



# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	September 11, 2023
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Encampment Response Team Update – July 2023
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Grace Mater Acting General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Operational Update:

The Coordinated Response Team, led by Housing Focused Street Outreach (HFSO), continue to collaborate to manage encampment response throughout the city. Housing Focused Street Outreach receive complaints and service requests from community members, Councillors and other internal City divisions will visit and attempt to contact any individual(s) staying onsite in an unsheltered location. When visiting, Housing Focused Street Outreach workers will provide goods to address basic and harm reduction needs, make an offer of emergency shelter when available, and identify and assist with connecting people to housing supports and other supports and services that meet the needs of individuals living in encampments.

Whenever a clear set of health and safety concerns have been established at a particular encampment and mitigation strategies have not worked, Housing Focused Street Outreach will engage the broader Coordinated Response Team that includes Municipal Law Enforcement, Parks Section, and Hamilton Police Services Encampment Engagement and Social Navigator teams to strategize around potential solutions to be implemented at a particular site with the intent of reducing negative impacts on people living in encampments, and to the broader public.

---

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.

**Data and Evaluation Update:**

**Measuring Success**

One of the primary goals of the City's housing outreach-led encampment response program, is to limit the movement of individuals living in encampments from their current location whenever possible, to provide Housing Focused Street Outreach and other community partners the ability to build rapport and develop personalized housing plans. At the same time the City must also respond to the needs of the broader community by ensuring that parks are cleaned and maintained, and the health and safety of all members of the community is preserved.

**Analysis:**

Additionally, data collected in June 2022, when the City's encampment response program was led by Municipal Law Enforcement, may not have natural comparators year over year with the City's current response, which is now lead by Housing Focused Street Outreach and new processes have been developed to centralize the service request and complaint process within Housing Focused Street Outreach.

**Volume of Complaints**

In July 2023, Housing Focused Street Outreach received 868 service requests and complaints, sent directly from the community and external stakeholders, as well as those initially sent to internal Coordinated Response Team partners (i.e., Parks, Municipal Law Enforcement) and forwarded to Housing Focused Street Outreach for first response. The 686 complaints and service requests received by Housing Focused Street Outreach in July 2023 represents an increase from 455 in June 2023. With no comparable data from 2022, additional data is required to understand the trends and develop a more informed baseline, but this month's datapoint is in-line with the 2023 average.

**Total Unique Individuals Living in Encampments**

The number of unique individuals identified in July 2023 who provide consent to Housing Focused Street Outreach staff to record their personal information was 80, this is slightly below the 2023 average of 92. Additionally, staff identified interactions with another 37 individuals who were in an earlier stage of rapport-building and unwilling or unable to provide personal information to staff. This combines for less interactions that were recorded in May and June 2023. However, the totals are still much greater than what was recorded in July 2022's total of 23 individuals.

The change from 2022 to 2023 is likely due to differing policy frameworks, having moved from an enforcement-led approach in 2022 to a housing-led approach in 2023. With this change has meant that there is more visibility of individuals who are

---

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.

unsheltered, and as a result Housing Focused Street Outreach are able to engage with more people.

#### Supports for Individuals Living in Encampments

Housing Focused Street Outreach identified that they were able to interact with 27 individuals to support their basic needs. This number is significantly lower than previously reported numbers in 2023 and is also lower than what was reported in July 2022. Given other interaction- and impact-related indications, it is likely that the reported total is an outlier and may be representative of human error, instead of a reflection of what is happening in the community. Staff will review data collection processes to ensure ongoing reporting is accurate and reliable.

In addition, Housing Focused Street Outreach was able to interact with 115 individuals to support their housing needs. This total is down from previously reported months in 2023, but still significantly higher than the totals reported in 2022.

Some of the discrepancy from 2022 to 2023 is likely a result of the differing approaches to engagement. Utilizing an enforcement-led approach in 2022 incentivized individuals to become less conspicuous to avoid having to move to a new location, which made it difficult for Housing Focused Street Outreach to find them and provide service and support.

#### Escalated Complaints

In general, July 2023 saw a similar number of Voluntary Compliance Notices being issued on public and private property as in June 2023, and lower than the rolling 2023 average. The 2023 average is inflated because of Voluntary Compliance Notices issued in May, to address significant health and safety concerns at Whitehern. With fewer tents at this location in June and July, there was a significant reduction in Voluntary Compliance Notices issued.

In comparing to 2022, despite more unique individuals or households living unsheltered in encampments throughout the community, there has been a significant reduction from the number of Voluntary Compliance Notices issued in July 2023 when compared to July 2022, likely in response to a housing-led approach.

#### Cleaning and Maintenance

Parks Section staff cleaned and/or maintained 86 encampment sites in July 2023. This was much higher than the July 2022 total of 55, and higher than the June 2023 total of 71.

**SUBJECT: Encampment Update (City Wide) - Page 4 of 6**

---

Without a Protocol that limits the potential areas where tents or temporary structures can be erected within the city, garbage and debris disposal happens across multiple sites in the city, on an ongoing basis. Additionally, as encampments become more entrenched, staff work with individuals living in encampments to regularly schedule maintenance and garbage pickup whenever possible.

**Data Tracking**

The following indicators have been established to assess the success of the program on an interim basis and will be reported on regularly to provide accountability to the public and people with lived experience, and transparency regarding the City’s approach to encampment response.

Indicator	Category of Measurement	July 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	July 2022
Total complaints and/or requests for service requiring response or follow-up by Housing Focused Street Outreach (HFSO)	Volume of complaints and/or requests for service	686	455	623	N/A
Number of unique individuals/households reached who are unsheltered and/or regularly living in encampments throughout the City (defined by connection to HFSO), who have provided consent to have their personal information stored in HIFIS.	Total unique individuals living in encampments	80	109	92	23
Number of unique individuals/households reached who are unsheltered and/or regularly living in encampments throughout the City (defined by connection to HFSO), who have not yet provided consent to have their personal information stored in HIFIS.	Total unique individuals living in encampments	37	34	50	N/A

**SUBJECT: Encampment Update (City Wide) - Page 5 of 6**

Indicator	Category of Measurement	July 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	July 2022
Number of interactions where individuals received support (from HFSSO) with their basic needs per month	Support basic needs of individuals living in encampments	27	96	81	59
Number of interactions where individuals received support (from HFSSO) with their housing needs per month	Support housing-related needs of individuals living in encampments	115	164	150	29
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on public property	Volume of Escalated complaints	8	5	9	N/A
Escalated items actioned to Municipal Law Enforcement from HFSSO (i.e., Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) were involved in response) on private property	Volume of Escalated complaints	0	6	6	N/A
Total number of Voluntary Compliance Notices issued on public property	Response type to escalated complaint	5	6	16	60
Total number of Voluntary Compliance Notices issued on private property	Response type to escalated complaint	0	0	0	24
Number of instances where compliance was achieved immediately on public property, without issuing of Voluntary Compliance Notice	Response type to escalated complaint	5	1	4	N/A

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.

Indicator	Category of Measurement	July 2023	Prev. Month	YTD Avg.	July 2022
Number of instances where compliance was achieved immediately on private property, without issuing of Voluntary Compliance Notice	Response type to escalated complaint	0	0	0	N/A
Number of encampment sites cleaned and/or maintained by Parks Section staff or a designated contractor	Park cleaning and maintenance	86	71	72	55

All indicators meet the criteria of being valid and reliable and can be replicated by City staff and reported monthly.

Please direct any inquiries to Michelle Baird, Director Housing Services Division, at (905) 546-2424 ext. 4860, or by email at [Michelle.Baird@hamilton.ca](mailto:Michelle.Baird@hamilton.ca)