

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Tuesday, May 6, 2025
Subject	Addressing Gaps in Daytime Shelter Options for Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Recommendation

1. That staff be directed to proceed with a competitive procurement process for daytime shelter services and report back through the 2026 budget update.
 2. That Council respectfully requests that the Mayor include funding for daytime shelter services in the 2026 budget update.
 3. That Council respectfully requests the County of Wellington participate in this initiative and pay 10 per cent of the cost as a discretionary social service.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report aims to share information on the provision of daytime shelter services to address gaps in basic needs for persons experiencing homelessness in Guelph. This report will provide information on current system gaps, background on the discretionary costs to fill these gaps, and basic needs services and supports that could be fulfilled through a formal competitive procurement process for daytime shelter services. This report will also detail the work being completed through the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table with regards to a daytime hub approach as a longer-term solution to support individuals in the community.

Key Findings

There are currently considerable gaps in daytime services for persons experiencing homelessness. Persons experiencing homelessness may face challenges accessing basic needs, such as daytime access to washrooms, showers, consistent access to three meals a day, and a place to sit or rest that offers safety and dignity, warming and cooling options (outside of current services provided by the City during emergency cold and hot weather events), as well as storage solutions for their belongings.

A daytime shelter at its onset could serve persons experiencing homelessness with basic needs such as food security, access to washrooms and showers, laundry and storage in addition to other supports. Not all of the basic needs gaps within the homelessness system will be filled by a daytime shelter space.

The Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness is a sub-working group of the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning

Table that was initiated by the Health and Housing Symposiums. The Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness Sub-Working Group was formed with the intention of reviewing barriers and gaps in services to support basic needs from a human rights perspective. The overarching goal for this sub-working group is to bring forward recommendations to the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table where gaps in services have been identified for persons experiencing homelessness in meeting their basic needs in the County of Wellington and Guelph.

One of the objectives of this group is to make recommendations for a daytime hub model that would integrate health and housing supports for individuals, as identified by the People with Lived Experience Advisory Group, which is an advisory group to the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table. A formal recommendation on the provision of daytime hubs that will provide health and housing services in urban and rural areas will be presented by the Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness Sub-Working Group to the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table.

It should be recognized that a daytime shelter or daytime hub is not a solution to homelessness, and municipal, provincial, and federal investments in affordable, supportive, and transitional housing, along with additional funding to support basic needs are required to realize the objective of assisting persons experiencing homelessness in getting housed as quickly as possible.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report 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.

Future Guelph Theme

People and Economy

Future Guelph Objectives

People and Economy: Support community well-being

Financial Implications

Staff are recommending a formal competitive procurement Request for Proposal (RFP) process to evaluate and understand the costs associated with the provision of 12-hour daytime shelter services for the duration of two years to meet the basic needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The RFP will allow interested and prospective organizations to provide service delivery plans (collaborative submissions welcome) and costs to provide basic needs services included within their respective submissions.

The RFP will encourage coordination and collaboration amongst multiple service providers, as appropriate. The results of the RFP will be shared with the Mayor and Council for consideration as part of the 2026 multi-year budget update.

Staff reviewed the history of discretionary funding to increase drop-in daytime shelter hours in downtown Guelph with County of Wellington staff, and recommend that City Council request the County of Wellington participate in this initiative and pay 10 per cent of the cost as a discretionary service.

Report

Background

The City of Guelph has a history of funding drop-in daytime shelter services in Guelph as it has been deemed to be a discretionary service by the County of Wellington.

In December 2022, Council approved \$250,000 from a City reserve following a report back from the County of Wellington to address daytime drop-in daytime shelter service gaps at Royal City Mission. This program began operations in January 2023 with the intention that the extension of hours be reviewed in the fall of 2023. These services were not procured through a competitive process and instead the recommendation to work directly with Royal City Mission came from a recommendation to City Council by the County of Wellington. The discretionary costs for this service were shared 90 per cent/10 per cent between the City and the County, as recommended by the County.

Following review of this CBA in the fall of 2023, staff raised concerns about the lack of a competitive procurement process, the discretionary nature of this service, and the lack of funding allocation for daytime drop-in services included in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget.

In November 2023, Council extended the funding to the end of March 2024. This continued discretionary support from January to March 2024 came at a cost of \$191,000. At the time, Royal City Mission estimated a cost of roughly \$850,000 to provide services 12 hours a day for all of 2024. The discretionary cost of \$191,000 was shared 90 per cent/10 per cent between the City and the County.

In August 2024, Council passed a [motion](#) to provide up to \$450,000 from the operating contingency reserve to support the basic needs of unsheltered individuals within the City. The Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table recommended the funds be used to support an extension of services at Royal City Mission to extend daytime shelter hours and address food security gaps, for the duration of 2025, at a cost of \$350,000. These discretionary costs are being paid 100 per cent by the City. The remainder of the funds are being used to support tangible items for persons experiencing homelessness living in encampments.

In summary, over the last 3 years, a total of approximately \$800,000 has been provided to Royal City Mission to enhance daytime services for persons experiencing homelessness. The breakdown of the discretionary City costs to date to support daytime services are below:

- \$250,000 to Royal City Mission in 2023 (90 per cent City/10 per cent County)
- \$191,000 for continued support of this program from January to March 2024 (90 per cent City/10 per cent County)
- \$350,000 to support additional hours which include lunch and dinner in 2025 (100 per cent City)

As the provision of overnight emergency shelter services is a core function of the County of Wellington as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM), the cost sharing of discretionary services between the City and County to meet the basic needs through daytime shelter provision for persons experiencing homelessness is appropriate. In conversations with County of Wellington staff, the

proposed approach for the provision of daytime shelter services in Guelph would support those in need from both the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington.

Addressing Basic Needs Gaps with Daytime Shelter

As City staff wait for formal recommendation through the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table to help inform the longer-term daytime hub model approach, the Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness Sub-Working Group and Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination have been able to identify and validate notable gaps that are evident within the homelessness system that a daytime shelter at its onset would be able to address. These gaps include but are not limited to:

- Drop-in spaces to rest
- Warming and cooling locations (outside of current City services during heat and cold weather alerts)
- Food security
- 24/7 365 washroom access
- Showers
- Laundry
- Storage solutions

Through the issuance of a formal RFP, the City will be looking to fill these basic needs gaps through the provision of daytime shelter services during the daytime hours of 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. It is important to note that not all of the basic needs gaps will be filled with the addition of a daytime shelter space, but the goal would be to build a foundation whereby system partners could contribute to the longer-term vision of a daytime hub model with multiple service partners engaging to provide enhanced programming and services alongside health and housing services.

Daytime Hub Model

Formalized competitive procurement of daytime shelter services could be considered the first phase of an approach that moves towards a future daytime hub model. A hub model could include co-located services to assist with housing stability, income and employment support and health supports. A daytime hub model approach would involve multiple organizations to provide additional wrap-around services and supports to meet individual and unique needs.

Daytime hub models are currently being operated in Windsor, Ontario (the H4 Hub) as well as a series of hubs being developed in London, Ontario. As executed in neighboring municipalities, a daytime hub model could include the following services and supports to enhance basic needs for persons experiencing homelessness, in addition to basic services offered in a daytime shelter:

- Income Supports including Ontario Works and ODSP
- Education & Employment Training
- Legal & Justice Services
- Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Cultural Supports
- Spiritual Aid
- Gender & Sexuality
- Primary Care & Psychiatry
- Counselling

- Recreation

Daytime hubs typically fall within the scope of the CMSM who are responsible for the delivery of Housing Services. CMSM's collaborate with multiple services agencies and community providers to deliver services tailored to individual need. The County of Wellington as the CMSM is currently reviewing and examining a daytime hub model approach through the work being done by the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table and the Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness Sub-Working Group. The County has provided feedback on the City's plan to move forward with recommendations for the provision of daytime shelter and has expressed commitment to working alongside the City.

Recommendations for a daytime hub model for Guelph will flow through the Wellington-Guelph Health and Housing Community Planning Table for consideration as that work progresses.

Financial Implications

Staff are recommending a formal competitive procurement RFP process to evaluate and understand the costs associated with the provision of 12-hour daytime shelter services for the duration of two years to meet the basic needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The RFP will allow interested and prospective organizations to provide service delivery plans (collaborative submissions welcome) and costs to provide basic needs services included within their respective submissions.

The RFP will encourage coordination and collaboration amongst multiple service providers, as appropriate. The results of the RFP will be shared with the Mayor and Council for consideration as part of the 2026 multi-year budget update.

Staff reviewed the history of discretionary funding to increase drop-in daytime shelter hours in downtown Guelph with County of Wellington staff, and recommend that City Council request the County of Wellington participate in this initiative and pay 10 per cent of the cost as a discretionary service.

Consultations and Engagement

County of Wellington

Provision of Basic Needs for Persons Experiencing Homelessness Sub-Working Group

Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination

Finance

Attachments

None.

Departmental Approval

None.

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