







## Housing and Children's Services

### MISSION STATEMENT

*"Our City is built on relationships – between citizens and their government, businesses and public institutions, city and region – all interconnected, mutually supportive, and focused on the brightest future we can create together"*

<b>REPORT #: S 54/2015</b>	<b>Report Date: 11/19/2015</b>
<b>Author's Contact:</b> Lucy Sobczyk Manager of Housing Support Services 519-255-5200 X 5250 lsobczyk@citywindsor.ca	<b>Date to Council: December 9, 2015</b>
	<b>Clerk's File #: SS2015</b>

**To: Mayor and Members of City Council**

**Subject: Welcome Centre Shelter for Women Request for Support to Seek Provincial Funding City Wide**

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT City Council **SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE** an application for the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women to apply for capital funds through the Ministry of Community and Social Services for funding to secure a new location and building to provide emergency shelter services for women and families.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

N/A

### BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to request City Council support for the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women initiative to seek Provincial capital funds for their "Building Relocation" project. The goal of the Building Relocation project is to increase shelter capacity by securing a new location and building to provide emergency shelter services to homeless single women and families. The Centre has indicated that Council support will enhance their request for Provincial capital funds.

The Centre provides basic and temporary accommodations, meals and case management to support women and families experiencing homelessness to transition to

more stable housing. In addition to shelter provisions, the Centre also operates a drop-in program twice weekly for women in the community who self-identify as at-risk or low-income, in order to provide social and referral supports pertaining to housing retention, rental rights, and community engagement.

In 1999 discussions began between the Social Services Department and the Well-Come Centre for Human Potential regarding the opening of a shelter and focused on the creation of a facility with 3 emergency beds for women. The Centre opened the emergency shelter in January 2000 at 263 Bridge Ave. In response to the growing demand, the Centre expanded to 8 beds in that same year.

In 2005, the Centre underwent major renovations, increasing from 8 to 11 single beds and making additional changes to the structure of the building, including adding 1 bed on the main floor for accessibility purposes for a total of 12 beds.

As a result of a Communications Audit, in 2012 the Well-Come Centre for Human Potential changed their name to the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women ( the Centre).

All funding for shelter services is supported by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

**DISCUSSION:**

In June 2015 the Centre expanded their services to assist overflow of single women and homeless families placed in motels/hotels, until permanent accommodations can be secured. Over the past three years motel/hotel use has increased significantly as shown in the table below:

Year	# of Overflow Singles	# of Families
2013	54	97
2014	156	130
2015 (Jan. to Sept.)	71	103

The Centre's goal is to complete a newly constructed, 14,000 square foot permanent shelter offering 18 beds for single women, 5 family units, additional office and programming space, as well as increased community use space. The build design will allow beds to be shifted between families and single females as required to avoid motel usage where possible.

There are currently 12 beds for single women and no shelter beds for families in the community.

In the past there have been times when we have not had access to motels/hotels due to events in the community. The new build will enable the Centre to add 6 additional beds for women and 5 family shelter units which has the potential to decrease motel/hotel use. In comparison to other communities of similar size, even with this increase, we continue to have a low number of shelter beds.

The current Centre building was originally a house built in the late 1950's. The lot size has been reached in terms of encroachment upon property lines, not allowing for further expansion without the addition of a 3<sup>rd</sup> story requiring elevator installation and major renovation. The Centre has looked at property throughout the West and West-Central area of the City focusing on location (near bus route) and size.

By December 2015 the Centre aims to have a fully completed business plan regarding the building relocation process and an active Building Relocation Advisory Committee (BRAC).

Subject to the availability of funding from the Province the shelter remains in compliance with our service agreement that outlines funding and reporting requirements.

The Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan acknowledges that emergency shelter services will always have a place along the housing continuum to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing, with the goal of having individuals and families move as quickly as possible into permanent housing. With the implementation of a Housing First approach, emergency shelters such as the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women continue to play an integral part in supporting individuals and families in the community through their housing crisis until a more permanent solution can be achieved.

### **RISK ANALYSIS:**

#### **Resource Risks:**

The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women estimates that operating costs may increase by approximately \$80,000 annually as a result of the expansion. At this time, Administration has insufficient information to verify this estimate.

It is important to note that while no additional budget is being requested, should additional funding be required to support the expansion, there would be an opportunity cost associated with providing this increase as there may be less CHPI funding available for other programs. Any cost savings from a potential reduction of motel usage could be used to offset a potential increase in operating cost for the Centre.

Timing Risks: None identified.

Cross-Corporate Impact Risks: None identified.

Community Impact Risks: If the request to support the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women's initiative to seek Provincial capital funds is not provided it may diminish the opportunity for the Centre to secure capital funds from the Province.

Other Risks: None identified.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

MMAH provides 100% funding to operate emergency shelters through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). In April of this year, funding for the Centre moved from a combined per diem and block funding model to a block funding framework only. Block funding allows service providers to have funding stability which acts as an incentive to focus on the needed supports within this temporary setting in order to move individuals as quickly as possible into permanent housing and allows for greater cost certainty.

The Centre currently receives \$449,080 of the \$9.091 million CHPI funding provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Centre's allocation supports the equivalent of 27 beds, 12 that are in the shelter location and 15 for individuals, couples and families who are placed in motels. The funding is subject to compliance related to funding and service targets established in an agreement between the City of Windsor and the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women. This agreement is renewed based on the Centre's quarterly and annual compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the agreement.

With a larger facility it is likely that the Centre will be making a request for an increase in operating costs to their existing budget. The Centre estimates this increase could be around \$80,000 annually for operating cost such as building costs including utilities, taxes and insurance. At this time, Administration has insufficient information to verify this estimate. If motel usage is reduced as a result of the expansion of the Centre the cost savings may be used to support the increase in the Centre's operating cost. It is anticipated that these costs will be supported through the existing CHPI envelope and there will be no request from Council for additional funding from the municipal budget. If the cost associated with the decrease in the motel usage does not offset the increase in the operating cost required for the expansion then there will be an opportunity cost associated with this expansion of the Centre as there may be less funding for other CHPI programs.

### **CONSULTATIONS:**

Community Development and Health Services have been in consultation with Lady Laforet, the Executive Director of the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women.

Nancy Jaekel, Financial Planning Administrator.

**CONCLUSION:**

City Council support of the Centre's request to the Provincial government for capital funds for a new shelter is consistent with the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan that identifies the need to right size the shelter system in Windsor and Essex County. This project will allow the Welcome Centre Shelter for Women to enhance the emergency housing supports required by women and to expand options available to families outside of motels.

**PLANNING ACT MATTERS:**

N/A

**APPENDICES:**

N/A

