through the theme of people and economy where our goal is to support community well-being.

### Financial Implications

Staff are recommending no further action, and so there is no financial implication to that recommendation. Should Council direct staff to undertake a month-to-month extension with Royal City Mission, the cost for January – March 2024 would be \$191,700 which would need to be funded from the Tax Rate Operating Contingency Reserve as there has been nothing included in the 2024-2027 multi-year operating budget.

Should Council direct that staff issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for provision of daytime drop-in services to cover seven day a week for the hours from 8:00 am – 7:30 pm, it is estimated that this could cost as much as \$900,000 per year which has also not been included in the 2024-2027 multi-year operating budget.

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## **Report**

This report responds to Council's motion from Special Council meeting on October 17, 2023, Housing in Guelph Workshop Actions and Responses, directing staff to undertake investigative next steps related to the provision of daytime drop-in services:

That staff are directed to seek feedback from the DGBA (Downtown Guelph Business Association), local downtown social service agencies and the County of Wellington to consider the best location(s) and delivery method for the provision of 12-hour service, 7 days a week daytime shelter space in the downtown secondary plan area, reporting back to Council on recommended next steps no later than November 2023. Options presented should consider issuing a Request for Proposals to identify interested service partners, and identification of possible funding sources.

Staff are also directed to work with Royal City Mission to consider a month-to-month extension of the current Community Benefit Agreement, to ensure consistent service provision until Council has time to consider next steps.

The direction to fund daytime drop-in services in 2023 originated from a request from the [County of Wellington Social Services Committee](#) to fund an extension of hours at Royal City Mission as a discretionary municipal service. The request, authored by the Social Services Administrator noted "that the extension of hours be reviewed in the Fall of 2023 by County and City staff, and considered for funding by the County and the City in 2024 budgets."

In discussion with Wellington County, staff do not recommend renewing the current Community Benefit Agreement or proceeding with a competitive procurement process to facilitate daytime drop-in services. The discretionary nature of this service puts it outside of core City services. Additionally, there is no funding allocation for daytime drop-in services included in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget. Stakeholder feedback supports the need for a systems approach to identify needs and build the appropriate solutions, and it would be the recommendation that this conversation is best led by the Guelph-Wellington Ontario Health Team as it connects to health system design and funding.

It should also be noted there was not a competitive process undertaken in 2022 when the decision to extend the hours of Royal City Mission was made. Should Council wish to provide funding for daytime drop-in services, staff recommend that Council give direction to undertake a formal, open and competitive procurement process, in partnership with Wellington County.

## **Additional Information**

A timeline of related decisions and information is noted below:

- On July 13, 2022, Council supported a [motion](#) which “respectfully requests that Wellington County work alongside the City of Guelph and other stakeholders to identify any gaps in the existing shelter system with the goal of 24 hour shelter coverage in the City of Guelph and report back by August 2022 with a plan to achieve 24 hour coverage.”
- On December 13, 2022, Council supported [four motions](#) which led Guelph to enter into a Community Benefit Agreement to facilitate the extension of daytime drop-in service hours at Royal City Mission for a one year period beginning January 1, 2023.
- A progress report was provided to Council via email on July 27, 2023.
- The provision of day-time drop-in services was further considered by Council on September 12, 2023 as part of the work undertaken by Collective Results to provide Council with a [Review and Gap Analysis of Homelessness, Substance use and Mental Health Services](#). That report noted “a lack of daytime low-barrier locations for people experiencing homelessness to go to for social support, recreational opportunities and support services” but further recommended “a review of the City’s role and process in informing funding decisions for housing services on the left-side of the housing continuum (this includes funding for daytime shelter space).”

In the weeks since October 17, 2023, City staff also met with stakeholders and received the following feedback:

- Overnight shelter services are most significantly needed, given the lack of other facilities that are open overnight.
- Safe and welcoming spaces in accessible locations at all hours are important for community well-being.
- Daytime spaces are critical connections for community building and the provision of health services.
- Current gaps include food security and access to showers, laundry, communications technology (phone, internet, charging, etc.) and storage.
- Several community organizations currently provide drop-in services, meals, and other services during daytime hours.
- The need for social service supports such as daytime drop-in services and the associated food security needs and warming/cooling spaces are increasing.
- There is a concern that the number of warming/cooling spaces available is decreasing.
- Significant concerns were also expressed about the City's funding to Royal City Mission coming to an end at the end of December, resulting in a potential drop-in service starting at the beginning of January, one of the coldest months of the year
- Mental health and substance use challenges are the primary drivers of the increase in demand and represent unmet needs in the community.
- The demand for daytime drop-in services is primarily located in the downtown area and the ideal location for a drop-in space would be within walkable distance of downtown.
- Locating daytime drop-in services in the heart of downtown is perceived by some as the cause of increasing challenges for the success of area businesses, and so consideration should be given to locations that are slightly peripheral to the core.
- Safety of clients is a consideration related to location. Visible (non-isolated) locations are safer.

- Downtown is an important connection to other social service supports and is generally considered walkable from the Guelph General Hospital. Guelph Central Station is another key connection point.
- Examples from other communities include multiple locations or “hubs” and is worth further exploration in Guelph.
- Multiple locations or hubs with overlapping hours reduces the pressure points that have been experienced in models with only one location.

The Health and Housing Symposium or Ontario Health Team could provide forums to discuss co-design of a system that can address the challenges facing the community. It would be premature to issue an RFP and trigger a procurement process, without the opportunity to design a system collaboratively as a sector.

Should Council wish the pilot program to be extended with Royal City Mission through the winter months of 2024, the motion would need to be as follows:

**That staff be directed to extend the current pilot program with Royal City Mission to offer extended drop-in service hours 6 days a week from 8:00 am – 7:30 pm, at an increased cost to the City of \$63,900 per month. The pilot extension will be from January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024, and the total cost of \$191,700 be taken from the Tax Rate Operating Contingency Reserve.**

Further information for Council’s consideration regarding the Royal City Mission extension can be found in the closed memo – the information is being provided in a closed memo as it pertains to identifiable individuals and could relate to potential negotiations carried on by the municipality.

Should Council wish to direct that staff explore options for other service provider(s) and models, the motion could be considered as follows:

**That staff be directed to issue a Request for Expressions of Interest for the provision of daytime drop-in services, seven days a week between the hours of 8:00 am and 7:30 pm, with preference given to locations located within walking distance of the City’s downtown core, and that staff be directed to report back on the results no later than June 30, 2024.**

As there have been no funds allocated within the 2024-2027 multi-year budget, Council could direct staff to issue a Request for Expressions of Interest at this point, to determine potential options along with scope and magnitude of the potential financial costs. Staff would then report back to Council to seek further direction on the financial implications before issuing a formal Request for Proposals.

## **Financial Implications**

Based on the request from Wellington County, in December 2022 Council directed that \$250,850 be taken from the Tax Rate Operating Contingency Reserve and provided to Royal City Mission, as a one-year pilot program to extend their daytime drop-in service hours 6 days a week, to provide coverage from 8:00 am – 7:30 pm. That pilot program and agreement with Royal City Mission comes to an end on December 31, 2023. Wellington County is funding an additional \$25,085 in 2023 to Royal City Mission as the cost sharing arrangement for discretionary spending is 90 percent to the City and 10 percent to the County.

Staff have consulted with Royal City Mission about their ability to consider a month-to-month extension of the existing contract, and they have indicated that they would need the total funding to increase to \$71,000 per month, or \$852,000 annualized. This would increase the City's contribution (of 90 percent) from \$20,904 a month to \$63,900 a month, just over a 300 per cent increase. This increase goes beyond staff's delegated authority in terms of committing to the month-to-month extension, and so no further action has been taken pending Council direction.

## **Consultations**

Wellington County, Downtown Guelph Business Association, Guelph General Hospital, Royal City Mission, Guelph Public Library, Guelph Community Health Centre, Toward Common Ground, Chalmers Community Services Centre, Stepping Stone, Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis, Hope House, Wyndham House, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community, Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination, Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition.

## **Attachments**

Closed Council memo – Daytime Drop-In Services

## **Departmental Approval**

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## **Report Author**

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## **This report was approved by:**

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